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Minutes of Meeting Between Coalition Military Leadership, CPA Representatives, and Central Region (Sunni) Leadership, 7 August 2003.

General Abizaïd Opening Remarks: General Abizaïd welcomed the attendees in Arabic. He told them that he wanted to talk with them about two things: security and cooperation. He said that it was clear to him that there was too much bloodshed, too many problems and difficulties between Iraqis and US forces in areas represented in the meeting. He said that we do not regard ourselves as an occupation force. US wants to focus on external security as a new government is formed that is representative of the Iraqi people. He expressed interest in achieving a dialogue with local leaders, increasing security, moving forces away from populated areas, and shifting to external rather than internal security. He stressed the formation of Iraqi security institutions because "US security institutions are not an answer to the problem." He then gave his impression of the security environment:

- Areas South of Baghdad calm -- better security than before the war.
- Areas in the North very calm
- Area from Mosul, Tikrit, Fallujah, Ar Ramadi, Baghdad experiencing too many attacks.

He stressed that by increasing security and cooperation could gain more control and set conditions for economic recovery. He then described the enemy situation: Fedayeen Saddam, Terrorists, and Criminals. He said that the enemy wanted to inflict casualties on Coalition forces and Iraqis. He used the example of today's bombing at the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad that killed eight Iraqis.

He said that there were also many good signs throughout the country and highlighted Iraqi cooperation in security. He stated that over fifty thousand Iraqis were under arms and cooperating with the Coalition in security. He then asked the group to consider the following:

- How can we increase the value of the Iraqi security corps?
- What measures can we take to make sure that the Fedayeen Saddam, terrorists, and criminals do not represent a threat?
- We have the military power to do this, but at great cost.
- Important that we take this time before Ramadan to move toward a vision of a new Iraq. Iraq for Iraqis, so we can shift US forces toward external security.
- At the appropriate time we will make a complete withdrawal, when Iraqis can defend their state.
- Hope that today will show us the way toward greater cooperation.

He then asked General Sanchez to provide an update on the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps.

General Sanchez: Welcomed them and then explained the CDC concept to them. He said that we would form sixteen battalions very quickly; eight battalions in the next forty-five days. Forces would be based out of their homes. They would be employed in: convoy security, fixed sight security, patrols with the Coalition, and security of infrastructure/power, etc. He reported that two battalions were nearing activation. He stated that the battalions would remain under US control and members would serve for one year. Ultimately, the new Iraqi government would determine the future of the CDC.

General Abizaïd then summarized the concept for multi-layered security institutions: police, CDC, New Iraqi Army. He then asked to hear their ideas.

Sheik Al Nah'meh (head Imam of Dhab al Iraqi Mosque in Mosul; senior member of Mosul council of Imams; Iraq Islamic Party; suspected of links to Muslim Brotherhood; guest speaker at Sunni mosques): He outlined what he sees as the reasons for violence and crime: He stated that Iraq should move rapidly to a Constitutional government and that occupation time should be limited. He said that this would "bring peace to the souls of people." He mentioned poor conditions and stated that a hungry man with no means of living would commit crimes. He suggested that paying salaries using ration cards would end crime or reduce it. He stated that unemployment was the primary cause of violence. He mentioned the British occupation beginning in 1918 and the British system of employing locals and paying salaries. He encouraged using Iraqi companies and labor for reconstruction. He urged fixing access to gas and electricity and cited harsh treatment of Iraqis that makes people "hate the US Army." He asked that the Coalition "enforce laws and punish those who break them." He then asked for the release of three particular individuals.

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Mr. Al Jiburi (Governor of Salah ad Din; tribal leader): He touted progress made in Tikrit stating that it was "safe." He invited General Abizaid to visit. He expressed commitment to a multi-ethnic Iraq. He stated that unemployment is the biggest problem. Because of unemployment "anyone with money could cause hit." He said that Iraqi police forces needed higher salaries, arms, training, and vehicles. He said that the criminals were better equipped. He stated that his area had established government institutions and courts. He said that forgiveness (reconciliation) was a prerequisite for peace and stated that revenge leads to more revenge. He talked of the disbanding of the "four million man" Iraqi Army as a source of discontent and talked about the public discontent as a "base" of a guerilla campaign. He suggested amnesty for some Baath Party members. He stated that improvements in power were essential to security. He suggested buying medium capacity generators. He suggested tribal involvement in guarding power and oil lines.

General Abizaid responded that he knows that employment is an aspect of security. He said that when military and local leaders decide that an area is stable, we will move troops away from populated areas so they can focus on other duties and then come in when requested. He said that will not happen immediately. HE asked again what are practical steps we can take to increase Iraqi security capability and to increase security in all areas so we can have economic recovery. He stated that electricity and other problems can receive full attention when security problem is fixed; to expect otherwise is "expecting too much."

Mr. Al Rawi: (Interim Governor of Al Anbar; has cooperated, but may have a checkered past as thirty-year police inspector). He said he will not talk about the economic problems, but mentioned the problem of securing petroleum supplies. He stated that petroleum was being smuggled out of the country to Syria for example. He said that most security problems come from outside Iraq. He stated that he too would like police to provide security instead of Coalition forces. He said that people do not respect Iraqi police because they were "never very good." He said that the police force has to "start from zero." He stated that most police cannot do the job correctly and would like the Coalition force to stand up the police. Doing so would require more resources. He lamented that no one from his province was represented in the IGC.

Mr. Ammash Khutabe (Imam from Al Nada's Mosque; professes to be pro-Coalition; has strong influence over a large Sunni population in Adhamiya). He complained that the IGC did not represent the population. He made several statements highlighting the need for more representation from his region. He stated that unemployment was the major problem. He stated that the Sunni people were "pure" and seemed to take exception that the "Sunni triangle" was being singled out.

General Abizaid stated that he was having these "conversations" in every region of Iraq. He stated that precondition for progress in political realm was an improvement in security and cooperation. He stated that this was not the responsibility of the Coalition, but of the Iraqis. He said he agreed that the police were weak and said that Coalition could increase police training and provide weapons, communications, and vehicles. He said that the CDF would be established very quickly and that would increase local capacity for security and provide a means for increasing coordination with Coalition forces. The CDF would be under American control, but you should regard them as "your forces."

Sheik Salam (Al Bo Rahman tribe): He stated that he was from the capitol of the Abbasid Empire. He stated that three Imams from his region were direct descendants of Muhammad. He said that Coalition forces should withdrawal and gives Iraqis an opportunity to take charge. He said that Iraqis needed "appropriate weapons." He related a story about an arrest in Samarra concerning an attack on policemen after which a judge let the assailant go because he could not be detained for attacks on Iraqis. He said that many innocent people had been detained and asked for their release. He complained about US searches in homes. He asked for work to begin on the restoration of the sewage treatment plant in his area. He complained that "five hundred Iranians per day" come into his area without passports. He asked why the border was open with Iran. He said most are coming with "plans." He urged stopping them. He asked for his area to become its own province and asked for a university to be established there.

(b)(6) (son of governor, see above). He stated that many had been forced to affiliate with the Baath and asked that they be reintegrated into the New Iraq (government jobs, etc.). He said that the Iraqi Army was proud and that dissolving it put people on the streets without salaries and they turned to criminal

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activity. He stated that people were paying for others to carry out attacks against Coalition forces. He suggested reforming the Army to divert them from criminality. He stated that Iraq has gone through many changes and the Army has always survived. He mentioned that Arab satellite channels were biased and were inciting violence against the Coalition. He stated the need for an Iraqi alternative to Al Jazeera and others.

General Sanchez stated that former military are being given priority for employment. He mentioned the border police and NIA as examples.

//there was then a 15-minute break and dinner was served//

General Abizaid stated that Americans view their homes as their castles and indicated respect for the sanctity of the home. He mentioned, however, that when we are attacked, it should be no surprise that we respond. He said that if we had more Iraqi cooperation, we would not have to search homes, etc. He acknowledged that we come from different cultures and said that we would welcome people to come to our headquarters and instruct us on Iraqi culture and history. He also said that former military are welcome in the CDF. He said since they were "speaking frankly," it was impossible for him to believe that the enemy and foreign fighters and terrorists can hide without people knowing where they are. He said that cooperation meant people helping us with security. He used a convoy attack as an example. He mentioned enemy rewards for attacks and Coalition rewards program for those who incite attacks. He said that this meeting was the beginning of an opportunity and could not think of the future of Iraq without their cooperation. He said that many of the assembled were soldiers. He stated that soldiers do not want to be policemen and wanted them to help us. Without their cooperation the problem could escalate unnecessarily and lead to a "dark future." He said he needed a practical map that would allow us to be soldiers and allow Iraqis to be responsible for their own security. On police, he said that he knew that salaries had to be paid and would work with them. He said that he knew that they needed weapons and we would work with you. He said that the sooner we defeat foreign fighters and others we will have prosperity and it would "come quickly."

Sheik Adan al Janabi (Senior Sunni Sheik in Babil; head of Janabi tribe): He said that the sources of trouble were two: Fedayeen Saddam and religious extremists. He cited infiltration from neighboring countries and said that Iraq's neighbors do not want Iraq to be stable. He cited infiltration from Iran. He said that there was a dichotomy between security and starting work on reconstruction. He emphasized employment and cited positive examples of JMEF putting people to work. He said that they had a very bad police force, but they now put good people in the force and gave them resources. He said that they were cooperating with the Coalition and "we have to do all things together." He said that the "sooner we put good people forward the sooner American forces can be in their camps." He does not want US troops to be police. He said that people do know who the enemy is and should be allowed to help the Coalition. He said that Iraqis could do the policing if they have the right elements: transportation, communications, and confidence to use superior arms. He cited a recent example of a successful engagement between police and criminals, but the criminals outgunned the police and the police took casualties. He stated that talking in generalities could overlook specifics such as how important it was to identify the right local people. He said that tribal leaders should recommend people for police and CDF then share in the responsibilities. He ended with "we cannot lose this."

Sheik Mohsen Hamid al Said (Head of the Neemi clan; highly influential in Nineva; strongly supported the council selection). He suggested the following measures: Sharing information and joint operations; strengthening police and cooperation with the populace; better equipment for the police (enemy has better weapons); separating the good from the bad and drawing out the positive; investing money to overcome unemployment; establishing a high quality Iraqi media -- expects that from Coalition; bring humanitarian assistance to secure areas; send religious delegations to troubled areas; establish checkpoints at city entrance points to interdict foreigners; increase cooperation between government and Coalition forces. He cited the following problems: contradictions between the ministries and the local governments -- Nineva is ahead of the ministries; over centralization of government; need to speed up formation of a central government.

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Sheik Muhammed Tahir Hamoud al Raboo (senior member of the Jiburi tribe; provincial council member from Nineva): He suggested assigning security responsibility by district and establishing security committees per tribe/region. He also mentioned that people do not respect the police force because they cannot rely on it. He suggested an elite arm of the police force (like a SWAT).

Sheikh Salih Khalid Hamoudi (Member of Mosul Council; leader of Mosul Scientists Organization; influential in religious community; suspected ties to Muslim Brotherhood; member of Mosul council of Imams). He mentioned the "principle of forgiveness" (reconciliation). He said that the pursuit of Baathists should "only apply to criminals." Said that people were not happy with the searching of homes and suggested that Iraqis accompany soldiers, preferably someone from a mosque to "avoid the perception of inappropriate behavior or looting." He cited the electricity problem. He said that Coalition forces sometimes receive misinformation and make false arrests. He stated that "someone who starts something should finish it." He said that "criminals do not act in their own areas."

Sheik As Sulayman (pro-Coalition; Dulaymi; member of the council of Sheiks in Al Anbar). He mentioned unique challenges due to the size of his province. He said that he needed highway patrol vehicles. He said if Iraqis "know where the criminals are they will kill them before the Americans." He mentioned an "unknown enemy" in Fallujah. He said that the former regime kept the police weak and that corruption was a way of life for the police -- only way for them to make a living. He said that his people were on good terms with the Americans, but lamented his regions lack of representation on the IGC. He said in the beginning, all tribes supported the US, but "matters went out of control and they asked the US to come in" (probably in reference to looting, etc.). He said that when security is reestablished the soldiers can "go back." He said that he "does not want to talk about sectarianism -- we are all Iraqis -- we hope for the best."

Emad Abu Asad: He said he represented a group of Imams near the airport in Baghdad. He talked about perception of heavy-handed Coalition tactics. He told a story of an attempted capture of an SSO agent during which a door was smashed in and the father and brother were beaten and the brother and wife detained. He related other anecdotal evidence. He said that because women had been arrested, the next time Coalition forces came, the people shot at them. He protested the detention situation at BIAP. He said that criminals are released even as innocents remain in detention. He said that detention lasts too long for innocent people. He urged the development of a legal system. "Why not innocent until proven guilty?" He mentioned that police often take bribes. He mentioned poverty and unemployment as main sources of discontent and violence. He suggested meetings similar to this one in every district in Baghdad because "Baghdad does not have tribal sections."

(b)(6) (CPA): Talked about leadership and told them that "with leadership comes responsibility." He said that the IGC complaints were not valid because the IGC did not represent tribes and was not "meant to last forever." He mentioned the Constitutional process and elections and said that those would "bring your voice to the national level." He said that these meetings were "always useful" and "the more we talk the more we understand." He urged them to "move beyond words to action" and called for "cooperation to begin in earnest." He said that he looked forward to meeting each of them individually in the coming months.

General Abizaid then said that it was unfortunate that all of them did not get to speak, but said that he would meet many of them at the local level and that they would have a follow up meeting with our local commanders "immediately." He said that the Party of Saddam Hussein and Saddam Hussein would "never come back." He said that that does not mean that "others cannot come back." He said that there would be methods of reconciliation chosen by the Iraqi people. Gen Abizaid stated that he did not want to "violate homes" and said that our units would work with local police whenever possible. He said that "we would make mistakes" but would "move toward greater cooperation." He stressed the need to strengthen the police and develop the local CDF. He told them to help him identify people who are in custody who should not be in custody and instructed them to give him their names. He told them that a "senior officer will review their case and if there is not reason to hold them we will release them." He then said that he also expects names of people who "work against us and the Iraqi people."

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General Abizaid then closed the meeting with the following statement: "Iraq is a special place with educated people, resources, and a longer history than any other country. The United States is also a special place -- a place of freedom, advancement, and the belief in the rights of people. There must be a way to bring the treasures of Iraq together with the treasures of the United States to make a great place. It is not a matter of religion, but of humanity. I believe in the future of Iraq and I am an American. The future requires peace, security, and cooperation."

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