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CC-CAG

1 December 2003

Memorandum for Record

SUBJECT: Notes from General Abizaid's Trip to Iraq (23-25 NOV)

General: The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the staff of key issues and discussions during the Commander's visit to Iraq. It is for CENTCOM internal distribution only.

Summary of Top Issues: Many top issues from the 4-8 November trip are still relevant. New issues and revised comments are italics.

- **Lack of responsiveness/agility in the commitment and obligation of funds** is emerging as the primary impediment to progress in Iraq. Unless authorities are decentralized and more flexibility is achieved, our efforts could become moribund despite the resources provided in the Supplemental. Need some funding immediately to fill the gap until supplemental dollars can be obligated. Funds for ICDC requested three weeks ago still not received – no uniforms or equipment to begin training in next two weeks. Program will be delayed as a result.
- **Need to reinstate and expand CERP funding.** Counter-insurgency requires more carrots than sticks. Need to transfer salary payments to ministries to unburden CERP. Despite the recent directive to CPA to release one hundred million dollars, this will remain a problem until the money is ACTUALLY available at the division level.
- **Police initiative is failing.** Police need cars and communication. Ministry of Interior needs assistance with the execution of the training program (esp. transportation). See CAG paper dated 26 Nov. The following report is from a battalion XO during a side conversation:
The Iraqi Police are broken to an almost indescribable degree. For the first few weeks of "Joint Patrols", we literally had to chase them down in the streets to get them to walk with us. I had to coerce an IP to get him to complete a foot patrol with me. The situation is slowly improving, but the police still have no radios, limited uniforms, not enough weapons, and no windows or doors in any of their police stations. We have a long way to go before they're ready to be partners in keeping the peace.
- **Unemployment is the primary source of strength for the insurgency.** It is clear that security is interdependent with economic development. Situation in some areas has worsened. Many jobs provided through CERP (local clean-up and construction projects) were terminated due to lack of funds.
- **Pay scales for security personnel.** Reductions and inequities in pay for FPS, ICDC, NIA and police may lead to significant reductions in Iraqi forces and problems in recruiting.
- **Border restrictions** are hindering reconstruction efforts and preventing resolution of the fuel crisis. Need immediate assistance to alleviate problems at the Turkish border. Need help from State and need planners to look at alternate routes.
- **Urgent need for reconciliation** and a political alternative to the Baath to emerge from the Sunni community. Also need for additional Sunni representation on the GC, especially from Al Anbar province. Lack of reconciliation is causing great disaffection and fueling the insurgency. Sunni fear of disenfranchisement may be exacerbated when Aziz al Hakim assumes the Presidency.
- **CPA has resources, but insufficient capacity** to allocate them properly; CJTF^{1.4a} has capacity and insufficient resources to apply.
 - There is a need to decentralize, but a reluctance to do so.

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- CPA under-manning and 90-day rotations do not permit an accurate appreciation of the situation and undermine ability to make progress.
- **There is an urgent need to improve intelligence fusion and dissemination** – especially in connection with interrogation reports. *Also need for additional bandwidth for transmission of intelligence between brigade, division, and CJTF ^{1.4a} headquarters.*
- **Severe shortage of kerosene and benzene** is likely to have broad negative impact.
- **Positive Developments:**
 - Joint operations with police/ICDC and ICDC effectiveness in some areas.
 - *Intelligence analysis and OGA-SOF-conventional integration at the brigade level.*
 - Innovative tactics and offensive actions.

23 November: Meeting at 3rd Bde, 82nd Airborne (Fallujah)

- Locals refer to the commander as the “fifth commander” as this has been an area with significant US forces turnover.
- Developing an intelligence picture takes time; recommend that units be left in the same area for as long as possible (CAG note: should reconsider movement of 1/1ID out of Fallujah?).
- 1-505 PIR Commander stated that our success is determined by “Iraqi math” – basically the peoples’ belief as to whether or not they are better off than they were before the fall of the regime. Due to high unemployment and shortages of critical commodities (benzene, kerosene) the trend is not in our favor.
- Need to vet teachers and professors to get them back to work (have been asking for a process for this for seven months).
- Enemy is threatening schools in Fallujah. Many are closed.
- Research Triangle Institute contractors still not there for governance teams and reconstruction.
- Police are a “hollow force” and have no capacity due to no equipment and no money. Vetting procedures are not in place for the police (see CAG paper on vetting).
- Still no money for ICDC uniforms and equipment. Training is to start in two weeks and may be delayed.
- Lack of a justice system means that many criminals are being released.
- Lack of CERP money is a severe handicap for brigade and battalion commanders. Ten million dollars approved for reconstruction in the 82nd ABN three weeks ago was still not available to the division.
- Decrease in pay for FPS from seventy to fifty-six dollars per month will lead to a significant reduction in the force.
- Increasing employment is key to stability.

23 November: Meeting with 1st Bde, 1st ID (Ar Ramadi)

- Very effective operations against enemy cells. Gaining clarity on enemy cellular organization. Excellent coordination with TF ^{1.4a} and OGA.
- Key in the area is continuity so units can develop a picture of the enemy and establish a rapport with the population. Pulling this unit out of Ar Ramadi to fall under 1ID Headquarters further North may be a mistake.
- Same comments on lack of CERP money and lack of equipment for police.
- Main threat remains Baathists.

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24 Nov: Meeting with TF RIE

- Achieved remarkable results. Took tremendous initiative to pull the plan together. Located equipment, expedited operations.
- Observation: An approach similar to this is needed to prevent failure of police initiatives (especially logistics, contracting, transportation: see attached CAG paper).
- Turkish border problem impeding needed supplies.
- Have committed 1.07 billion dollars and have twenty-six major projects underway.
- Important not to publicize successes to prevent attacks against electricity infrastructure.
- Formation of an Iraqi engineer division is a critical initiative.
- Lack of competent Iraqi leadership in Ministry is a concern. Many engineers and second-level officials are very talented, but have been conditioned not to take initiative.

24 November: Meeting with Selected Members of the Governing Council

- Members focused mainly on the problem of the Baathists who are organizing the violence. Agreed that they must be killed or captured.
- Intimidation campaign of Baathists/FRL is being effective. (Do we have enough visibility on this?) Enemy essentially the same cells, structure that the Baathists had in place prior to the war.
- Said that they want to be more involved and General Abizaid offered to form a counter-terrorist battalion out of trained militia from each of the factions present. Want Iraqis to be seen as on the offensive. Served as the basis for follow-on planning sessions with leadership of CPA, CENTCOM, and CJTF-1.4a will have the mission to form the battalion.
- Unit will focus mainly in Baghdad and have an intelligence fusion capability.

24 November: Meeting at First Armored Division

- Eight of the 33 sectors in the city of Baghdad are "less than secure."
- After "Iron Hammer" and AC-130 attacks, received much more intel. Offensive brought people to our side.
- Telling detainees that they could get 15 years in Abu Ghareb prison for possessing unauthorized weapons is getting them to talk.
- Anti-coalition Imams a problem – many are self-declared Imams. Many people happy when they are detained.
- Still not getting intelligence reports from detainees.
- Technique of division leadership reviewing detainee files and recommending release or detention is preventing "revolving door" releases of enemy.
- Many detainees have false IDs, so it is difficult to identify foreign fighters.
- Believe that they have detained eight AI.
- 1.4b
- Gen Abizaid: Commented that foreign fighters should go to Guantanamo for detention / interrogation.
- General Abizaid asked how well they had established liaison with the 1.4b From response, it seems loose, sporadic.
- Iskanderia is a problem area.
- General Abizaid asked if soldiers and officers in key specialties (intelligence) could be provided incentives to extend beyond the twelve month tour of duty to provide continuity. The staff is already working on this with the Army Staff.
- One brigade shifted prematurely to "local control" and lost awareness of the situation when they consolidated. Now trying to regain awareness with patrols. General Abizaid commented that shift to local control has to be conditions based.

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- There was a discussion of opening BIAP for HAJ. CJTF^{1.4a} and 1AD are developing plans.
- Pay scales for security forces is a problem.

25 November: Meeting at the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Kirkuk)

- Resettlement and de-Baathification/reconciliation are the main issues.
- Kurds want Kirkuk to be “the capital of Kurdistan.” Concerned about Kurdish desires for continued autonomy as a destabilizing factor in the long term.
- Enemy is primarily FRL. Penetrating the cells with police investigators. Enemy conducting decentralized operations. May not need much regional C2. Focusing efforts based on tribal factors critical to the effort against the enemy.
- Police in Kirkuk far advanced because used CERP early to equip and selected competent leaders. They have 2200 police, divided into 7 precincts with 100 vehicles. (contrasts with failures in establishing police elsewhere – demonstrates what is possible if we attack the problems and decentralize the effort where possible).
- Found 12 of 14 IEDs recently. Police key to the intelligence.
- Baiji bridge is not funded – needed to integrate the North and for economic development.
- Problems in coordination between TF^{1.4a} and division/brigades.
- Sulamaniyah should be part of the northern unit’s sector during the next rotation.
- Economy improving.
- Resettlement and displaced persons will be a huge problem this Spring. Need to settle land disputes. Still no plan for this.
- Establishing Iraqi prison guards next big problem. 4ID has six MP platoons engaged in it.
- Prophet Hammer a very effective system.
- Lack of CERP funds: “we lost momentum when we ran out of CERP.”

1-12 Infantry Fire Base (FOB McHenry, SW of Tikrit)

- Mortar attacks are most common form of attack there. Had received a rocket attack that afternoon. ^{1.4b} QRF killed one and wounded another.
- Senses that enemy leadership reseeded and reorganized after initial successes against them.
- OGA is doing a good job in the area against the top leadership.
- Local concerns are clean water, jobs, and materials needed for agriculture.
- Engagement with the tribes is key. CERP was critical in that connection.
- Seems to have been an influx of trained enemy from the outside – still recruiting locally as well.

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