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## GEN Casey's 25 October Travel to Ramadi and Al Asad

GEN Casey traveled to Ramadi on 25 October for an update with the 1/1 AD (RFCT) Commander on his operations. 1 MEF Commander MG Zilmer also attended. The CG received one of the most positive briefings on the state of play in Ramadi since he sent the 1/1 AD to Ramadi from Tal Afar in June.

Between what the RFCT, TF 1.4a and the tribes have done, CG believes they may have AQ at a tipping point. He stated this was the time to go for the jugular, to take risk, and to be decisive. He stressed the need to prevent AQ from hitting back at the tribes. He suggested they look at the proposal from Shaykh Khalaf Ulayan and be creative. He recalled that the Prime Minister had given Shaykh Sattar al-Rishawi his approval to form emergency response battalions. If they won't join the IA, then CG suggested that the brigade commander consider formation of a 'police auxiliary' which would serve to get them in uniform, get them paid, and would allow the large population of illiterate males to fight for Ramadi.

The brigade commander stated he had one area left to clear, and the rest was either permissive or semi-permissive. In response to CG queries, he stated he could use two additional companies for this last operation. CG is now considering sending him two Stryker companies to help finish this off. CG commented that if they can reclaim the capital city, which they think they can do in the next few months, the people will get behind them, and they will start providing intel on the locations of insurgents and help them close on the rest of the province.

Other issues of note:

CG thought it was significant that 75 percent of their fight is against AQ. The other 25 percent is composed of the Sunni resistance. (The reverse is probably true up north in Mosul.) The G2 reported that CJSOTF 1.4c indicates AQ is sending more fighters in to the area. 1.4b, 1.4d

1.4b, 1.4d CG asked them to send forward the reports as he has never seen reports of large movements of this nature before.

The Brigade commander briefed the CG on the continuing problem between the Shaykhs and the IIP Governor. CG suggested they use their POLAD and PRT political officer to come up with a solution that will bring these two groups together. He also encouraged them to focus the shaykhs on the provincial elections, and their need to get organized and get the security under control in order to have a successful outcome. MG Zilmer said they had organized a big meeting on 8 November between the Amman and Ramadi shaykhs with Governor and the GOI. GEN Casey thought it might be useful for the Ambassador to also attend as he may have some good ideas on how to bring this group together.

Following the briefing, the brigade took the CG on a one hour mounted patrol into Ramadi city center to see the results of their work. The city was absolutely calm. The patrol traveled past the Government Center to see the reconstruction efforts underway. The city showed evidence of years of fighting, and the drive showed the amount of work required to restore the city to full functionality, but the city center clearly has been retaken from the insurgents. Such a drive would not have been possible several months ago.

Overall the CG was pleased with their success to date. He reminded MG Zilmer of the plan he had drafted in May, and now five months into it, he is just about to cross the goal line. In May, the desired end state was described as:

- Restore full Iraqi government control of Ramadi and eliminate it as a base of operations for AQ

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- Iraqi security forces remain in Ramadi to provide a safe environment for the people
- Humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts to restore essential services
- Local leadership facilitates the re-establishment of the political process and remains united against AQ.

Al Asad. GEN Casey then flew to Al-Asad for an update with the (b)(6) commander on operations in western al-Anbar. His overall impression was that they were a little unfocused and under energized, but they have a hard job and have taken quite a few losses.

The marines described Al-Qaim as a good news story. The marines moved a reinforced battalion and an Iraqi brigade to hold the city and it remains calm. The IP recruiting there is strong, and the IP are working well. They have 1229 IP on duty with one district and three IP stations manned.

Regarding the village of Anah, the marines confirmed they built a berm around Anah, in response to Gov Maroun's request to Vice President Tariq Al-Hashimi. Anah has been reclaimed, but this was clearly a city that had been serving as C2 node for AQ, just as described by the governor. Both SI and sitex validated that. The marines described a cache they found with 31 thousand feet of det cord, and enough explosives for 800 IEDs.

The marines stated that Haditha is central to AQ's operations in the province and they are investing heavily in it. It is still a very kinetic fight, and just one day earlier they had lost three marines. CG suggested, that if this is the situation, then Haditha needs to be retaken, and they need to shift their resources, assume risk elsewhere, and deny AQ access to the city. If they do this, this will get closer to achieving their goal of defeating AQ by summer 2007.

#### 30 October Meeting with Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi

On 30 October GEN Casey met with Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi at his request. When the CG arrived, Hashimi had with him al-Anbar Governor Ma'mun Sami Rashid al-Alwani, and three of his colleagues from the province. Hashimi briefed GEN Casey on his new strategic security plan for Al-Anbar, which is awaiting Prime Ministerial approval. Gov Ma'mun briefed the CG on his fallout with the Shaykhs from the Emergency Council to Save Al Anbar (ECRA) and his intent to boycott the 8 November al-Anbar conference. GEN Casey urged them to focus on defeating al-Qa'ida (AQ) engaging the resistance, recruiting for the ISF, and economic development. GEN Casey also promised to engage with the 1 MEF commander to look for a way to unify the two groups, whose joint efforts at this time could succeed in defeating the terrorists. GEN Casey will call Hashimi 31 October with his guidance, and suggested they meet again in one week, to strategize for the conference.

GEN Casey opened by thanking the Iraqis for the tip they provided on the presence of AQ in the Anbar village of Anah. He showed them a slide of a weapons cache the marines had discovered on one of the islands nearby, previously described by the Ma'mun. He also showed them the berm that the marines had emplaced around Anah, as the Iraqis had requested. The Governor added that he thought the military should duplicate that effort in both Barwana and Haditha. GEN Casey just returned from Al Asad where he had made a similar suggestion to the marine commander.

GEN Casey told the Iraqis that his impression is that the work the CF and GOI has done, in combination with the Shaykhs, has brought them to a tipping point in their effort to defeat AQ in the province. The Governor easily concurred noting that a lot of Anbaris are now joining the police and army and this will push them to the next phase of their plan. GEN Casey said he thought he was still working on the plan they hatched when Ibrahim al-Jafari was Prime Minister. At that time, Ma'mun and the local leaders agreed to provide up to 15,000 Anbaris to join the ISF and as this

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group took control, the coalition would withdraw from the city centers. Jafari approved 75 million dollars in reconstruction money. GEN Casey noted that at the last Ministers Council for National Security (MCNS) that Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and the Finance Minister agreed to release the remaining 35 million dollars for the province.

Ma'mun complained that some of the local Shaykhs are trying to work outside of the GOI framework, and he voiced strong objection. He said he had just met with three representatives of the ECRA and thought he had their agreement to coordinate and strengthen the ISF. He referred back to the 7 October meeting on al Anbar in which there was broad agreement to form an "Islamic Party Tribal Council" which would replace ECRA. Ma'mun stated that at the 7 October meeting he had recommended that Shaykh Sattar serve as Mayor of Ramadi, and from that inside governmental position administer the security program in Ramadi. Last night, on Iraqiya TV, however, Ma'mun said the shaykhs rejected the 7 October agreement, and he now lamented they were back to square one. Has withdrawn his support He does not support their tribes. They need to not outside the process. As a result, Ma'mun stated he for the 8 November conference. Creation of separate armies by work within the government and Hashimi then added that he would also like to update GEN Casey on Anbar developments since 7 October. He stated that Maliki, Ambassador Khalilzad, and UK DCG General Lamb attended the 7 October conference. The result was the formation of the "Islamic Party Tribal Council" for al- Anbar. This was to be the official group to administer the province. This council was open to all voices, all tribes, all Anbar citizens who wanted to work for the province. Maliki, Khalilzad, and Lamb all agreed that this would be the Council for all work in the province.

Hashimi stated he sent a letter to Maliki that laid out the basic requirements to administer the province, and he provided a copy to GEN Casey. He provided a copy of a second letter detailing the specific committees required to support the larger effort. He is now waiting for formal approval from Maliki, although he stated he had verbally approved the proposals. He invited GEN Casey to participate in the Islamic Party Tribal Council.

Anbar Strategic Security Plan. Hashimi stated that he thought Anbar was near a transition where they could start planning for the ISF to start taking the lead, with the coalition in support. In connection with this, Hashimi said he would like to establish an operations center either in Baghdad or al-Anbar with representatives from the CF, MOI, and MOD. It would be directed or managed by the Anbar Governor. In addition, Hashimi proposed smaller ops centers in Anbar cities at risk.

As a first step to normalizing the situation in Ramadi, Hashimi proposed the establishment of a Green Zone. Once this section of the city center was secured, it would be safe to bring back the government and the business center, and provide local employment. This would have a ripple effect in the rest of the city and the province, as Ramadi remains the key to the province.

Hashimi noted that the AQ presence in the province differs by location. In areas where it is light, then the local police can use local intelligence, and provide overall security. In areas where AQ presence is beyond local control, then CF support will be needed. He suggested a mobile emergency battalion to assist.

He also proposed that the CF help them secure the highway that leads from Jordanian/Syrian border into Ramadi. This is Ramadi's lifeline and would be key to ensuring Ramadi's economic development.

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GEN Casey said he thought the plan was a good start. He said he might take a little broader view. He urged them to take full advantage of the current willingness of the Anbar Shaykhs to take back the province from the terrorists. Everything the Iraqis do should be framed in that context to reinforce the notion that the local citizens are fighting terrorists. He urged them to work toward defeating AQ using all political and military means, so finding a way to leverage the Shaykhs initiative (ECRA) is important. He agreed that securing the border and the highway would also deny AQ an important source of support and funding.

Secondly, the CG reinforced the need for the people to continue to join the IP and IA. Police recruitment has been outstanding to date. One year ago, they had 1200 IPs, mostly in Fallujah. Now there are over 6000 IPs located throughout the province, with more in training. This program must continue.

Third, the CG said it would be important to engage the resistance to bring them into the political process. Perhaps an amnesty program would be appropriate. They should give the opposition opportunity to participate as long as they renounce violence. In connection with that, the CG mentioned there were some initiatives underway that could produce some outside financial support that would benefit the province and ultimately the country.

Fourth, the CG said they should work on improving the local economy. He agreed with Hashimi's interest in 'normalizing' Ramadi and getting the government back to work.

Hashimi agreed that the success of the overall effort was dependent on the tribes and he understood the need to leverage their work against AQ. He again noted that their Islamic Party Tribal Council is open to all. Hashimi admitted that the problem was that the tribes want to manage the effort, and each tribe has its own agenda. If they turn this effort over to the tribes, they will eventually end up fighting themselves. Hashimi asked that GEN Casey and/or the Ambassador direct the tribes to join their council, and if they do, they will welcome them with no preconditions.

GEN Casey urged them to be creative and to take advantage of the tribal initiative. He told them to stay focused on defeating AQ. Once accomplished, they can break the resistance, and get on with economic development. Ma'mun restated his opposition to attending the 8 November conference, and CG again urged him to rethink his position and not lose this opportunity. Both Hashimi and Ma'mun suggested that GEN Casey support the Governor serving as the chair or co-chair of the conference, but the CG cautioned that such a last minute change could break the process. In the end, GEN Casey asked them for 24 hours, during which he would work with 1 MEF Commander in Al Anbar to see if they can come up with a compromise. The CG restated the fact that they have the momentum now, and they need to carry it forward.

31 October 2006 Meeting with the prime Minister on the Sadr City Checkpoints

On 31 October GEN Casey and Amb Khalilzad met with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki at his request. Maliki greeted the CG with a smile, but at the same time queried "Why are you always causing trouble for me?". GEN Casey commented that while it was delivered in a friendly enough manner, he sensed some seriousness there too. CG commented that Maliki looked frazzled.

Maliki proceeded to explain some of the pressures he was under as a result of the Sadr City checkpoints that were being used to help search for the missing soldier. He said he had heard from members of the Council of Representatives and named several -- not all of which were members of the Sadrists Trend. He also said he had been called by various Shia leaders, again not all Sadrists, complaining about the checkpoints and the impact it was having on the lives of the residents.

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Maliki explained that the theme the Iraqis conveyed to him was that they could not see the justification to punish three million people, over the loss of a single US soldier.

GEN Casey explained that the checkpoints were not established just because of the soldier. He explained that Maliki had approved them, as part of the Baghdad Security Plan, to conduct random checks during the day, and to help keep the city locked down during curfew hours. Maliki replied that he must be getting old, as he did not recall that agreement.

GEN Casey told Maliki that the reports of the congestion in Sadr City as a result of the checkpoints were exaggerated. He and his deputy had over flown the city at separate times during the day and never saw more than a 10-15 minute back up on two or fewer checkpoints. The others showed short or no delays. Maliki quickly acknowledged that he knew they claims were exaggerated. "This is Iraq" he said. Nonetheless, he still needed to act.

CG told Maliki he needed to consider the risks of opening the checkpoints. CG said lifting the checkpoints may impede efforts to locate the soldier and the US public would likely view this negatively. Maliki quipped that POTUS had just told him he should not be concerned about the US public opinion over events in Iraq. Secondly, it may result in an increase in death squad activity as the checkpoints had reduced their freedom of movement. Finally, the CG warned that the Sunni population would perceive this as favoring the Shia and penalizing the Sunni. Maliki acknowledged the risks. Nevertheless, he stated that he wanted all the bridges over the army canal opened during the day and closed during curfew. He further said that they could be reinstated in an emergency.

CG suggested that the press statement that announces the opening of the checkpoints include a sentence that the GOI would continue to pursue terrorists and death squads. The press statement that was finally issued was not coordinated with the coalition and erroneously stated that there had been agreement to remove checkpoints in Sadr City and Baghdad. MNF-I immediately asked for a correction to limit the scope to Sadr City.

At the end of the session Maliki commented on the levels of violence. He said that he thought that both the Mecca Agreement and the Sadr statements against violence had produced the decline in the number of post-Ramadan incidents in Baghdad. He was pleased with the result.

GEN Casey said he had a phone message from Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi waiting for him when he returned to the office. Hashimi was instantly aware of the decision on the checkpoints and pleaded with the CG not to lift them. He said it would result in more Shia death squads activity and Sunni murders and executions. He conveyed his very real concern that the result would be catastrophic for the Baghdad Sunni population.

GEN Casey is still mulling over the implications of Maliki's decision on the checkpoints. Hsense is that this incident showed Sadr's ability to mobilize his people and leverage the GOI quickly and effectively. He again commented the Maliki seems to be more afraid of collapsing the government that could result from a confrontation with Sadr, than over the activities of the militia. The next day, the CG commented that this may be bigger than Sadr and a demonstration of overall Shia mobilization capability.

As a postscript, GEN Casey met with Maliki the next day on a separate issue. Maliki was obviously upbeat, and greeted him with a pretty good military style salute and a big smile. GEN Casey asked him if the removal of the checkpoints had been helpful, and he responded affirmatively and thanked the CG sincerely for his quick response.

On a related matter, GEN Casey told Maliki that he had information that Sadr had sent a message

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out to his followers that if the coalition had not withdrawn from Sadr City in 48 hours, that they should attack any remaining forces. CG noted the urgency, as the 48 hours would expire ca 2200 hours local on 1 November. GEN Casey told Maliki that if his forces were attacked, they would defend themselves and respond aggressively. Maliki acknowledged that without hesitation, and stated that he would follow up. Sadr, he said, had just publicly pledged not to attack any ISF or Coalition forces, so he thought that this could be cleared up.

#### 1 November Meeting with the Prime Minister on Al Anbar

On 1 November, GEN Casey and his deputy UK LTG Lamb met with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki at his request to discuss the security situation in al Anbar. Maliki also invited DR. Rafi' Hiyad al-Issawi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Al Anbar Tribal Shaykh Mu'ayid Ibrahim al- Thiyabi. Maliki's Chief of Staff Tariq Abudllah was also present. Dr Rafi', a member of the Iraqi Islamic Party, serves as a liaison to Iraq's Sunni Arab neighbors. Maliki invited him, rather than his Vice President Tariq al- Hashimi, to help work out a resolution between the two groups currently competing for control in al Anbar. IIP Governor Ma'mun and his Provincial Council represent the first group. The second group is the Emergency Council to Rescue al Anbar (ECRA), consisting of the dominant tribes in the province who favor replacing the Governor and the Provincial Council and taking the lead on removing terrorists from the province.

As expected, there was some tension between Dr. Rafa and Shaykh Mu'ayid. Malki\* kept the tone light and acted as mediator. In the end, Maliki was able to get both to agree to sit down and work out an agreement that would unite the efforts of both groups in support of stabilizing the province. Significantly, small steps were taken to expand the membership of the Anbar Provincial Council to include representatives of Shaykh Mu'ayid's (ECRA). GEN Casey is still thinking about the possibility of the GOI to hold early elections in Al Anbar to provide the residents a chance to correct the January 2005 election in which only 2,000 voters in the province turned out to cast a ballot. This turnout essentially resulted in the GOI appointment of Gov Ma'mun and the Provincial Council, which the Anbaris have never fully embraced.

Maliki opened by saying that there had been good progress in Al Anbar since the 7 October conference and he was optimistic about the future. He said there were some additional steps they needed to take to move this forward. He said the security situation had to be addressed, and there were still political/administrative issues left to resolve. Finally, he said they would have to work on getting economic reconstruction and development out to the province. He said the Iraqis would work on the political and economic issues and said that GEN Casey may be able to help them with the security issues.

He asked the two Iraqis to comment. Dr. Rafi', provided his background and tribal connections to al Anbar. He claimed he was not representing any political party but that he wanted to unify the effort and work together for the common goal of stabilizing the province.

Shaykh Mu'ayid stated that the current Anbar provincial council had basically ceased to exist, and had left the terrorists in charge. They have given the governor and the council time to improve the situation, but they had failed. He said they now have 10,000 fighters ready to take back the province. He said he was ready to prove that the ECRA could produce results. With the support of the Prime Minister they could free Ramadi of terrorists. He said ECRA should replace the defunct provincial council. Mu'ayid also proposed to insert members of ECRA in to the existing provincial council. Either way, Mu'ayid said ECRA wished to support the IA and the IP recruitment efforts, ensure they had weapons, and vehicles, and were capable of eliminating the terrorist threat in the province.

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Dr. Rafi' said he could add members to the council if directed by Maliki. The PM's other option might be to declare a state of emergency and dismiss the provincial council. The group debated that possibility, but decided that Anbar should not be the first/only province where such an extreme measure was taken. In the end, it was decided that the two Iraqi leaders would sit down together over lunch, and work out an agreement. Maliki proposed they come back to him within three-five days with their proposal on the way forward. Once there is an agreement between the two sides, the GOI would work hard to deliver the promised funding for reconstruction.

As a final note Shaykh Mu'ayid claimed his men could liberate Ramadi. GEN Casey picked up on this, and told Mu'ayid that they ought to set a goal to liberate Ramadi this month.

2 November 2006 - Trip to Basrah

GEN Casey traveled to Basrah on 2 November for a series of meetings with British, American and Iraqi representatives. He spent most of his time in the Basrah Palace compound on this trip, as he wanted a better feel for the indirect fire problem, and efforts to contain it. The UK brigade commander, Brigadier James Everard, and his staff hosted the visit and provided a review of OP Sinbad and other issues.

The CG's first meeting was with two members of the Basrah Security Committee (BSC) appointed by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in July. BG 'Ali Hamadi Tahir is the BSC president, and he was accompanied by BSC member BG 'Ali Ibrahim. Following are some highlights from the conversation.

Regarding the security situation, Hamadi described the situation in Basrah as embers under ashes. When the ashes are removed the flames will return. Death squads are the biggest destabilizing factor. Right now the ISF turns a blind eye. They are not strong enough to attack them. He claimed they do not need intelligence on the identities of the death squad members. They know who they are. He said one party (JAM) commits 75 percent of all crime. They know very well who and where the source of trouble is in the city, but they did not have the capability to go after it. He did say, however, that JAM had splintered and it would now be easier to contain and manage it.

JAM strength. Hamadi assessed that there were about 1,000 effective and influential members of JAM. Of that number, he estimated there were 70 leaders and/or commanders. There were about 2000 followers, which he described as 'scum.'

Reliability of ISF. Regarding the ISF, Hamadi said that 50-60 percent of the army was reliable. He assessed just 15-25 percent of the police as reliable. Factions within the ISF, he said, are working against the ISF.

Rapid Reaction Force. Gen Hamadi wants to stand up a rapid reaction force of 1-2 battalions to control the internal situation in Basrah. He does not want, however, this force to be recruited nationally. He plans to appeal directly to the tribes to contribute 10-15 good men. He stressed that these battalions must have loyalty only to the country. Hamadi thought he could train them in about three months but requested assistance with equipment and infrastructure. He proposed that they take over the area of the Old State Building currently occupied by the UK. This would put the unit in close proximity to its targets in this downtown location.

He said what is needed is a carrot and stick approach. Without a show of strength the enemy won't respect you. He told Maliki that an encounter with JAM was inevitable and they must be prepared. There is a hard core that will not stop until they run out of military options. In order to make Basrah safe, he said the goal must be to get the weapons out of civilian hands. But, he cautioned,

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this must move slowly and involve a comprehensive plan that includes social and economic assistance.

Operation SINBAD. Gen Hamadi said he thought OP SINBAD was producing better results now than when it first began. Barriers, he said, are coming down and for the first time the Iraqi Army (IA) is now executing orders effectively and immediately. Hamadi said that it is very common now for the residents to ask when OPS SINBAD will start in their own areas as they see that this has been almost entirely an economic and reconstruction effort. He thought that it had greatly improved the image of the UK and, at the same time, discredited the AIF, which claimed that OP SINBAD was a military operation that would set the city back. Overall, he said OP SINBAD reflects well on MNF-I and continues to improve relations between the public and the coalition.

Everard provided the following comments on OP SINBAD and the overall situation in Basrah.

OP SINBAD. Everard said the Basrah governor, Muhammad Mus'ib Muhammad al-Walili, knows that Fadilah has failed, and the pending provincial elections mean he must be more cooperative. He has been moderately supportive of OP SINBAD. He said, OP SINBAD results are unclear. Attack trends are up and murders, after declining initially, are creeping up again. Rogue JAM and the members of the Serious Crimes Unit (SCU) are largely responsible for the problems. SCU was not disbanded as planned, as a result of a lack of political will.

Everard said that he is worried about the effects of the MOD's 'Force Leveling' campaign on OP SINBAD. This is an Iraqi Ground Forces Command initiative to transition the IA into a more national force, by moving whole units from one geographic area, where they were originally recruited, into a new IA Division. In this case, the IOth IA, is being asked to give up units that the UK has finally just trained and bonded with in OP SINBAD. He said they Iraqi soldiers have established relationships with the locals and are finally showing some positive results, and anticipates some setbacks if the units are transferred. GEN Casey indicated he would look into this in Baghdad.

The next phase of OP SINBAD will start in early December. That phase is intended to concentrate in the Basrah city center. Before that happens (and the CG advised that it should be well before that) the BSC will need to obtain Maliki's approval for this next phase. Gen Hamadi will be the one to present the next phase to Maliki.

GEN Casey commented that it would be a good idea to engage again with the GOI and determine exactly what they expect or want out of OP SINBAD. It would also be worthwhile to figure out how to get the GOI to play a role in OP SINBAD to include providing some funding.

Indirect Fire (IDF). On the subject of IDF, GEN Casey received detailed briefings and discussions from the US Base, REO and UK Consul/FCO. IDF has become the priority, and consuming issue for all these offices. They are tracking it carefully and know the trends and patterns and time lines for attacks.

Everard said they had recovered a brand ne 1.4b 07 mm rocket. In this case, the rocket failed to detonate, but it was very clearly straight out of the box.

The IDF patterns confirm that a 4x4 multiple rocket launcher is being used against Basrah palace compound, likely Chinese.

The enemy is working the gaps. Whenever and wherever the coalition is not, they are. While the Apaches, which arrived on 18 October, seemed to have suppressed the IDF, when the Apaches don't fly, they launch.

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Overall, the CG thought the IDF issue was still not under control. It is clearly designed to run the coalition out of Basrah, as it did in Maysan. This is a JAM problem with the coalition. More broadly, however, it is a Shia problem that revolves around who is going to govern and control the Iraqi security forces. The elected government and authorized security services are part of the problem. Enroute back to Baghdad, CG commented that the British themselves have admitted that their own guys have not done well in Iraq. They watched the threat change, but did not adjust, and just kept implementing the same original program.

4 November 2006 - October Threat Laydown.

On 4 November General Casey chaired the MNF-I monthly threat laydown....MNF- I C2, BG Lacquement, provided his first assessment since arrival in country, and in a new, simpler format than his predecessor. As The senior MNF-I staff attended. Lacquement's bottom line is as follows:

- Sectarian violence incidents slightly increased in October despite positive impacts of OTF-II in Baghdad decreasing overall casualties.
- Expansion of the conflict along LOCs, Diyala and Salah ad Din province is of most concern.
- Expect steady attack levels through November before declining in December, based on historic trends.

Some of the Highlights of the discussion follow below.

Jaysh al-Mahdi and Sadr. GEN Casey asked the C2 for a full description of Muqtada al-Sadr's actions leading up to and just after the lifting of the Sadr City checkpoints, and provide an assessment his effectiveness and capabilities. GEN Casey also wants an assessment of what really happened at the meeting between Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and Sadr in Najaf, and how that might relate to what happened in Sadr City. CG perceives that Sadr was able to mobilize more than just JAM. Sadr seemed to have secured broad Shia support and, according to the press, even support from some of the Al Anbar Shaykhs. It may not be too much of an exaggeration to describe this as a mass mobilization of the Iraqi population against the coalition. The CG said that recent polling data shows that coalition support by the Iraqi population is at new lows. Sadr seems to be making himself increasingly essential to political process. Maliki, who is quick to accommodate him, seems to understand this very well.

CG also requested that the C2 compare Sadr's current activities to Hizballah's activities in Lebanon. He described a four-story color poster of Hizballah General Secretary Hasan Nasrallah that he saw in Sadr City the other day, underscoring the link between the two.

Finally, related to the Sadr City checkpoints, CG noted that MNF-I lost the initiative on this issue early. In their efforts to focus on finding the missing soldier, they did not carefully calculate the impact on the population. In the end, the Iraqis viewed this as MNF-I punishing three million residents of Sadr City for the loss of a single soldier. The Iraqis place a very different value on human life.

Sunni Strategic Assessment. General Casey reiterated that Ramadi is the center of gravity in al Anbar and will remain the main effort in the province. The supporting effort will be in Haditha. GEN Casey said he would move one more battalion to Ramadi and the MEU to Haditha in late November to put pressure on these AQ strongholds. His goal is to bring sufficient security that the Shaykhs, who are currently working against AQ, won't be assassinated. In turn will give the Anbaris time to further develop IP, assume control for domestic order, and move the province forward with economic development and reconstruction programs.

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CG asked his staff to assess the recent attacks in Kirkuk, which have been attributed to AQ. Is AQ trying to open a Kurdish/Arab front? If their goal is to increase sectarian tension, why not get the Kurds in the fight?

CG commented that there is a supportive Sunni population in Salah ad Din and Diyala, which is susceptible to harboring AQ. CG asked if it is possible that we are seeing an AQ push south from Muqdadiyah into Baghdad, from both the east and west sides of the Tigris River. Perhaps we are seeing a re-energized AQ, as a result of an influx of Sunni fleeing JAM death squads, and they are now pushing south. This could be the Sunni version of JAM expansion in this region. The Iraqis, of all ethnicities, seem to know about the Baghdad belts and understand what it takes to control Baghdad. This campaign could be locally driven, but overall supportive of the broader AQ agenda.

Related to this, CG pointed out that the Sunni extremists are using the two main roads between Haditha and Bayji, and Ramadi and Balad. He asked the Corps to start planning to control these critical LOCs as part of the increased effort to defeat AQIZ.

CG noted that Prime Minister Maliki needs a Sunni success to demonstrate his support to the broader Sunni community. This is why GEN Casey has stayed involved in the various al Anbar initiatives, trying to find the right one to give Maliki the success he needs to gain Sunni support for his agenda.

Southern Iraq. GEN Casey summarized for the group that the biggest concern for MNF-I is the loyalty of the police in the south, and whether they are so compromised as to render them incapable of maintaining domestic order, one of MNF-I's strategic goals. GEN Casey told his C2 he needed better visibility on JAM/SCIRI. He also asked his staff to review the criteria for Provincial Iraqi control (PIC) and make sure there is sufficient attention given to the quality of the force, and not just on objective measures like equipment and training. CG asked if his staff was comfortable with the TRA and PIC conditions in the south. MNF-I SPA noted that MOI Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Ahmad al-Khafaji had just completed his own assessment of the conditions in each province and it was currently being translated. CG expressed great interest and was promised a final version by the weekend.

GEN Casey asked his staff which enemy groups (AQ, Sunni and Shia extremists) might be thinking they are doing well. Overall, the staff thought it was likely that none of the groups thought they were succeeding. Despite all the violence and political wins and losses, the staff made a convincing case that all the groups felt they were struggling. This prompted one of his Generals to comment that there are fewer Iraqis in the middle of the spectrum, and that all the groups have increased their influence on the edges. The moderate center is getting smaller.

#### 6 November 2006 - Current Issues on the Agenda

The CG has identified his three priorities for military operations in Iraq. Baghdad remains the first and highest priority. He continues to adjust the Baghdad security Plan in reaction to the threat, and is working with the Iraqis to bring in two more of their promised brigades to assist. The two supporting areas are Al Anbar and Diyala, and in that order. He has made the following decisions on force deployment:

- 4th Brigade 1st Cav will go to Mosul
- Strykers in Mosul will move to Baghdad
- The MEU will be sent to Hadith and Ramadi

These moves should be in place by the end of November.

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This is intended to coincide with the Brigade Commander in Ramadi's final push against the remaining AQ stronghold.

While the Washington intel/policy communities continue to work on identifying the enemy we are fighting in Iraq, GEN Casey is pretty satisfied that he knows. In its simplest form there are the irreconcilables and the reconcilables. The irreconcilables have to be removed from the process, the others brought into the process. The division commander in the North assesses that 60 percent of his fight is against AQ. In al Anbar, the commanders assess that 75 percent of their fight is against AQ. But it is different in different parts of the country, and Baghdad remains the center for sectarian violence and where the militia/JAM are responsible for 8.5 times more deaths than result from AQ car bombs.

LTG McChrystal is now taking a hard look at the Baghdad VBIED network for the CG. GEN Casey is intent on degrading this network and reducing their capacity to generate attacks. While the attacks have not been especially effective, the fact that they continue, and in large numbers, undermines the peoples' confidence in the GOI to protect them. CG expects that this review will produce a picture of the network that will allow targeting of its component parts (car buyer, bomb maker, planners, triggermen etc.). This is the current strategy they will pursue to bring down the network.

The CG has tasked Corps to ensure that they are using their military power as effectively as possible. This must be the focus for MNC-I, and there should be less concern about what the GOI is or isn't doing to support their efforts. The CG reminds his staff that they are the guys with the guns, and every effort must be made to ensure that they are employed as effectively as possible.

GEN Casey commented that after the 6 December assessment that he and the Ambassador-chair, then MNF-I and State would write a Joint campaign Plan for 2007, as they did last year. CG said that the new plan would need to include a big push against the Sunni insurgency. He said he still thinks AQ may be at a tipping point in Al Anbar and they need to ratchet up the pressure, and take away all their options. This will allow a tighter focus on dealing with the militia, a task the Iraqis must then drive forward.

Evening of 4 November GEN Casey received a first draft of the letter that will be attached to the UNSCR 1637 request. As expected, the Iraqis inserted some caveats on coalition presence. Amb Khalilzad sent it to Casey for his comments. The CG had his staff research some issues related to PIC timelines, and he fixed the wording in several places to reflect the terms agreed to in the 'existing agreement'. This is still a work in progress, and it is still too early to know how this will affect coalition authorities and presence.

GEN Casey noted that Prime Minister Maliki is holding increasingly frequent meetings on security topics without MNF-I/Embassy participation. It is another sign that Maliki wants to take control of the security portfolio sooner rather than later. However, CG pointed out that Maliki's Ministers {MOI, MOD, NSA} tend to contact MNF-I immediately after these meetings for consultations and advice. The GOI is still dependent on the CF but is testing its legs, which is a positive trend.

On the return flight from Basrah, GEN Casey began to look at developing alternative strategies for Iraq in 2007. He has identified four options in his first cut at this. He will be fleshing them out in the weeks ahead, and will coordinate with GEN Abizaid before he rolls them out for Washington to consider.

GEN Casey does not spend much time or energy on media reaction to the events in Iraq. Nonetheless, he knows it is perhaps the toughest environment since the start of the Iraq campaign. He reflected on the visit of (b)(6) Johns Hopkins SAIS) in mid-February when he spoke on the

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topic of Civil-Military relations. (b)(6) predicted that there will be a point in the conflict where the media will come after the Generals. Last week Time Magazine ran an article on "Criticism Mounts of US Generals in Iraq" that seemed to validate his assertion. While this article is largely about GEN Abizaid, he expects that may change too.

7 November 2006 - Meeting on 1.4b

1.4b, 1.4d

As a result, GEN Casey provided QUITE A BIT OF guidance to the group. He told them that his inclination is to put all the players together, under one roof, with one guy in charge. He noted that at this point they are all analysts, and the CG said it must have at least one operator in the mix. It was agreed that the unit would be reestablished in the SCID's spaces on FOB Union III where it had been in the Spring. CG told Lacquement to CONTACT CENTCOM and orchestrate Inspired Nomad's move to FOB Union to support this new effort. That appears to be underway.

The CG wants a holistic approach to the 1.4b target that will sustain operations against them, and stop what they are doing against THE coalition. To start off, the CG worked with the CIOC to identify a new set of Priority Intelligence Requirements (pir). The 1.4b Cell members will further develop the following PIRs:

- What are their objectives in Iraq vis a vis US objectives?
- What means are they using to achieve their objectives?
- What is their Iraq based infrastructure?
- Who are they?
- Whom in the GOI do they influence?
- Need to reproduce the list of 1.4b
- Identify key components of support to military operations in Iraq (eFPS, training, ordnance)
- Identify other elements of 1.4b

In preparation for the CG 1 s 9 November meeting with the Ambassador and others, the CG tasked the CIOC to produce a slide presentation that addresses:

- What We know
- What We Think
- What We Don't Know
- Stated coalition Objectives
- PIRs (fully developed)
- Way Ahead

CG asked them to include some recommendation on how to disrupt 1.4b ability to sustain support to Shia extremists. He did not rule out kinetic operations, but he said that there must be a range of options. Leveraging the GOI to assist (arrest, PNG) would be one of the more important options to use.

SCID then provided examples of the targeting packages they have developed on the four categories of targets they are tracking: 1.4b facilities and organizations. They

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cautioned that while there has been a lot of work done on the total package of 56 targets, that no targets are currently actionable. Fourteen of the 56 target packages are completed at 'base level' that is, they lack specifics concerning detailed patterns of life which are critical to action any target.

In subsequent conversations ON THE TOPIC, the CG SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THIS [1.4b] effort will track more closely with the effort against the extra judicial killings (EJKs) than the much larger AQ effort. He recalls it took a good six weeks to get the EJK operation up and running and he is hoping that the Iran start up will not be that slow. He commented, that if something happens with [1.4b] [1.4b] they will likely ratchet up the pressure on the US in Iraq. CG wants to be ready, and to have a series of options to choose from that run the spectrum through to direct action. He envisions an organized and concerted effort that starts at the borders and addresses the [1.4b] [1.4b] throughout the country.

14 November

GEN Casey...is still interested in whether Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has the personal and political ability to move the country forward. The second issue is whether there is a Shia hand manipulating Maliki, to go slow on militia, so that the Shia can consolidate and gain position over the Sunni. The CG also surfaced his interest in the whole relationship between Maliki and Muqtada al-Sadr. He noted that Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) essentially is Maliki's action arm. CG commented that Maliki has been quite adamant about the coalition avoiding a fight with JAM, and has been trying to work this in the background. Maliki is clearly not stopping JAM's forward progress...

GEN Casey mentioned that GEN Abizaid's meeting with Maliki on 12 November was not heavy on substance but more of a social call. He noted, however, that a report leaked from Maliki's office, claimed that Abizaid had delivered a tough message to Maliki on curtailing the militia. He thought this was curious, and appeared that Maliki may be using Abizaid's visit as a cover for some of his plans to work the militia piece a little harder.

GEN Casey said there had been a big discussion in the last Ministers Council for National Security (MCNS) on al- Amarah. The Iraqi leadership is looking for a central government imposed solution, that may include things like an emergency law and/or a Security Committee, similar to the actions they took to address security issues in Basrah. The CG said they need to help the Iraqis work through this, and he would like to see the central government in charge of al-Amarah. This may involve rebuilding/retraining the police in the province, which in turn may extend the timeline for provincial Iraqi control. Maliki reportedly described the situation in al-Amarah as 'embers burning under ashes' and ready to re-ignite.

Regarding Basrah, the CG said he had asked the Corps commander to look into the pros/cons of stopping OP SINBAD and focusing those UK assets on solving the IDF problem. He agrees that the two are separate efforts. SINBAD is designed to improve the atmosphere, but not the security situation. Nonetheless, the CG said there couldn't be another pullout like there was in Maysan after Camp Abu Naji was attacked, due to a lack of security. The CG believes that the JAM strategy is to force a UK withdrawal through relentless IDF attacks...

Maliki is pleased to have the dedicated strike force, that MNF-I recently provided, to go after his own time sensitive targets.

Maliki gets depressed about the problems in Iraq, and also very angry. At certain moments he leans toward using Saddam-era tactics to control the situation, but then regains his composure.

Maliki has issued instructions on how to man the checkpoints which will include a substantial

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increase in personnel on the checkpoints (up to 30 per checkpoint} on the perimeter of the city. Inside Baghdad, Maliki wants mobile checkpoints that only stop suspicious vehicles/individuals. GEN Casey was pleased to hear this, and added that in his meeting with the MOI and MOD morning of 14 November he told them the checkpoints were poorly manned, and that it was undermining the plan they signed up to. The CG told them they either needed to get serious, or tell the Prime Minister that they cannot do it.

Maliki is suspicious about the US intentions regarding the problem of IDF. Maliki believes that because the US knows the points of origin for the IDF, that they have the capability to eliminate it. As a result, Maliki is asking why the coalition doesn't remove the threat. GEN Casey thought it was interesting and commented that Maliki has almost no understanding of military matters. He apparently does not understand that the IDF can be set, launched, and cleared in a matter of minutes. He asked his C2 to bring him a slide that shows a photo of a rocket on a timer as a way to demonstrate to Maliki the difficulties involved in attacking IDF cells.

Maliki is considering changes in leadership in the MOD, below the Minister level. He thinks they are not competent and some should be punished for corruption. Maliki commented that the MOI Jawad al-Bulani lacks the appropriate qualifications to serve as a Minister and that he is considering his replacement as well.

Maliki is worried about the MNF-I plan to send another 3,000 US forces into Ramadi for a 90-day period. He believes such a deployment may negate the efforts he has made with the al Anbar shaykhs in the province. GEN Casey said he had briefed Maliki on his intention to move a brigade into Ramadi at the end of November to help finish the AQ presence in the city. At that time, Maliki had told the CG that he wanted to first check with the tribes before he provided his approval.

On the subject of developing an intelligence architecture in Iraq, the CG said that he wants to help the Iraqis find a way to organize their intelligence agencies, so that in 2007 they have some organizational capability to feed their counter terrorism fight. BG Lacquement assured the CG that he had a pretty good handle on the intelligence architectures inside the MOI and MOD...GEN Casey again stated that he does not want to create and impose a US model on the Iraqis. This needs to be something that the Iraqis are comfortable with, and will use. Further, the CG stated that he would like to have the Ministers decide now on the division of labor between the intelligence organizations. BG Lacquement said he had a good start on this, and would have a rough cut in the next week...

16 November 2006

GEN Casey spoke to Maliki on the day before he departed for Turkey about his plans to bring in the 2,200 man Marine Expeditionary Unit to help defeat AQ in al Anbar. He explained that the situation may be a tipping point as a result of the coalition and tribal efforts against the terrorists, and this temporary deployment may make the difference. Maliki told the CG he wanted another 48 hours to decide, and would provide his response when he returned to Baghdad. Maliki told the CG that this is 'like walking in a political mine field, laden with trip wires.' Maliki explained he is concerned about the response from Tawafuq Front Leader Adnan al-Dulaymi, COR member Khalaf Ulayan al-Khalifawi, and the IIP in general. They will likely view this as a GOI attack against the Sunni, and he was very concerned over their reaction. To underscore the delicacy of this current situation, the CG said that the embassy is showing mounting concern about Sunni continued participation in government. At this point, Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi and some of the COR members, who have repeatedly threatened to leave the government, have been unusually silent. Maliki is trying to balance the interests of all these groups against the MNF-I request for more forces in this Sunni province.

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CG said that he is getting the sense that things are stagnating at the strategic level. The Iraqis seem to be losing momentum again, and the CG is working to help the GOI change the dynamics in Baghdad. He has asked his staff to start working on ways to jumpstart the Iraqis by moving some information, political, and economic events forward in the next 30-60 days. Nearly all the high-level US visitors to Baghdad over the past month have commented on the fact that the Iraqis do not see the situation anywhere near the crisis proportion it is viewed in the US.

GEN Casey is still looking carefully at Maliki and whether or not he genuinely wants to lead a unity government and whether he can succeed in moving the country forward. Until there is better clarity, he plans to continue to provide as much support to Maliki. As a result, he is thinking about the utility of placing a military LNO in Maliki's office/residence to ensure he has unimpeded access to him and MNF-I as needed. Maliki has complained about his inability to communicate with the CG from time to time, and GEN Casey wants to take that complaint off the board soonest. They had thought the Prime Minister's Situation Room could provide that connectivity, but Maliki rarely spends any time in that facility now, so a shift is in order.

CG commented on the new NSC-led Iraq Review group, noting that they need to get the MNF-I proposals for accelerating the transition into the mix soonest. Of note, SECDEF has been in communication with the CG this week on the subject of options in Iraq. At his request, GEN Casey has accelerated his planning for the Transition Bridging Strategy and provided a first cut to SecDef on 16 November for his use with Washington principals. CG has also briefed the incoming Corps Commander, LTG Odierno, who will replace LTG Chiarelli next month.

LTG Dempsey has written a think piece for GEN Casey. The paper states that the lack of a national intelligence law and agreed upon intelligence architecture to implement it will soon create a condition in which Iraq will have control of most of the elements of national power necessary to effectively govern - economic, political, information and security - but will be guided by rumor and suspicion because it lacks the ability to responsibly collect, verify, and document intelligence. This will manifest itself in imprecise military operations tactically and in potentially imprecise policy nationally. A national intelligence architecture is a pre-condition to everything the Iraqis will want to do in the future. LTG Dempsey is recommending that the National intelligence law, and the organizations to implement it, should be included in the Prime Minister's 2007 governance plan as a pre-condition to any acceleration of transition.

#### 20 November: Prime Minister Approves Next Phase of Basrah Security Plan

On 20 November GEN Casey and UK MND-SE Commander MG Sherriff met with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to seek his approval for the next phase of OP SINBAD. MG Sherriff explained that this phase would focus on Basrah city center and would be led by Iraqi security forces, with coalition in support. The UK would continue combined operations against criminal elements/IDF cells and would continue to focus on training the police. Sherriff requested that the Serious Crimes Unit be disbanded and only those trusted individuals be transferred to the PJCC. Maliki approved the operation and asked that Iraqi forces take the lead against the IDF cells. Also, Maliki asked for greater focus on the Umm Qasar port director and his operations and take legal action against him as warranted. Finally, Dr. Safa requested better security for the main supply route leading from Kuwait north to Baghdad. GEN Casey agreed to look into it. Also attending the meeting were the following: Brigadier General 'ali Hamadi Tahir, President of the Basrah Security Committee; Minister of State for COR affairs, Dr. Safa' al-Safi; 10th Iraqi Army Division Commander MG 'Abd al-Latif Thu'ban Muhammad; UK DCG LTG Lamb; MG Fastabend.

BG Ali led off the meeting with a review of OP SINBAD to date. He noted that the reconstruction

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efforts had increased the trust of the citizens and that the security operations had improved the quality of the ISF, especially the police. Maliki pressed him on his relations with the IA, IP and whether or not the ISF responded to his requests for action. BG Ali indicated that there were still problems here, and that led him to make another pitch to establish his own security force. He said there were two MOI Department of Border Enforcement battalions, over which he would like to take control, and focus on security operations in Basrah. Maliki asked him what he would do with them and BG Ali said he would attack the criminals and the IDF cells. Maliki emphasized that any violators who operate outside the law, regardless of ethnicity, must be dealt with harshly. BG Ali said that the IP was intimidated and not properly trained to do the job.

Maliki shifted gears and asked about the Umm Qasr Port Director, and whether BG Ali had taken any action to curb his criminal behavior. BG Ali agreed that he could 'interfere' in the port if that is what Maliki wanted. Maliki retorted "this is not interference. You must arrest anyone who violates the law. Maliki said that the people are fed up. They are asking for the GOI to get rid of the gangs in Anbar, Diyala and in Basrah.

MG Sherriff then quickly briefed Maliki on the UK proposal. He said that in September Maliki approved operations on the outskirts of Basrah city, and directed they return to him after Ramadan to gain approval for the next phase. He noted that the consent of the people in Basrah had increased for the coalition as a result of the reconstruction projects, enabled by the ISF, and improvement of the police performance through training and mentoring. The coalition has focused training on eight IP stations with impressive results. The main achievement is an increase in confidence and capability of the IP. In addition, they have seen marked improvement in joint command and control in the coordination center. Now, MG Sherriff, said they need Maliki's authorization to continue into Basrah. The operations would be led by the ISF. Iraqi engineers would conduct the reconstruction projects. MNF-I would support and advise, and focus on IP training. On 12 December the UK would like to move into the city center, with the IA in the lead. In January at the end of the OP, the ISF should be capable of planning, leading and executing independent operations. Maliki subsequently approved this phase of OP SINBAD.

Sherriff continued that the reality on the ground is that there are still high attack levels and a special problem with IDF. He stated they would continue to jointly plan combined operations to find these cells and arrest/detain the perpetrators.

Dr. Safa stated they should take steps against the criminals in the IP. They should issue arrest warrants and pursue prosecutions. Sherriff agreed and noted the need to disband the Serious Crimes Unit and move the good elements into the PJCC. He noted that OP SINBAD is not just about reconstruction, but also involves security operations. Maliki agreed that the police needed to be dealt with. He also said that he would like the Iraqi forces, with CF support, to work against the IDF cells.

BG Ali stated quietly to Maliki that he was not able to interrogate detainees thoroughly because of the coalition focus on human rights. He told Maliki that he wanted to have his own facility, without the coalition and he could better obtain the confessions. Maliki then addressed the coalition and told them to leave the terrorists to the Iraqis. He said "We understand human rights, and we will deal with them consistent with human rights laws and regulations."

Dr. Safa then stated that he would like the coalition to better secure the main supply route from Kuwait heading north into Baghdad. He said it is not well policed and that weapon smugglers and other criminal elements were using it to infiltrate contraband and illegal travelers into Iraq. GEN Casey said this was the first he had heard about it, and requested the Iraqis send him the details and he would look into it. Sherriff then added that he was well aware of some of the incidents Dr.

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Safa had referred to along the MSR. However, he stated the coalition was not in position to provide much more control over the route than specific security bubbles during a specific time window.

28 November

...GEN Casey showed the group the base of 81mm mortar fin, with [1.4b] factory markings, in English language (export version) that had been recovered from a recent engagement. He highlighted the fact that the mortar had been produced in 2006. This shows, he said, that the [1.4b] are no longer even trying to hide their support to the Shia extremists. Older [1.4b] ordnance plausibly could be linked to the Iran-Iraq war, but this brand new ordnance is showing up all over Iraq including in Basrah where the British have found brand new rockets that failed to detonate.

GEN Casey is expecting large reprisal attacks, for the 23 November Sadr City bombings, to occur on 29 and 30 November while Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is in Amman meeting with POTUS. He has asked Station to intensify its collection and help the military avert these anticipated high profile attacks.

GEN Casey said that First Cavalry Division is now fully operational in the old 4ID battle space in Baghdad. GEN Casey told the new Division Commander to take a blank piece of paper, and his fresh perspective, to comprehensively review the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP). He welcomed any changes that might meet with more success. On the subject of the BSP, CG noted that the Iraqis had established more than 120 checkpoints in Baghdad and, as a result, had become too stationary to be effective. His Corps Commander is helping the Iraqis reduce the number of checkpoints, by as much as half, and free up that portion of the force for more offensive operations. He also stated that the Iraqi political leaders had all agreed that two IA brigades in the north (largely Peshmerga) should be brought into Baghdad to assist. The CG said the Iraqis also had agreed to one brigade from the west into Baghdad. So, in A'Ilort ord!.- there should be three additional Iraqi Baghdad, and a more mobile and offensive operational profile. In response to a query, the CG confirmed that Maliki has approved kinetic action against Shia militia inside and outside of Sadr City as needed.

GEN Casey said that Maliki had very definitely progressed in his ability to lead compared to even two months ago. He added that all the security Ministers have progressed. GEN Casey said it has been his experience that it takes these new leaders about 4-6 months to get their legs, and to begin to take control. In addition, they have now been in office long enough to see things come around for the second and third time, and they now have experience and confidence to make faster judgments and take more decision actions. GEN Casey added that he has been telling his Washington partners that it is time to stop pressuring Maliki directly, and start pressuring the UIA. This is a UIA government and they need to be accountable for their support or lack of support to Maliki and his program.

GEN Casey remains very interested in the work that TF [1.4a] is doing against the Abu Zar, Abu Nur VBIED network that have been responsible for so many high profile attacks in Baghdad. He said that TF [1.4a] is doing fine, but he wants their efforts better integrated with the conventional forces. He has tasked the CIOC to do a study on the VBIED network infrastructure (not just the personalities). He asked them to work on identifying the flow of ammunition/ordnance, vehicles, circuitry, and garages/locations where the VBIEDS are assembled. He urged them to identify the network vulnerabilities in any/all of these areas and exploit them. He is also thinking about changes that Iraq may need to adopt in order to live with terror, as the Israelis have done. This could include more pedestrian only market places.

GEN Casey said that the MEU is now operating in Al Anbar Province, and assisting the Marines finish

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the final kinetic phase of operations in Ramadi, as well as clearing operations in the western city of Haditha. In both cases, the CG wants the AQ presence reduced to a level that the Anbar Shaykhs can implement their anti-AQIZ efforts successfully, and re-establish local control over their areas.

BG Lacquement provided a brief update on his interaction with the Ministry of State for National Security (MSNS). He has a LTCOL positioned just outside Minister Shirwin al- Wa'ili's office. This officer is just about one week away from being able to brief BG Lacquement on the roles, missions, resources, organization, satellite office locations, and legal justification for the Ministry. In addition, he has been collecting phone numbers and putting them on tasking, which should provide another layer of insight into the Ministry's players and activities. Once MNF-I has a good understanding about what this Ministry is, and what it is doing, the CG will work to either shape it into a more productive and positive organization, or eliminate it. He did note that National Security Advisor Muwafuq al-Rubai has complained about Wa'ili several times, and seems to want coalition support for doing away with his job and his ministry in its entirety. CG noted that Wa'ili does have Maliki's ear, so there will be some negotiating to do as they move forward.

Approved for Release

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