



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**The Battle for Fallujah:
Battle Reconstruction Support Document
Volume IV: Battle Site Survey**

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Dianne Fuller

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PREFACE

This paper was prepared under two task orders: “Fallujah Battle Reconstruction (JFCOM-JCOA)” and “The Battle for Fallujah—Success in the Urban Battlefield,” for the Director, Joint Center for Operational Analysis, Joint Forces Command. It helps address the task order objective of contracts DASW01-04-C-0003 and W74V8H-05-C-0042.

The authors would like to thank members of the technical review committee, Brigadier General, USA (Retired) John Smith; Dr. Ed Johnson; and Colonel, USA (Retired) Scott Feil for their reviews and contributions to the presentations that resulted from the enclosed interviews. We would also like to thank Colonel, USA (Retired) Rick Wright, IDA, and Dr. John Flemming, Joint Center for Operational Analysis for their review of the document and Mr. Tom Milani for his technical expertise in editing the document. Special thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Bennett for his work on the project.

JAWP was established at the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) to serve as a catalyst for stimulating innovation and breakthrough change. It is cosponsored by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics; the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the Commander, United States Joint Forces Command (JFCOM). JAWP includes military personnel on joint assignments from each Service and civilian specialists from IDA. JAWP is located in Alexandria, Virginia, and includes an office in Norfolk, Virginia, to facilitate coordination with JFCOM.

This paper does not necessarily reflect the views of IDA or the sponsors of JAWP. Our intent is to stimulate ideas, discussion, and, ultimately, the discovery and innovation that must fuel successful transformation.

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DEDICATION

The Advisory Support Team (AST) members (the teams are now known as Military Transition Teams, or MiTTs) are the face of the U.S. commitment to the Iraqis. As the Iraqis stand up and the Coalition stands down, these courageous teams will be the lasting presence of the Coalition. They are a critical enabler and an integral link to our national strategy.

The IDA team had the opportunity to work through these teams in search of the various Iraqis and Iraqi units associated with the study. During the Battle Site Survey in Iraq, there was nothing but praise from the Iraqis for the AST/MiTT team members. Names like De Oliveira, Cornell, Zacchea, Miller, Simms, and many, many others will become legend in Iraq and synonymous with American ideals of courage, commitment, and freedom.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On 31 March 2004 four U.S. contractors were ambushed in Fallujah. The charred remains of two of the brutally beaten and burnt bodies were hung from the ramparts of the old North Bridge near the hospital. During the savage demonstration, locals cheered, and one Iraqi held a sign underneath one of the lynched bodies that read: “Fallujah is the cemetery for Americans.”¹

During the next month the Coalition would in succession

1. Commit, via Operation Vigilant Resolve, the 1st Marine Division to gain control of the city and demonstrate Coalition resolve;
2. Accede to a cease-fire under national (Iraqi), regional, and international pressures; and
3. Cede control of Fallujah to the “Fallujah Brigade,” a political solution.

The Fallujah Brigade, an ad hoc organization consisting of former Saddam Iraqi military leaders, residents, Jundi, and insurgents, was lauded by the Iraqis as “Fallujans securing Fallujah.”

By July Fallujah was infested with insurgents, and the Fallujah Brigade was characterized as a “failed experiment.” The strategic outcome of Vigilant Resolve for the Coalition was much worse—for many Iraqis, Fallujah represented defeat for the Coalition and a victory for the insurgents. The Iraq Interim Government and the Coalition finally regained control of Fallujah during Al Fajr (Fallujah II) in November/December 2004. Described by General Casey as “A great study in political-military interaction,”² Fallujah II was one of the significant events that led to successful Iraqi elections in January 2005.

¹ Colin Freeman, “Horror at Fallujah,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 April 2004.

² GEN George Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The battle for control of Fallujah was a critical opportunity for the Iraqis to show the insurgents, the world, and above all the Iraqi people that the emerging Iraqi government was taking charge of the Iraqi destiny.³

The purpose of the study is to analyze the operational and strategic lessons from the battles for Fallujah with emphasis on:

- Coalition forces' operational-level planning and execution.
- Teaching Iraqis to plan and execute a major military operation.
- Coaching Iraqis on the use of information operations to beat the enemy's information-operations campaign.
- Building Iraqi self-confidence and external respect to assist in the transition to sovereignty.⁴

The study approach traces the development of those competencies above, from their genesis in Fallujah I (Vigilant Resolve) through the battles of Najaf and Samarra to Fallujah II (Al Fajr). The approach also highlights the political, security, and information-operations aspects of 2004, and in particular the above events, for project analysis.

PUBLICATION

The purpose of this publication (Volumes I–IV) is to organize and archive interviews of participants from various organizations. Participants are defined as those individuals in critical organizations and agencies that played a role in 2004 operations in Iraq, specifically Fallujah I, Najaf, Samarra, and Fallujah II. These volumes are organized as follows:

Volume I—Summary of selected transcripts (across Volumes II–IV).

Volume II—Transcripts and summaries of interviews with members of the Multi-National Forces – Iraq, Multi-National Corps – Iraq, command and staff of the Coalition Military Assistance Training Teams, members of the Advisory Support Teams (AST),⁵ and representatives of other government agencies.

³ Task Order background statement, CB-8-2516, May 2005.

⁴ Task Order objectives, CB-8-2516, May 2005.

⁵ The ASTs are now known as Military Transition Teams (MiTTs). At the time, the ASTs were assigned to Coalition Military Assistance Training Teams and then the various commands were given operational control of the MiTTs for operations. Now, the MiTTs are assigned to the commands they support.

Volume III—Transcripts and summaries of interviews with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and attached units.

Volume IV—Battle Site Survey and Support Documents—Includes Interviews with Iraqis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 31 March 2004 four U.S. contractors were ambushed in Fallujah. The charred remains of two of the brutally beaten and burnt bodies were hung from the ramparts of the old North Bridge near the hospital. During the savage demonstration, locals cheered, and one Iraqi held a sign underneath one of the lynched bodies that read: “Fallujah is the cemetery for Americans.”¹ Coalition administrator Paul Bremer said there would be a response:

The acts we have seen were despicable and inexcusable; they violate the [tenets] of all religions, including Islam, as well as the foundations of civilized society. Their deaths will not go unpunished.²

During the next month the Coalition would in succession

1. Commit, via Operation Vigilant Resolve, the 1st Marine Division to gain control of the city and demonstrate Coalition resolve;
2. Accede to a cease-fire under national (Iraqi), regional, and international pressures; and
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¹ Colin Freeman, “Horror at Fallujah,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 April 2004.

² Robin Young and Bill Delaney, “Bremer Vows Fallujah Investigation,” *Here and Now*, 1 April 2004.

³ “Many enlisted following a great battle they considered a great victory—the April 2004 fight for Fallujah,” Abu Nour, insurgent and kidnapper of Jill Carroll (Jill Carroll, “The Jill Carroll Story,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 August 2006 [<http://www.csmonitor.com/specials/carroll/index.html>]).

Described by General Casey as “A great study in political-military interaction,”⁴ Fallujah II was one of the significant events that led to successful Iraqi elections in January 2005.

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- Coalition forces’ operational-level planning and execution.
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- Building Iraqi self-confidence and external respect to assist in the transition to sovereignty.⁶

The study approach traces the development of those competencies above, from their genesis in Fallujah I (Vigilant Resolve) through the Battles of Najaf and Samarra to Fallujah II (Al Fajr). The approach also highlights the political, security, and information operations aspects of 2004, and in particular the above events, for project analysis. Throughout this document you may see alternate names for the operations. A guide is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. 2004 Operations of Project Interest

Operation Name	Also Known As	Location	Dates
Vigilant Resolve	Fallujah I	Al Fallujah	4 April -1 May 2004
Battle for An Najaf	Pacific Guardian (rarely used)	An Najaf	5–27 August 2004
Baton Rouge	Samarra	Samarra	1–4 October 2004
Al Fajr	Fallujah II	Fallujah	8 November - 23 December 2004

The reader needs to be aware of two other “alternate” naming conventions:

- *Advisory Support Team (AST) and Military Transition Team (MiTT)*—The AST operated prior to February 2005, in the period covered in the project.

⁴ GEN Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

⁵ Task Order background statement, CB-8-2516, May 2005.

⁶ Task Order objectives, CB-8-2516, May 2005.

The AST was renamed MiTT in February 2005. You will see both terms. Some interviewees use those terms interchangeably.

- *4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Intervention forces (IIF) Division and 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division*—The 4th Battalion of the 1st IIF Brigade, a key Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) unit for the study, was reflagged the 3rd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade in 2005. For study period of 2004, you will see it written as the 4th Battalion; however, the IDA team met with members of the 3rd Battalion, its current name, about Fallujah.

Also note that the top of the map is always north unless otherwise indicated.

B. PUBLICATION

The purpose of this publication (Volumes I–IV) is to organize and archive interviews of participants from various organizations. Participants are defined as those individuals in critical organizations and agencies that played a role in 2004 operations in Iraq, specifically Fallujah I, Najaf, Samarra, and Fallujah II. Figure I-1 shows Coalition and Iraqi organizations relevant to Al Fajr. The tan boxes indicate that interviews were conducted with personnel from those organizations. If a name (or names) appears in the box, it is the commander of the unit and person interviewed. If a name does not appear in the tan box, someone else within the organization was interviewed.

C. DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The project final report provides the analysis and conclusions. However, many of the details supporting the analysis and conclusions are in these volumes. The transcripts are organized in accordance with the Critical Information Sources chart⁷ (Figure I-1), which guided the collection. Figure I-2 shows which volume these sources appear in. These volumes are organized as follows:

Volume I—Summary of selected transcripts (across Volumes II–IV).

Volume II—Transcripts and summaries of interviews with members of the Multi-National Forces – Iraq (MNF-I), Multi-National Corps – Iraq (MNC-I),

⁷ The chart at Figure I-1 is a (very) modified organizational chart of MNF-I, MNC-I, etc., intended to reflect information sources critical to 2004 and Al Fajr. Relationships among the organizations changed throughout the year.

Critical Information Sources

```

graph TD
    CENTCOM[CENTCOM  
GEN Abizaid] --> MNFI[MNFI  
GEN Casey]
    CENTCOM --> CFSOCC[CFSOCC]
    
    MNFI --> MNC_I[MNC-I  
LTG Metz]
    MNFI --> CoS[CoS]
    MNFI --> MNSTC_I[MNSTC-I]
    MNFI --> CJSOTF[CJSOTF]
    
    MNC_I --> MND_B_1CAV[MND-B 1CAV]
    MNC_I --> MND_NC_1ID[MND-NC 1ID]
    MNC_I --> MNF_W_I_MEF[MNF-W I-MEF  
LtGen Sattler]
    MNC_I --> 2BCT[2BCT]
    MNC_I --> 1_5_CAV[1-5 CAV]
    MNC_I --> 1st_MARDIV[1st MARDIV  
MG Natonski]
    MNC_I --> 4CAG[4CAG  
Col Ballard]
    MNC_I --> 11th_MEU[11th MEU]
    MNC_I --> RCT_1[RCT-1  
Col Shupp]
    MNC_I --> RCT_7[RCT-7  
Col Tucker]
    MNC_I --> 3rd_LAR[3rd LAR  
LtCol Dinauer]
    
    CoS --> CoS_BG_Troy[CoS  
BG Troy]
    CoS --> C5_COL_Smith[C5  
COL Smith]
    CoS --> C3_COL_Rogers[C3  
COL Rogers]
    CoS --> C2_COL_Tait[C2  
COL Tait]
    CoS --> ECC_BG_Formica[ECC  
BG Formica]
    CoS --> Effect_IO[Effect IO  
Col Walsh]
    
    MNSTC_I --> DCS_StratCom_BrigGen_Lesell[DCS StratCom  
BrigGen Lesell]
    MNSTC_I --> DCS_SPA[DCS SPA]
    MNSTC_I --> DCS_Strat_Ops[DCS Strat  
Ops]
    
    CJSOTF --> CPATT[CPATT]
    CJSOTF --> CMATT_MG_Eaton[CMATT  
MG Eaton]
    
    CFSOCC --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_DeOliveira[Sr Advisor  
LTC DeOliveira]
    CFSOCC --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Symons[Sr Advisor  
LTC Symons]
    CFSOCC --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Yassir[Sr Advisor  
LTC Yassir]
    CFSOCC --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Miller[Sr Advisor  
LTC Miller]
    CFSOCC --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Farrelly[Sr Advisor  
LTC Farrelly]
    CFSOCC --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Symons_Maj_Zacchea[Sr Advisor  
LTC Symons  
Maj Zacchea USMC]
    CFSOCC --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Symons_Maj_Fedak[Sr Advisor  
LTC Symons  
MAJ Fedak MAJ Cunven]
    CFSOCC --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Symons_Maj_Letcher[Sr Advisor  
LTC Symons  
MAJ Letcher]
    
    IIG[IIG  
PM Allawi] --> MOD_JHQ[MOD/JHQ  
GEN Babikir]
    IIG --> MOI[MOI]
    IIG --> MIMs[MIMs  
Dpty Mohammed]
    IIG --> INIS[INIS  
GEN Shawani]
    IIG --> IGF[IGF  
LTG Qadir]
    
    IGF --> IIF[IIF]
    IGF --> ISOF[ISOF  
COL Fahdl]
    IGF --> ICTF[ICTF]
    IGF --> II[II]
    IGF --> Commandos[Commandos]
    
    IIF --> BG_Razzak[BG Razzak]
    IIF --> LTC_Ali[LTC Ali]
    IIF --> LTC_Yassir[LTC Yassir]
    IIF --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Symons_Maj_Zacchea
    IIF --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Symons_Maj_Fedak
    IIF --> Sr_Advisor_LTC_Symons_Maj_Letcher
    
    ISOF --> II_Commandos[II  
Commandos]
    
    ICTF --> II_Commandos
    
    II --> II_Commandos
  
```

Legend

Tan indicates that someone from that organization was interviewed

Volume III—Transcripts and summaries of interviews with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and attached units.

This volume, as well as Volumes II and III, is organized to facilitate reading the transcripts. Armed with the study purpose and approach (above), the maps in Appendix A for geographical orientation, and the summary of events for 2004 given in Appendix B for context, the reader will have a better appreciation for the details found in the transcripts.

I-4

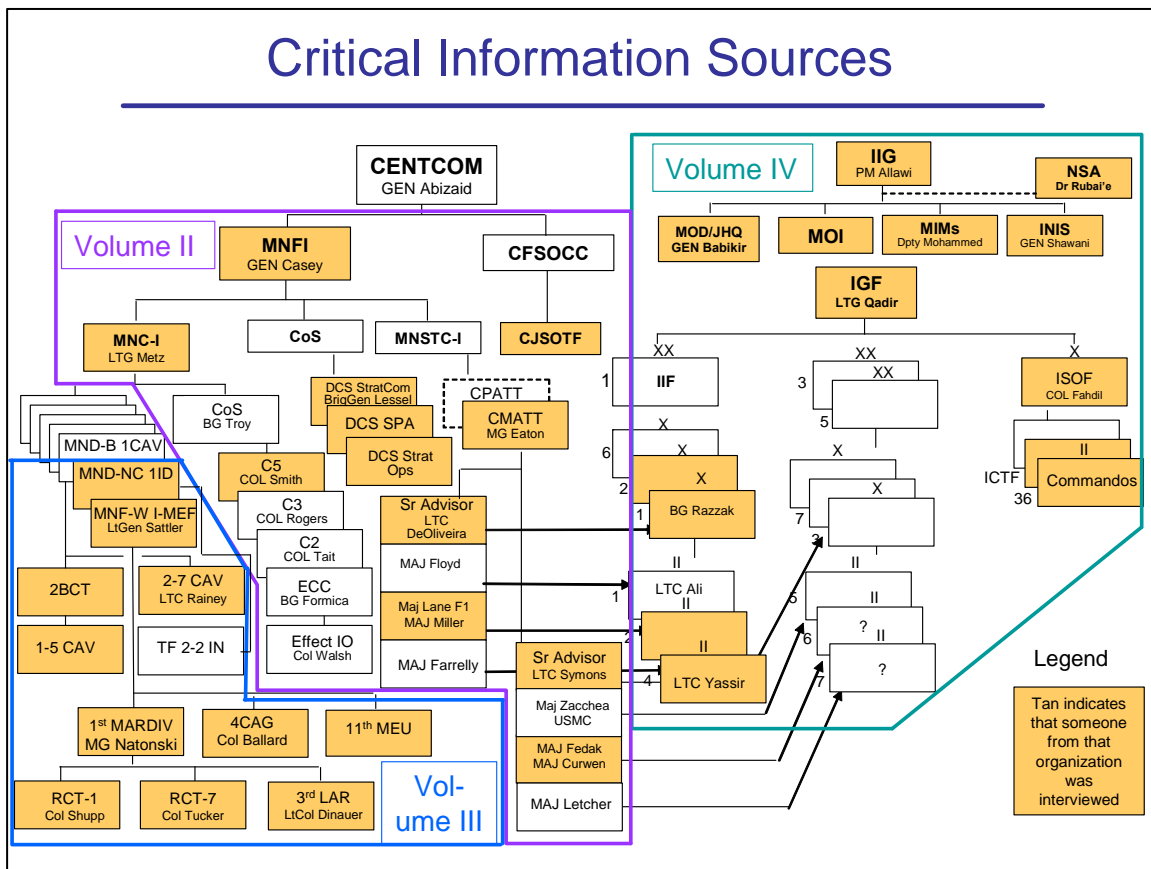


Figure I-2. Transcript Organization, Volumes II, III, and IV

Chapter 2 outlines the Team's trip to Iraq. The trip provided much more than a great opportunity to speak to Iraqi participants of 2004 events, it helped the team put events in context as it traveled across Iraq. This chapter also provides a summary of select interviews.

Chapter 3 inserts Iraqi perspectives obtained during the trip into a story line for 2003 and 2004 events that focuses on project objectives.

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II. BATTLE SITE SURVEY

This chapter discusses the planning and preparation for the trip, the deployment, and the team's efforts in country to meet project requirements. It also provides summaries of selected interviews⁹ and IDA team accounts of events and interactions with Iraqis that may not be in the interview transcripts. For example, it includes discussions with Fallujah residents, businessmen, and the Fallujah Hospital staff.

The purpose of discussing planning, preparation and the in-country activities is to provide future visitors food for thought as they plan and prepare for a trip to Iraq.

A. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Trip planning and preparation included developing and disseminating the collection plan to inform MNF-I, MNC-I, and Joint Center for Operational Analysis (JCOA) of the IDA team's research needs, team organization; coordinating with CENTCOM, the MNF-I and MNC-I, and the in-country (JCOA) team; and equipment requirements.

1. The Collection Plan

The Battle Site Survey collection plan, an extract of the overall battle for Fallujah collection plan, helped focus the team's efforts and communicated to the MNF-I and MNC-I the types of information the team needed to collect and the people and units it needed to see. The collection plan included the Information Tracking Worksheet (Figure II-1, which identified critical information requirements and information requirements. Critical information requirements were based on the Coalition Operational and Strategic Planning for Fallujah II and the Teaching, Coaching and Building of the Iraqis for Fallujah II.

The Information Tracking Worksheet linked the critical information requirements and information requirements to the study objectives and provided the foundation for

⁹ Those summaries vary in length, depending on the relevance of the information, whether a completed transcript is included in Appendix C, or whether the information is provided in Chapter III. As an example, quotes and detail provided in the "story line" in Chapter III may be mentioned in this chapter as part of the interview summary but, in the interest of brevity, are not duplicated here.

more detailed research instruments. Those instruments included questionnaires, surveys, and interview lead sheets, as well as a site survey checklist for battle reconstruction purposes. It also identified the critical information sources shown in Figure II-2. The identity of those sources connected to the critical information requirements and information requirements was provided in more detail to the MNF-I and MNC-I as the team coordinated our efforts to link up with the right people and organizations.

Relevant PO	CIR/R	Source	Updates	% cover - 10 Dec 05	Action - Followup
1,3	1. What are/were the strategic and operational objectives during 2004? In general, how were those objectives reflected in Fallujah I, Najaf, Samarra, and Fallujah II? Did objectives or methods change? If so, how?	National Security & Military Strategies, UNSCR 1511/1546, MNFI Campaign Plan, OPLANs, OPORDs, FRAGs, Reports to Congress	July 05 - document search and interviews in August - December 2005 of state-side accessible participants	65%	Interviews w/ Dr. Allawi, GEN Casey, Dr Ruba'ie, etc. MNF-I archives
1,2,3	2. Are the study objectives of "Teach, Coach, Build" (TCB) congruent with the strategic, operational and tactical objectives, i.e., are/were they explicitly or implicitly incorporated into how the MNFI/MNCI did business? Describe in terms of the Political, Security and Information Operations (PSI) implications.	Plans (Campaign), OPORDs from MNFI, OPLANs from MNCI, Particular interest in Coalition Military Assistance Transition Teams (CMATT) and Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF)	June - December 2005 interviews of available command and staff for MNF-I, MNC-I, MEF and attached units.	60%	Interviews w/ Dr. Allawi, GEN Casey, Dr Ruba'ie, etc. MNF-I archives
1,3,4	7. What was the IG/ISF relationship with the populace they protected? A. Were the ISF Jundi from the area? B. Were they respected by the residents?	ASTs members, AARs, Iraqi Security Forces, Fallujah residents, storekeepers, children	AARs and interview of available AST members	30%	Interview Iraqis, primarily Fallujans

Note. Column 1 reflects the Project Objectives (PO) that the CIR/R supports. In summary, PO1 is operational and strategic planning and execution, and application of TCB; PO2 is the evolution of TCB during 2004 events; PO3 is vertically looking at the application of TCB from the tactical to the strategic during Al Fajr; and PO4 is identifying vignette candidates for reconstruction - those tactical events with operational and strategic implications

Figure II-1. Information Tracking Worksheet—Examples (December 2005)

The priorities for linking up with the ISF are also noted in Figure II-2 and expanded here, in order:

1. LTG Qadir—commander of Iraqi Ground Forces and Military Governor for Al Anbar during Fallujah II.
2. The Iraqi Special Operations Forces—participated in all 2004 critical operations.
3. Command elements of 1st IIF Brigade, to include the 1st, 2nd, and 4th (reflagged the 3rd Battalion in 2005) Battalions—Elements of the 1st IIF Brigade participated in Vigilant Resolve, operations in An Najaf, and in Fallujah II.
4. Command elements of the 3rd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, and its 5th and 6th Battalions—Elements of the Brigade participated in An Najaf, Samarra, and Al Fajr.
5. Elements of the 2nd IIF Brigade—They secured Fallujah once the 1st IIF Brigade departed in December.

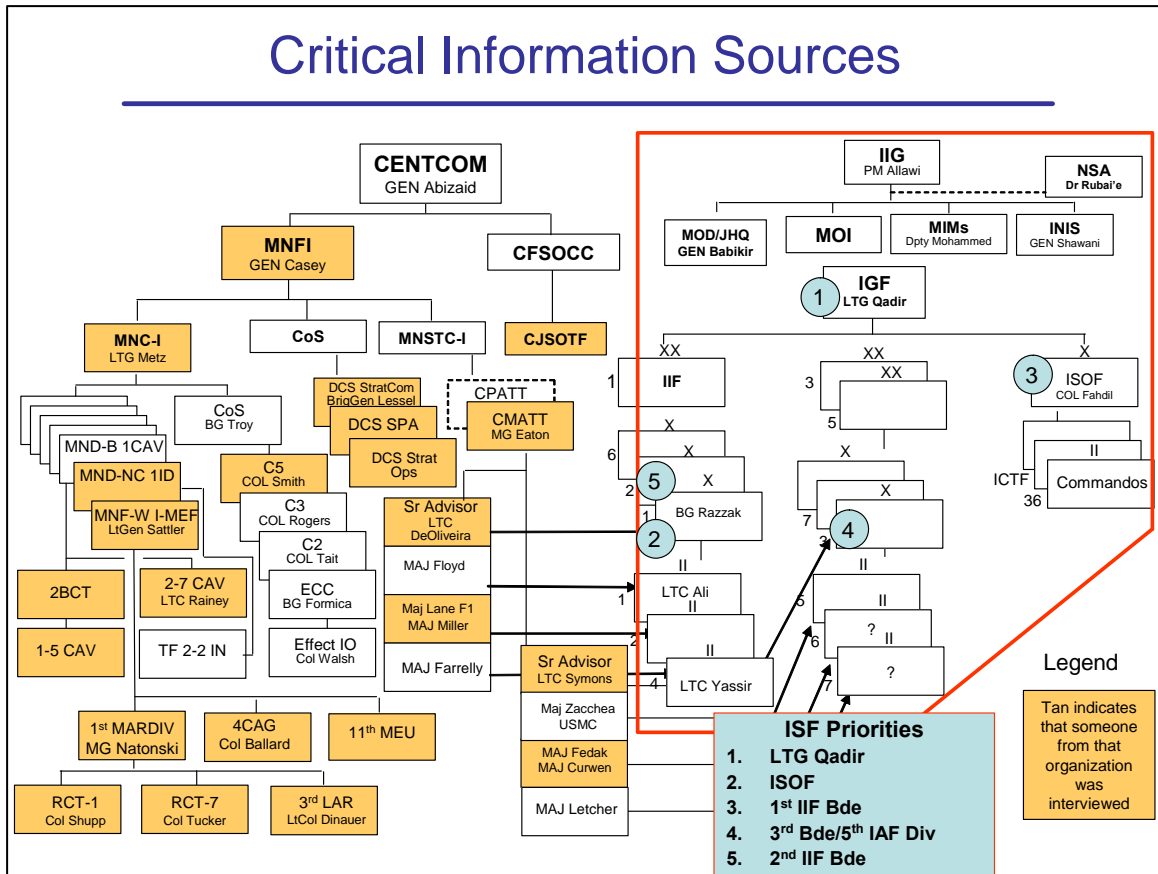


Figure II-2. Critical Information Sources

Because the project was concerned with the political-military interaction, it was important to link up with the various Iraqi political leaders who were in charge in 2004 (indicated in Figure II-2). They were, in order of priority:

- Former Prime Minister Allawi.
- Dr. Rubai'e, National Security Advisor.
- GEN Shawani, Director of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service.
- GEN Babikir, Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Armed Forces.
- Mr. Mohammed, Deputy Director of the Ministry for Industry and Minerals, who chaired the Baghdad Council for the Reconstruction of Fallujah.
- MG Adnon, a member of the Ministry of Interior during early 2004.

In addition to speaking with the ISF and members of the Iraqi Interim Government who participated in Fallujah II, it was also important to talk to the residents

of Fallujah about their perspectives of Fallujah II, security conditions, and their impressions of the ISF and Iraqi Interim Government.¹⁰

To better understand the battle and the key events that took place there, it was also important to visit various sites in Fallujah to walk the ground and talk to residents. Those areas, identified in Figure II-3, include the following:

1. North Bridge—the location of the catalyzing event for Vigilant Resolve. The remains of the Blackwater contractors were hung from the east end of the North Bridge on 31 March 2004. Also called the “Old Bridge.”
2. Fallujah Hospital—a critical information node for the insurgents during Vigilant Resolve and the primary and first target for the Coalition during Al Fajr.
3. Government center—another critical communications node and information operations target.

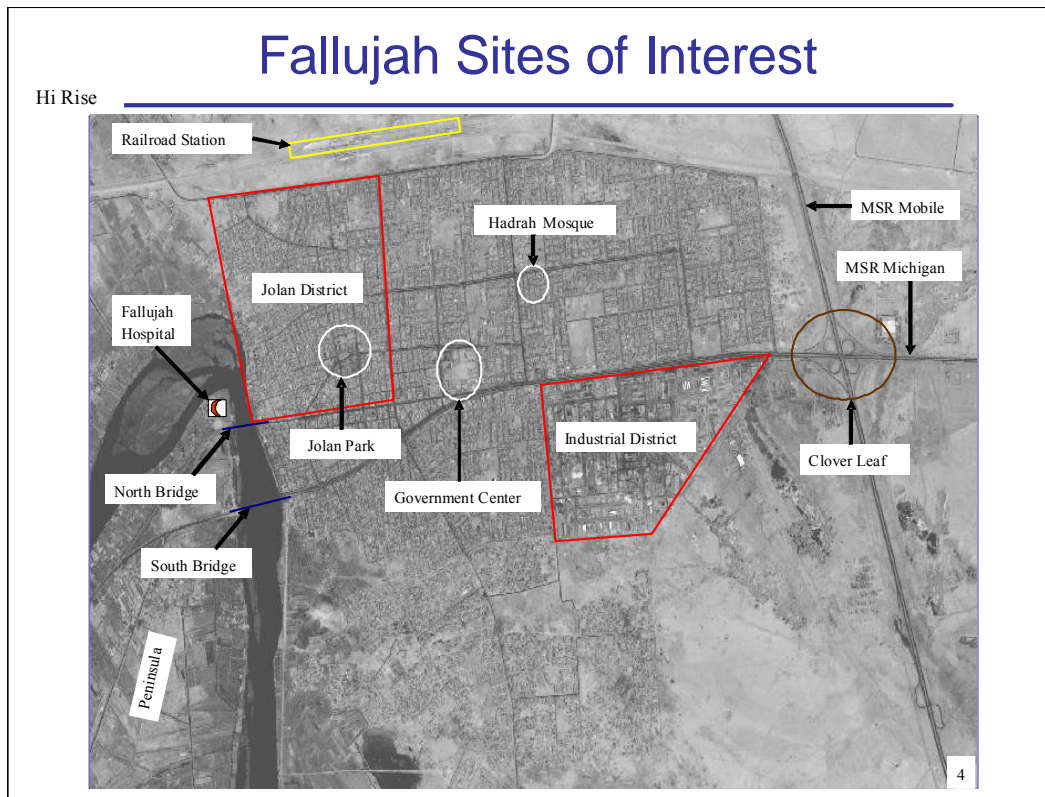


Figure II-3. Fallujah Sites of Interest, from 1st MARDIV

¹⁰ One of the project objectives was to determine “external respect” for the ISF and Iraqi Interim Government (i.e., did Iraqis respect the ISF and Iraqi Interim Government). Hence, some of the questions to the Fallujans were intended to gain insight into this. One of the questions posed to the children was, “Do you want to be a Jundi [Iraqi soldier] when you grow up?”

4. High-Rise Apartments (located in the top left corner off the map)—the target of RCT-1's first assault and the area from which it prepared to launch its attack into Fallujah.
5. Train Station—the area from which RCT-7 launched its attack into Fallujah.
6. Jolan District—the site of some of the heaviest initial fighting.
7. Hadrah Mosque—the initial objective for RCT-7 and attached Iraqi forces.

To better understand how and where these locations fit into the scheme of maneuver, see Figure II-4. Figure II-4 is extracted from the 1st Marine Division presentation and reflects Phase III-A, the initial assault phase, of the operation.

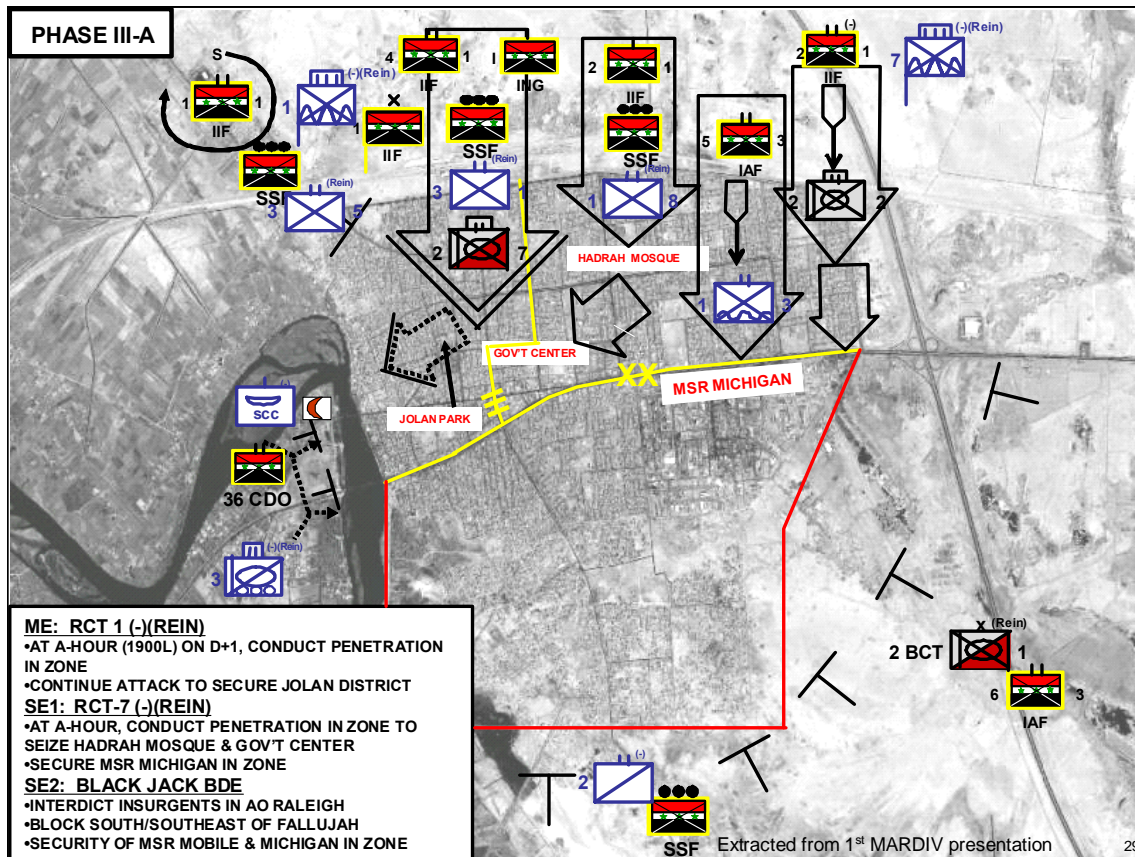


Figure II-4. Al Fajr, Phase III – Assault

2. The Team

The team consisted of four people with various skills, experiences, and project missions:

- *Dr. Bill Knarr*, Project Team Leader, Colonel, USA, Retired, with previous lessons learned and battle reconstruction project experience. He completed a similar project for Afghanistan in 2004.¹¹
- *Colonel, USA, Retired George Mauldin*, language qualified with 10+ years in Asia. George deployed to the American Embassy in Baghdad to set up the various interviews with Iraqi leadership in that area. This included former Prime Minister Allawi, Dr. Rubai'e, and others. He was also key to team stability and communications. As the rest of the team moved from one location to another, George became the team's main point of contact as the rest of the team traveled to other parts of Iraq.
- *Major (P) Anthony Bennett*, USA, Strategic Planner. Tony was responsible for setting up meetings with personnel of the ISF that participated in the various battles. This was a difficult because units' locations were constantly changing. Complicating this, the personnel associated with the unit in 2004 may not have been with the unit in 2006. Fortunately, the team was able to locate most of the right people identified during the research phase.
- *Major Robert Castro*, USMC, and Mayor of Camp Fallujah in 2005. Bob immediately deployed to Camp Fallujah to set up the various visits into Fallujah to support the site surveys and battle reconstruction efforts. This included using an interpreter to talk to residents, businessmen, Fallujah council members, and others.

3. Trip Coordination

The most difficult part of the trip was obtaining theater clearance and, in particular, determining where in the process our request for theater clearance was located. That determination required one of the IDA team members to personally talk to the action officers at each agency to discuss, understand, and resolve any existing issues. The trip had been postponed several times for various reasons:

- August/September, the JCOA team was rotating.
- October, the Iraqi constitutional referendum limited travel.
- December, the Iraqi elections limited travel.

Finally the team established a departure date of 3 January 2006 and ensured that all other issues were addressed. For example, the team submitted theater clearance 30 days before

¹¹ William Knarr and John Frost, *Operation Enduring Freedom Battle Reconstruction: Battle Site Survey and Ground Force Data Reconciliation*, IDA Document D-2925 (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, February 2004).

the departure date and ensured that the requested time in country did not span more than one calendar month.¹²

The clearance request also required a sponsoring unit overseas. JCOA had established a team at both Camp Victory and the American Embassy and sponsored the trip. Coordination between the team and JCOA forward was conducted via Information Work Station, DNS, commercial telephone, SIPRNET, and unclassified e-mail.¹³ The request was finally approved on 2 January.

4. Equipment

Fort Eustis Central Issue Facility provided the military equipment for standard issue items such as field gear, uniforms, body armor, and helmet. The Navy at Suffolk provided the NBC (nuclear, chemical, and biological) protective equipment—a backpack of MOPP (Mission-Oriented Protective Posture) equipment.

Mission equipment included Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers, a satellite phone, international Blackberry, two mini digital video cameras, two digital cameras, both cassette and digital voice recorders, and computers with basic Microsoft Office software plus FalconView and MapSource World to transfer the Garmin GPS locational data to the computers.

B. DEPLOYMENT, 3–5 JANUARY

The team deployed on 3 January from two locations. Tony, Bob, and Bill departed from Dulles International Airport near Washington, DC, and George departed from the airport at Nashville, TN. The team met at Doha Airport in Qatar on the evening of 4

¹² The U.S. approval authorities were concerned that anyone requesting theater clearance spanning more than 1 calendar month was attempting to “game” the system associated income tax breaks. Military personnel receive a tax break if they spend 1 day in country during the month. The team initially scheduled the trip for 45 days because it thought it would need that much time to complete the project. The team submitted the final request for 27 days, 3–30 January, expecting it would need to request an extension—which it later did—to 15 February.

¹³ The team was told that the request was disapproved by the MNF-I Chief of Staff. On 31 December, Bill discovered the MNF-I Chief of Staff had not disapproved the request and that it was at the C-3, MNC-I. Since the team requested travel to Al Anbar, the MNC-I had to coordinate the travel with the MEF.

January.¹⁴ The IDA team was met by Lieutenant Landrum and SFC Fluker, members of JCOA assigned to Qatar to support JCOA operations. They did a great job.

The team arrived at the Al Udeid transient area at 2300. On 5 January the team was up at 0330 to make a 0440 flight. Prior to check-in, Bob and Tony drew their weapons (9 mm) along with two magazines and 30 rounds of ammunition at the Air Force armor facility. After various delays the team departed at approximately 1400 and arrived at Baghdad International Airport at approximately 1700. At the airport, COL Speakes and COL Hens, from the JCOA forward team, picked up the IDA team in two vehicles for the 25-minute drive to Camp Victory. At Camp Victory, the team was introduced to the world of the Kellog, Brown & Root run dining facilities and then provided two trailer rooms for billeting.

C. IN-COUNTRY COORDINATION, 6–12 JANUARY

The next morning, 6 January, the team attended the MNF-I/MNC-I Battle Update via video teleconference at the JCOA forward location, briefed the JCOA team on the IDA team's mission, and then processed through MNF-I/MNC-I at the Al Faw palace for security badges and both NIPRNET and SIPRNET e-mail accounts.

1. Initial Coordination, In-Country Deployment, and Interviews

That afternoon, the team briefed Col Johns, USMC, C3, MNC-I. Col Johns was important because elements of the MNC-I, most notably the MNF-West, run by the MEF, were responsible for security, transportation, and other support functions related to the team's trip. Col Johns was also one of the people who approved the team's country clearance (for the above reasons). Following the meeting, Col Johns published an e-mail that recognized the validity of the visit and requested support from the various organizations, including the ASTs related to the ISF units the team needed to visit.

¹⁴ Are visas needed in Qatar? IDA team members used their orders, U.S. ID card, and tourist passport. They almost had to purchase a visa at the airport. It was probably a 50/50 chance whether a visa was needed. Travelers need to remember that if they check in with a visa they need to check out with the visa so they aren't shown as still in country, which could complicate future visits.



Figure II-5. Al Faw Palace, MNF-I/MNC-I Headquarters

On the morning of 7 January,¹⁵ Maj Castro deployed to Camp Fallujah to set up travel, interpreters, and meetings before the team arrived. The trip to Fallujah was planned around the Fallujah Council Meeting on Tuesday morning, 17 January. The Council meeting was a convenient way to meet a number of Iraqis who participated in Al Fajr.

At the Al Faw Palace, which served as the MNF-I/MNC-I headquarters (Figure II-5), Tony worked with the MNCI C-3 ISF cell and later with the Iraqi Assistance Group to coordinate visits to the various ISF units.

In the afternoon, the team briefed MajGen Donovan, Chief of Staff, MNF-I, who then provided recommendations and points of contact to support the rest of the trip. This was probably the single most important meeting for the team—MajGen Donovan validated the mission, and just mentioning his name and position opened doors.

2. American Embassy

On the morning of 8 January, George and Bill traveled by helicopter from Camp Victory to the American Embassy. They immediately met BG Bolger, Commander of the Coalition Military Assistance and Transition Teams. BG Bolger was key to the team's linking up with various ISF leaders. Although the primary means of contact was through the MNC-I because it was part of the MiTT chain of command, the meeting with BG Bolger allowed the team to find the various ISF unit personnel through the MiTTs (formerly the ASTs).

George and Bill also met with BrigGen Alston, the Director of the Strategic Communications Directorate, a position formerly held by BrigGen Lessell during Fallujah II, and Bill was able to talk by telephone to BG Peterson, Commander of the

¹⁵ This was also the day that Jill Carroll, freelance journalist for the *Christian Science Monitor*, was kidnapped by insurgents as she was departing the office of Adnan al-Dulaimi, a Sunni politician.

Civilian Police Assistance Transition Teams. He provided contact information to George to coordinate for the later meeting with MG Adnon and MG Mehdi. MG Adnon was with the Minister of Interior in 2004, and MG Mehdi was commander of the Public Order Brigade that supported Al Fajr.

On the evening of 8 January, Bill's flight from the American Embassy to Camp



Victory was canceled so he manifested to ride on the Rhino (Figure II-6) that night at 2300. Tony and Bill had a meeting with the Commander of the Iraqi Counter Terrorist Force (ICTF) on the evening of the 9th, and Bill did not want to rely on helicopters for the next day's meeting.

Figure II-6. Rhino

3. MAJ Mohammed, Commander, Iraqi Counter Terrorist Force

On 9 January 2006, Bill and Tony interviewed MAJ Mohammed at his compound near Baghdad International Airport. MAJ Mohammed had been a member of the ICTF since its inception in April 2004. Before the Coalition invasion, MAJ Mohammed was an air-conditioner repairman. He did not join the military under Saddam because, he said, "I would be working for Saddam, but now I am working for the Iraqi people." MAJ Franks, the 5th SFG Advisor to the ICTF, participated in the interview.

In the span of 9 months, MAJ Mohammed rose with the unit from team leader in April 2004 (supervising 16 soldiers), through troop leader in August 2004 during operations in An Najaf (supervising 70 soldiers), to his present position of battalion commander at present (supervising 369 soldiers). ICTF units include a headquarters and headquarters company, two assault companies, a sniper troop, and a reconnaissance troop. They expect to stand up a small boat unit with the help of the SEAL advisory team. Troops for the battalion are drawn from applicants throughout Iraq. They normally start with 800 candidates but due to attrition only graduate 100. Initial training is 3 months in Jordan but will transition to Iraq as the trainers and facilities are developed to support it.

MAJ Mohammed indicated that the unit's equipment requirements were being met. The unit received 20 up-armored HMMWVs that were being modified into assault vehicles in Jordan. They also have current night-vision systems but still need radios and rely on the Coalition for such things as communications and air support. Facilities appeared to be adequate as MAJ Mohammed provided a tour of the quarters, offices, and training facilities (including the shoot house). The team finished the tour with dinner at the unit dining facility. MAJ Mohammed told the team that living quarters were being built for his family on the Coalition installation because of threats against his life.

During Vigilant Resolve, the ICTF was in training and followed its American advisors. During operations in An Najaf, the ICTF was training up and preparing to execute the assault on the "terrorists" in the Imam Ali Shrine. The 36th Commandos, a sister battalion of the ICTF in the Iraqi Special Operations Forces, provided them cover and support. Negotiations with Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani obviated the need for the assault, however.

During operations in Samarra in October 2004, the ICTF Recce troop supported the 36th Commandos with intelligence as it (the 36th) became the assault force. During Fallujah II, the ICTF sniper troop supported the Marine quick-reaction forces. Its experience level is high—the ICTF performs missions almost daily.

One of MAJ Mohammed's biggest frustrations is the release of detainees after an operation:

Yes, I believe in human rights, but human rights in the right place. In Iraq we are at war. I cannot capture bad guys that kill 10 or 20 people and then put him in a good place, and give him food and cigarettes and drink, and have him not say anything. After 2 or 3 weeks...we release him and he starts to kill people again. We can have human rights, but in a safe country like in the United States, where they can take their time. We cannot use it in war. We need to be stronger with bad guys. When I shoot a bad guy, he becomes white.

He spoke of his country's dark past:

Saddam Hussein, he put us in the dark. No satellite; no Internet; if you have a cell phone, he kills you. Iraqi people lived the dark life. That's why the Iraqi people have no culture like in other countries. He killed the nationalist spirit in Iraq. But now my guys believe they are fighting for Iraq.

He also explained his position on striking mosques:

When anybody puts weapons or terrorists in a mosque it is now a military compound. A mosque is for praying and talking to your God. However, when you put fighters or weapons in the mosque, it then becomes a target. That's why when we go to hit a mosque with terrorists, we don't care. We treat it like any target.

MAJ Franks spoke of the detainee situation and the demands of doing good "police" work:

[I understand MAJ Mohammed's frustration.] This unit has brought in the same people time and time again. A detainee comes in and understands that if he keeps his mouth shut he will get out in 14 days...he will get into a nice facility where he can lick his wounds, recover, and network a little bit.

Although the Iraqi police [Ministry of Interior] have facilities, the Ministry of Defense has no ability to detain anyone. When we have bilateral operations, I send an American on the objective and fill out sworn statements. Then they ensure the paperwork is turned into the Coalition Detention Facilities.

Once the detainee gets to Coalition detention facilities, it becomes difficult to get access to them. The result is that if there is sufficient evidence they go to an Iraqi court. Our guys go to court because they were on the objective and filled out the paperwork, but the Iraqis need to start doing that. We have really been pushing the sensitive site exploitation and battlefield interrogation to try and work these problems. As we moved from combat operations to counterinsurgency, a lot of what we do looks and feels like police-type work. I think that is the direction we are headed.

I think that is where MAJ Mohammed's frustrations are, "Hey, we round up the same guys over and over." I think in some cases that they think we are coming in and imposing our ways on them. However, there needs to be a better way of transitioning detainees into an Iraqi system.

D. FALLUJAH

On 13 January, Tony and Bill departed Camp Victory via Blackhawk for Camp Fallujah. At Camp Fallujah, Bob, who had been the Mayor of Camp Fallujah prior to assignment to IDA, gave Tony and Bill the tour of the camp, and then they picked up weapons.

1. Nassar-wy-Salaam



Figure II-7. Nassar-wy-Salaam, Village East of Fallujah

The next morning, the IDA team fired for familiarization and then linked up with the Marine Civil Affairs unit for the convoy into the small town just east of Fallujah called Nassar-wy-Salaam. Capt Walton, Team Commander, 4th Detachment, 6th Civil Affairs Group, gave the convoy brief and explained the day's mission. The mission was to link up with soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st IIF Division to

talk about counterinsurgency techniques. Per Capt Walton, "The Iraqi soldiers are good at kicking doors and doing cordon and sweep operations, but apparently [they] don't do a good job of trying to help the people." While at Baharia, where the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade was located, the Iraqis supplied the noon meal of chicken, rice, and vegetables, which were purchased at the local roadside market.

According to Capt Walton, Nassar-wy-Salaam is a Shi'a village located in a Sunni province. The provincial government apparently expects Baghdad to take care of the people because it is located so close to Baghdad. Baghdad doesn't do anything for the village, and the town suffers because of the Sunni/Shi'a differences.

The combined U.S./Iraqi force moved into town, making several stops where the Iraqi forces talked to residents as the U.S. forces handed out trinkets and stuffed animals to the kids. The unit stopped no more than 15–20 minutes at a stretch and then moved on. Capt Walton offered the acronym "SWEAT" to conduct a quick assessment of the town. SWEAT stands for Sewage, Water, Electric, Academics, and Trash.¹⁶ From the photograph (Figure II-7), Nassar-wy-Salaam faces a number of SWEAT challenges.

¹⁶ LTC Thomas Magness and MAJ James Ahearn, "National Training Center (NTC): SWEAT," CTC Notes, *Engineer Magazine*, July-September 2003.

2. Hadrah Mosque and Vicinity

On 15 January, the team again met with Capt Walton. His unit's mission was to meet with Iraqi contractors at the Fallujah Liaison Team location, to pay them, and to discuss current and future projects. The Fallujah Liaison Team was currently being used to issue resident identity cards, and the Marines demonstrated their registration process and the use of the biometric automated tool set.



Figure II-8. Fallujah Storekeeper (right) of Shop Located Next to Hadrah Mosque. On left is the interpreter.

After the meeting, the unit delivered 26 computers to an Internet cafe next to the Hadrah Mosque. Saddam Hussein never allowed people access to the Internet, and Capt Walton expressed hope that the free exchange of ideas and information over the Internet would benefit the security effort. While in the area, Bill had an opportunity to talk to two shopkeepers.

Figure II-8 is a photo of Abdu Qadir with the interpreter. Abdu has lived in Fallujah for 30 years. Before the war, Abdu never locked his doors. Now he locks the doors at night, and his business has deteriorated. Despite changes for the worse, he did say that the Iraqi Government and Coalition helped the city rebuild the hospital, and that they were working on the sewage system. He has also submitted claims for damage. When asked if things were better now than before, he said, "Security was better before." He added, "It does not matter who becomes the leader in Iraq. He can be Shi'a or Sunni. What is paramount is security. We cannot have a good life unless we have security."



Figure II-9. Hadrah Mosque Minaret

the damage done (and that remains) as the Coalition faced insurgent sniper fire from the tower.

3. Train Station

The next stop was the train station. RCT-7 began its assault at the train station. From the rooftop, the station had a commanding view of the entire north side of Fallujah. It was easy to see how the train tracks were an obstacle to Coalition movement and had to be removed (with 2,000-pound joint direct attack munitions) before units started the penetration south. Although it had been a year since the “purging” of insurgents from Fallujah during Al Fajr, the Marines preached caution in our travels. A sniper still on the loose in Fallujah had claimed several Coalition kills. When we were on the roof of the train station, a Marine approached from the rooftop bunker and warned, “You need to keep moving; there’s a sniper in the area.”

4. High-Rise Apartments

The next area the unit visited was the high-rise apartments (Figure II-10), where RCT-1 launched its attack into the Jolan area.

The 3/1 Marines were responsible for seizing the apartment complex. The Marines had been concerned about booby-trapped buildings and indeed found that some

The second shopkeeper Bill spoke with said things were better now than before. Although his house was not damaged, his neighbors’ houses were, and they had submitted claims and received help from the government in the form of cement and bricks to rebuild their homes.

The Hadrah Mosque was one of 1/8 Marines’ objectives as they assaulted south into the city. It was the scene of major combat operations as the insurgents used it as a military defensive position, command-and-control node, and weapons cache. Figure II-9 shows

had been booby-trapped. In their hasty retreat, however, the insurgents either hadn't rigged them properly or failed to set them off. While at the apartments the team had the opportunity to talk to some of the residents.



Figure II-10. High-Rise Apartments North of Fallujah

The first was a 10-year-old boy who had lived in the apartments all his life. When asked if life has been better in the last 2 years, he responded, “Life is good. Life is wonderful. Life is comfortable. Praise be to Allah.”

The second resident was a 24-year-old man. When asked what Fallujah was like

before and after November 2004 he responded,

You have destroyed more than you helped. When we left [evacuated] our houses before Al Fajr, there was furniture. They stole everything. All people here are Bedouins, and they have simple and small furnishings. How can they replace their furniture? During Al Fajr, the fighting forces destroyed sewers, wire [electrical and telephone], and our water tower.

[Who destroyed everything?]

U.S. Forces—Marines. The Iraqi Army sent trucks to steal furniture. Upon our return 7 or 8 months later, all our furniture had been taken. Either the U.S. forces or the Iraqi Army took it. Our claims for missing furniture have not been paid. They [unspecified] gave 3,000 Iraqi Dinars—enough to buy one chicken.

[How is security now?]

Good. The U.S. Marines come by at night and destroy our doors for no reason. We ask them why. The Marines say, “Fuck you,” and other ugly words. They come at 3:00 A.M. and kick in the doors. We ask, “Why?”

[Is everything better now?]

No, everything is worse. The Iraqi government promises to help us, but help has not appeared. I have not seen anyone from the [Iraqi] government. We had to pool our money and fix the problem with the electricity ourselves.

[Do you think things will get better?]

I hope so.

Although no American would believe that U.S. forces would steal furniture, this angry young Fallujan was eager to spread the word that everything that happened was the fault of the Coalition or Iraqi forces.

5. Fallujah School for Business and Economics

The Fallujah College for Business and Economics was next door to the apartment complex (Figure II-11), and Bill talked to some of the students (Figure II-12). Although the students spoke of problems with basic services such as electricity and water, their biggest complaint was with the long lines for automotive fuel and checkpoints. Since some commuted to school, they were frustrated with the checkpoints that they needed to traverse to get to school.



Figure II-11. Fallujah College for Business and Economics



Figure II-12. Fallujah College Students

A note on interpreters—the interpreter that assisted Bill at the high-rise apartments and business school was extremely weak in English. Bill and the interpreter spent a lot of time trying to understand each other. Later, Bill discovered that the interpreter did not understand the IDA team’s missions and, when asked, told the students Bill was an international journalist working on a story.¹⁷

¹⁷ Per George’s translation later, “Another man in the background asked twice if Dr. Knarr was a reporter. Unbeknownst to Dr. Knarr, because the translator never translated the question or the answer, the translator responded that he was from the international press.” This was shortly after the 7 January kidnapping of Jill Carroll, freelance reporter for the *Christian Science Monitor*.

6. The East Fallujah Iraqi Camp, 2nd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces Division

On 16 January, the IDA team met with members of the command and staff of the 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division at their headquarters at the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp. The East Fallujah Iraqi Camp was set up to train and house the Iraqi forces in preparation for Al Fajr and now garrisoned the 2nd Brigade. LtCol Lystad, Chief of the MEF ISF cell, escorted the team into the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp and introduced team members to the base commander, Col Lentz, and the Chief of the 2nd Brigade MiTT, Col Chene. Col Chene arranged for the IDA team to interview three Iraqi officers and the MiTT's main interpreter.

The interviewees (Figure II-13) consisted of:

- LTC Akrum, Executive Officer of the 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division. He had a total of 24 years of military service (including his time in the Saddam Army) and was a MIG-21 pilot in the old Army. He joined the new Army in February 2004 and was one of three original officers that made up the Brigade.
- COL Raid (pronounced "Rod") Jasen Aidar, Commander, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division. He was born in Basra, had 20 years of military service, was Special Forces in the old Army, but left after the fall of Baghdad. He joined the new Army in 2004.
- LTC Katheer Abd-Al Rahman, Commander, 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division. He was a colonel in the old Army and joined the new Army in July 2004.
- Mr. CNN (not pictured; name withheld for security reasons) was the interpreter. He began working with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in 2003.



Figure II-13. From Left: Col Chene, MiTT Chief; LTC Akrum, 2nd Brigade Executive Officer; COL Raid, 2nd Battalion Commander; and LTC Katheer, 1st Battalion Commander

The 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division, was established in Taji in May 2004, moved to Numiniyah (Baghdad area) in July 2004, and then deployed to support Al Fajr on 3 December 2004. It replaced the 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division. The 1st Brigade was subsequently deployed to Mosul. Al Fajr was their first large combat operation. The 2nd Brigade worked for Col Shupp, Commander, RCT-1.¹⁸ The 2nd Brigade battalions deployed in three sectors, 2nd, 3rd, and 1st (from west to east Fallujah). Their Brigade headquarters was located at the Government Center, collocated with the RCT-1 Headquarters.

The mission of the 2nd Brigade, in support of RCT-1, was to clear and secure the area, kill or capture insurgents, search the area for insurgent caches, and receive civilians and residents as they returned to Fallujah. The residents returned through various entry control points around the city and were normally allowed in via sector (e.g., Jolan Park in the northwest sector).

The 2nd Brigade's joint patrolling with the Marines initially consisted of coupling Iraqi squads with Marine units. They built up to company operations and then battalion operations where the Marines would cordon an area and the Iraqis would search it.

Although they can now conduct operations independently, and two of the battalions have their own battle space in Fallujah (1st and 2nd Battalions within Fallujah report directly to their 1st Brigade Headquarters; the 3rd Battalion was working near Ar Ramadi with the Marines at the time of the interview), they still require some major support from the Marines such as air support to include helicopter lift, artillery fires, and MEDEVAC. At the time of the interview, Iraqi soldiers were being transferred to American hospitals for wounds because they had no indigenous Iraqi hospital support.¹⁹

Based on interviews of the three Iraqi officers, the lessons the 2nd Brigade had learned included the following:

- Battle for Iraq—Fallujah supported insurgents throughout Iraq, hence this was a battle for Iraq, not just for Fallujah.

¹⁸ Col Shupp rated the 2nd Brigade performance as better than the 1st Brigade's.

¹⁹ Plus, the Iraqi Soldiers were afraid of the type of care they would receive at an Iraqi hospital. In fact, some were afraid they would be killed in an Iraqi hospital.

- Pursuit and Exploitation—To continue to pursue the enemy even though initial objectives of driving the enemy out of Fallujah were met.
- Snipers—Insurgent snipers were deadly and they had to be watchful for snipers as they patrolled near tall buildings.
- Noncommissioned Officers (NCO)—The NCOs should be leading patrols, not officers.
- Iraqi Police—They were concerned about turning over the city to the Iraqi Police because they did not feel that the police were reliable.

7. Government Center—Fallujah Council Meeting²⁰



Figure II-14. Raising the Iraqi Flag
(Source: I-MEF PAO)

On 17 January, the team convoyed with Capt Walton to the Government Center, one of RCT-7's primary objectives during Al Fajr. Raising of the Iraqi Flag by Iraqi forces on 10 November 2004 made U.S. and Iraqi national news (Figure II-14).

Upon arriving, the team had an opportunity to meet and interview BG Salah, the Chief of Police for Fallujah. BG Salah was MG Mehdi's Deputy for the Public Order Brigade during Al Fajr. BG Salah said that security was much better before the Americans arrived, and he was pessimistic about the chances for success in Iraq. His choice of words and attitude led the IDA team to believe that BG Salah

wanted the Coalition to fail.

After the interview, the team attended the city council meeting. The Iraqis sat at the table and the Coalition sat on the sidelines. The meeting seemed to progress for about 30 minutes and then degenerated when a resident presented a claim for damages because the Marines allegedly broke into a residence and beheaded the homeowner. Col Bergen, RCT Commander, was irritated that such an outlandish statement was allowed to be presented and asked the mayor and Sheikh Kamal Nazal, counsel co-chairs, why the complaint had not been vetted properly before being tabled. The complaint and claim were withdrawn.

²⁰ The Fallujah Council Meeting was a result of meetings convened by the Civil Military Operations Center with townspeople after Al Fajr.

Sheikh Kamal Nazal, highlighted in Figure II-15, was assassinated 2 weeks later by gunmen in the front of the Government Center as he arrived to attend a Council Meeting. As Kael Weston, the State Department representative to Fallujah would say, the insurgents targeted anyone that was productive—anyone that proved to be a threat to them.²¹



Figure II-15. Fallujah Council Meeting, 17 January 2006, Sheikh Kamal Nazal

As team members took photographs of the area out front, they were told by the Marine guard to move inside because there was a sniper in the area who had already killed several Marines. There were also 5–10 Iraqi policemen out front without body armor or helmets, smoking and socializing, who didn’t seem to be in danger. They also didn’t seem to think it was necessary to warn the Americans (the IDA team), who were taking pictures, of the potential danger. Indeed, this sniper was after Coalition forces. Later, after the sniper was finally killed, the insurgents published on the Web a video that martyred him and his exploits as “nationalistic.” The video, with music and detailed

²¹ Kael Weston, telephone interview with the author, 26 May 2006.

portrayals of each of his targets, told the story of how he was very careful in his targeting, ensuring that only Coalition forces were killed and that he did not take a shot if there was a chance an Iraqi might be in danger.²²



Figure II-16. Sniper Video

Figure II-16 is a picture of Shaykh Abdallah Njaum Abu A'zam, the sniper, taken from the video. Each of his sniper exploits in downtown Fallujah is sequenced with music and imagery of the area of operations. The sniper's position is marked with an arrow that points to the target, which is circled. It is then followed by video of the tracking and shooting of the target or abort. The aborts are crafted to show that Shaykh Abdallah

does not want to hit an Iraqi and is truly a martyred nationalist hero.

8. The North Bridge and Fallujah Hospital

After the council meeting, the unit convoyed over the North Bridge (Figure II-17), where the remains of the Blackwater contractors were displayed. They had been murdered in town. That incident sparked Fallujah I, Vigilant Resolve.

Fallujah General Hospital is just over the North Bridge. The hospital (Figure II-18) was one of the insurgents' key command-and-control and information operations nodes during Fallujah I. As such, the Coalition took the hospital early to prevent a replay of the information operations problems that insurgent control of the hospital caused during Fallujah I. During Fallujah II, the hospital operation was turned into a Coalition and Iraqi Information Operations success as the assault was led by the 36th Commandos supported by Army Special Forces advisors. As the IDA team researched Al Fajr events,

²² LtGen Maples, Director of DIA, in a statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 28 February 2006, suggested that most Iraqis would not condemn another Iraqi for shooting a Coalition member and would indeed see them as nationalistic. The text from his statement, titled, "Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States," was: "Nationwide opposition to Coalition presence persists. Many Iraqi Arab cities, where the insurgency is strongest, have confidence in the eventual success of 'armed national resistance.' Most Iraqis consider those who perpetuate violence against civilians to be 'criminals' or 'terrorists,' but those who attack the Coalition as 'patriots.'"

it learned that activity at the hospital, although tactical, clearly had operational and strategic implications and was a candidate for detailed reconstruction. The team needed to capture as much detail—audio, video, and still images—as it could for the reconstruction effort.



Figure II-17. North Bridge as Seen from the Hospital



Figure II-18. Fallujah General Hospital

During Fallujah II, Al Jazeera's pirating of CBS video being beamed to the United States for broadcast resulted in it being first shown on Al Jazeera. Ironically, in its efforts to scoop the Americans, Al Jazeera delivered a Coalition and Iraqi Interim Government information operations message to the Iraqis and the region—"Iraqi Forces leading the assault on Fallujah."²³



Figure II-19. Hospital Director, Dr. Abdallah

²³ Hence, it probably had more credibility coming over Al Jazeera than it would have had coming over Iraqi-controlled news or American television.

Muhammed Milhem (right)

At the hospital, the IDA team spoke with staff members, specifically the director, Dr. Abdallah Muhammed Milhem (Figure II-19); his deputy, Dr. Ahmed Taha Shab; and staff members who were present at the hospital during both Fallujah I and Fallujah II. The gist of the conversation with the staff members is below.

During April 2004 [Fallujah I] we treated about 700 people. We treated old people and children. A man had his legs cut up. A woman was pregnant and the baby was shot. The injuries were from Air Force bombs. We did not treat any Iraqi soldiers. One time, I had a little kid, and the father did not know whether to stay with the child or his mother. I really felt bad after that. This was all a result of combat operations. This was a big disaster at that time; you can't tell whether a person is an insurgent or a good guy.

In November 2004 [Fallujah II] they didn't allow us to work at the hospital. I recall one doctor saying that he was being slapped around by one of the commandos and that he was told to lay on the ground and the commando put his boot on his neck. We were told to leave. During the interim period the hospital closed. We stayed at home. Some worked in hospitals on the periphery of Fallujah. We finally returned to work on 15 February 2005.

As noted above, the team needed to capture a lot of information but, for security reasons, needed to restrict on-station time. Fifteen minutes had gone by and as the interviews approached 20 minutes, Bill felt the familiar, but nervous, tug on his sleeve that said, "It's time to go." Bill quickly grabbed his video camera and Tony for cover as he moved down the hallways, taking video to support the reconstruction. In another 10 minutes, it really was time to go, and the unit rendezvoused in the vehicles out front for departure. The next destination was Jolan Park.

9. Jolan Park

The site of intense fighting during both Fallujah I and II, the Jolan district was a major objective for RCT-1 during Fallujah II.

The convoy arrived at Jolan Park mid-afternoon of 17 January. Vendors were out. The unit dismounted, except for drivers, and walked to the front, sides, and behind the vehicles for a quarter of a mile loop through the area. The people weren't particularly friendly, but the unit had no trouble during the patrol. Tony noticed the kids there were much less likely to come meet the Marines than they had been in the apartment complex. As the unit moved through the area Bill noticed a water tower with an inscription, "God is great and will give us victory over America" (Figure II-20).

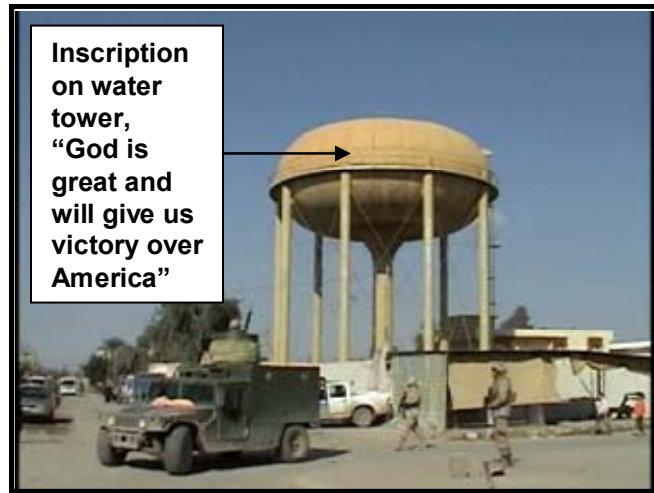


Figure II-20. Water Tower with Inscription

During the walk-through Bill and Bob spoke with the residents, vendors, and children. Before the operation Bill gave the interpreter, Johnnie, a copy of the questions he was going to ask. There were three sets of questions: one for the residents, one for businessmen/vendors, and one for children. Bill asked the children, "Do you feel safe?" to better understand their perspective of security, "Do you go to school?" to understand the status of services and security, and "Do you want to be a Jundi when you grow up?" to determine if they had any respect for the Iraqi soldiers and the security implications.²⁴ In some cases Bill asked the questions through Johnnie, and in others Johnnie used the checklist and recorded the answers.²⁵ A sample of questions and responses follow.²⁶

²⁴ One of the objectives was to determine whether the Coalition and Iraqis were building "external respect" for the Iraqis. Hence, "Do you want to be a Jundi when you grow up," might provide insight into whether the Iraqi children thought being a Jundi was a respectable and desirable profession.

²⁵ When Johnnie used the checklist on his own, there were times that he forgot to provide a translation, and George's talents in Arabic were used to transcribe the discussions.

²⁶ Greetings, mandatory in that culture, consume the initial discussion, and given the 15–30 minutes allotted to move through the area, the interviewers didn't have much time for conversation.



Figure II-21. Vendors in Jolan Park



Figure II-22. Children in Jolan Park

1. [Do you feel safe?] Resident: No, robbers take things from us. They claim to be policemen; they have weapons, so we cannot resist.

2. [How is business?] Vendor 1 (Figure II-21): It is good. [Has the Government of Iraq helped you?] Not enough. There is not enough electricity.

3. [How is work?] Vendor 2: OK. [How is security?] On this street it is OK. [How does the Iraqi Army treat you?] Sometimes, they don't respect anyone. The U.S. forces respect us more than the Iraqi Army does.

4. [How long have you lived here?] Child 1: I was born here. I'm looking forward to seeing the new president. We don't feel like we are safe. We need to live in peace. We can't even go to school because we are afraid sometimes.

Bill and Johnnie met two other children (Figure II-22), and each said that they attended school and that security and life seemed good.

On one occasion, as Tony was walking through the Jolan marketplace, he was approached by an Iraqi teenager, who, pointing to the rank insignia on Tony's helmet, asked if he was a senior officer. Tony immediately went to the HMWWV and removed the insignia.²⁷

E. AL QAIM

One of the challenges in linking up with the various ISF units was determining where they were located. The 1st IIF Brigade and its battalions were located in Al Qaim,

²⁷ Tony is in the Army; the Marines do not wear their rank insignia on their helmets.

on the Iraqi-Syrian border. That was the current hot spot in Iraq, and the 1st IIF, as the premier counterinsurgency force, was deployed there. The IDA team had identified several important people to meet at the 1st IIF. COL Razak, the current brigade commander, was with the unit since its beginning and had been the executive officer during Fallujah II. LTC Yassir, Commander, 4th Battalion (reflagged 3rd Battalion after Fallujah II), praised by COL Shupp, was still with the battalion. The team was also looking for elements of the 2nd Battalion. This was the unit that was ambushed by al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia en route to Fallujah from Baghdad in April 2004 but fought admirably during Al Fajr. The IDA team was in luck and managed to link up with all the units. The team also interviewed the Iraqi that led the ambushed convoy.

On 19 January, the IDA team manifested at 2320 and flew on a CH-46 from Fallujah to Al Asad, arriving around 0300. At Al Asad the team manifested at 0700 and flew on a CH-53 to Al Qaim via five different stops, including back to Taqadum (within 20 miles of Fallujah) and then to Korean Village near the Jordanian border. With the hatches open for the door gunners, it was a cold 5-hour flight (Figure II-23).

At 1400, the IDA team met LTC Simpson, the MiTT Commander, and 1SG Bright, who provided sleeping quarters and a vehicle (bottom of Figure II-23) from the 1st IIF Brigade. The vehicle was an unarmored SUV decked out with a fake fur dashboard and bouncing dolls.

In Al Qaim, late afternoon on the 19th, the team interviewed COL Razak, the brigade commander, and then attended the brigade daily battle update brief at 1930. The staff presented a daily update much like what you would see in a U.S. unit. While at Al Qaim the team also interviewed LTC Yassir, 4th Battalion Commander, and Mr. Mazin. Mr. Mazin, an interpreter at the CPA for the Coalition Military Assistance Transition Teams, was subjected to one of Saddam's chemical attacks in northern Iraq and fled to Iran and later to Australia, where he became a citizen. He was back in Iraq to help the Iraqi people. The last interview in Al Qaim was with the MiTT.

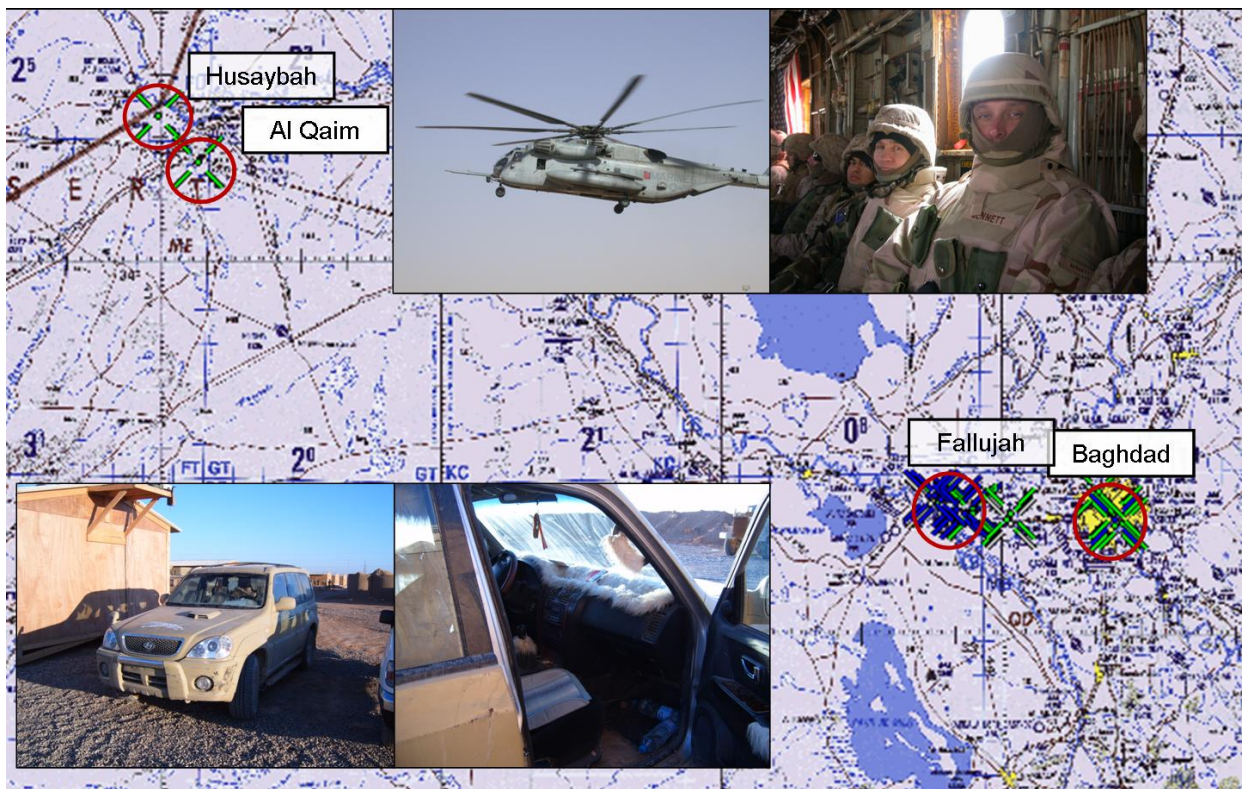


Figure II-23. From Fallujah to Al Qaim to Link up with the 1st IIF Brigade

1. COL Razak



Figure II-24. COL Razak

COL Razak (Figure II-24), recently assumed command of the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division IIF. He was the executive officer for a year before that and, as such, participated in Fallujah II. Under Saddam's reign, COL Razak was a Special Forces colonel. He traced the history of the brigade from its inception as the first Iraqi brigade that was established, in October 2003, with the headquarters activated on 15 May 2004. LTC Simpson, the MiTT commander, participated in the interview.

The brigade's first operation was in July 2004 in Sadr City, the second operation was in August 2004 in An Najaf, and the third operation was in Fallujah in November 2004. After that the brigade saw action in Mosul and currently was in the Al Qaim area fighting insurgents. COL Razak was obviously proud that his brigade was sent to the hot spots in Iraq. Later, the IDA team attended the professionally conducted Brigade Update Briefing, which outlined current and future operations.

LTC Simpson, the Senior MiTT with the 1st Brigade, attributed success to support the Iraqi unit received from LtCol Alfred, Commander, 3/6 Marines, the partner unit for the 1st Iraqi Brigade. LTC Simpson said that LtCol Alfred worked with the Iraqis and allowed the Iraqis to run their operations and make mistakes.

Although COL Razak said that operations were going well, he discussed the major issues of equipment, supplies, and air support, all of which required Coalition support. Another issue he contends with is the appointment of officers to his unit who received direct commissions but have no experience or training. He attributed success to the quality of the MiTT and the fact that it was part of his brigade, and that he was not required to report to a Coalition Force.

2. LTC Yassir



Figure II-25. LTC Yassir

LTC Yassir Haziz Muqmad (Figure II-25), Commander, 3rd Battalion,²⁸ 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division, joined the old Army in 1992. He was in Special Forces, and COL Razak was his commander. He participated in both Gulf Wars. In 2004, he joined the New Iraqi Army, and at the end of June 2004 moved with the 4th Battalion (reflagged as 3rd Battalion in 2005) to Aristimiyah, in the vicinity of Baghdad. His unit participated in An Najaf in August 2004 and Fallujah in November 2004. After Fallujah, the unit was sent to Mosul to combat the insurgents and provide security for the January elections. His battalion, along with the rest of the 1st Brigade, has been continually deployed to hot spots throughout Iraq with current duty in Al Qaim to clear insurgents from a major stronghold and entry route into Iraq from Syria.

The 4th Battalion's work in Fallujah was highly praised by both Col Shupp, the regimental commander, and MajGen Natonski, the 1st Marine Division commander. In particular, they praised the battalion's work in clearing areas, finding caches, and the capture of an insurgent intelligence officer. LTC Yassir provides some good descriptions of the work the unit did in Fallujah and Talafar.

²⁸ Previously named the 4th Battalion.

3. Mr. Mazin



Figure II-26. Mr. Mazin

On 20 January 2006, the team interviewed Mr. Mazin Muhammad Rhada (Figure II-26) at the 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division conference room, Camp Dixie, Al Qaim. Mr. Mazin, a Kurd, was gassed during one of Saddam's attacks on the Kurds in the late 1980s and was evacuated to Iran for medical care. He worked with the Anti Saddam Forces throughout the 1990s from his homeland in Northern Iraq. After the war he became an interpreter for the Coalition Military Assistance Transition Teams in the CPA and worked for MG Eaton and later BG Schwitters. In March 2004, he volunteered to work with the 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division, and worked closely with LTC Marcus De Oliveira.

Mr. Mazin made several points throughout the interview. One, be wary of the old Army and old rules. Two, the MiTTs need to be resourced with quality people, not only Coalition forces but interpreters as well. Three, the Coalition emphasis on ethnic and religious identification (the Coalition is anal about whether a person is Sunni, Shi'a, or Kurd) has made the differences more pronounced and contributed to the sectarian violence. Four, the United States should not expect democracy in Iraq to look like democracy in the United States or Europe.

4. Military Transition Team



Figure II-27. LTC Simpson and Maj Hiel

On 20 January, members of two MiTTs were interviewed. One MiTT was assigned to the 1st IIF Brigade, 1st Division, and the other MiTT was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade, 1st Division.

LTC Simpson (Figure II-27), U.S. Army, was the Senior Advisor, 1st IIF Brigade. He is a member of the 80th Division, based out of Virginia. With him at the interview was 1SG Bright, SSG Harrington, and MAJ King, S-3, who was assigned to the 85th Division from Indianapolis, Indiana.

Maj Heil, USMC, was the Senior Advisor for the 3rd Battalion MiTT. Accompanying him was SSgt Alley, GySgt Parrella, and 1SG Lane. Most of them were from the 25th Marines.

None of the MiTT members had ever done this type of work. LTC Simpson said that as a training division, his division was supposed to assume missions at training posts like Fort Benning and Fort Jackson so that those elements could deploy. That said, everyone on the MiTT understood how important the mission was—GEN Casey and LTG Petraeus personally spoke to them about the mission. The MiTT members discussed a number of topics concerning team composition, training, etc.

a. Team Composition

Teams can consist of anything from infantry soldiers to quartermasters; there seems to be no one perfect team composition. It depends on the unit it is supporting, the mission, and the chemistry within the team. Several MiTT members said they would add NCOs and put them with companies to lead by example. Per LTC Simpson:

The Iraqis will see that NCOs are very capable, they watch us. They are pretty observant, thoughtful people, and when they see what can be done, by our example, I think that's the best way to train....[In addition,] the Iraqis take on the personalities of their advisors.

At the brigade level, MAJ King said that the MiTTs need someone that understands contracting. Maintenance is also extremely important. A person who knows both U.S. and Iraqi equipment, such as vehicles, would be invaluable. MAJ King added:

Of course, the guys working at the company level need to know the infantry standards, the infantry CTT. But we need to keep in mind this is not our army, and it never will be. It's not an American army; it's an Iraqi army. It's very apparent when they write an OPORD, they have something that is similar to a five-paragraph OPORD, but it's not our five-paragraph order. Does it make it wrong? No, it doesn't. Is it the way we want it? Is it the American Army way? No, it's not, but does it meet the standard? Yes, it does.

b. Selection

LTC Simpson commented on MiTT member selection:

[Personnel selection of MiTT members] needs to really look at who they are going to put on these MiTT teams. They need to do a hard selection, not just because I'm a major, or a colonel, or a first sergeant. They need to ask, "Who is this guy, what does he do, what are his capabilities, is this

somebody we really want on this team?” And they didn’t do that very well.

c. Systems

Communications are going to be increasingly more important as the Iraqis become more independent. They not only need communications systems but they also need secure systems and advisory expertise to support those systems.

Maj Heil commented on the Iraqis need for a personnel system:

The first sergeant has done a lot with getting PERSTATS [personnel status report], driving personnel accountability into their heads. Our unit does that pretty well now, with a little bit of guidance. On a higher level, they need a promotion system, an assignment system, and a personnel evaluation system.

d. Training

LTC Simpson commented on MiTT training:

There needs to be a time when the team trains as a team, not just a big group. You need to get the Foreign Internal Defense people from Bragg involved in the development of the training. They’ve been doing it for years. If the active duty Special Forces guys are all deployed, then get the retired guys.

e. Language Training

LTC Simpson commented on the language training:

A couple of hours a night the students would sit around doing language training. In some cases they were being taught other than Iraqi Arabic. For example, an instructor would say, “...in Egypt they say it this way.” We were like, “Wait a minute, who cares how they say it in Egypt!”

f. NCO Structure

1SG Lane commented on the NCO structure:

[The Iraqis] need to take advantage of the NCOs. We knew before we came that there really wasn’t an NCO structure. There was one chief and the rest were Indians. That’s a problem that needs to be rectified through professional military education and training.

g. Most and Least Rewarding Experiences

The MiTT members were asked to comment on their most rewarding or proud moments.

Maj Heil noted Iraqi courage and dependability under fire:

You've heard of Iraqi forces falling apart and running away. We've never seen that here with these guys. We haven't been in an urban fight where these guys have run away. They've always gone towards it. I've always trusted that they would engage the enemy and stand fast. They've proven it several times.

Maj Heil commended the Iraqi Brigade S-2:

The Brigade S-2 has really developed. He was telling one of the company commanders how he looked at trends, patterns of cache finds, IED finds, different trigger mechanisms on IEDs, the different tribes in the area—it was a real nuance approach.

1SG Lane sees improvement in personnel accountability:

Personnel accountability has gotten a lot better. I think because of the advisors that we have on our team at the company levels, they are energizing their company commanders, their counterparts, to take advantage of those strong NCOs that they have. They are starting to utilize them. It's been night and day from the first time we got here until now. In everything from personnel accountability to letting their NCOs become NCOs, I think it's a step forward.

SSgt Alley is excited that the Iraqi NCOs started leading the patrols:

Proudest moment? We fought to let the NCOs take the patrols out. It used to be an officer, it had to be an officer in charge of the patrol. We fought and we fought, and when it finally got done, the NCOs didn't screw it up, so they proved us right.

The MiTT members were then asked to comment on the least rewarding moment or the thing they were most disappointed in.

1SG Lane felt that one of the biggest Iraqi challenges is their military justice system.

Least rewarding, I would have to say, is the military justice system. For example, you will have soldiers who refuse to come on missions, and they will stay back at their base, let's say Aristimiyah. The unit will come out here for 2 or 3 months, so basically that soldier is AWOL...So you would think that he was basically discharged from the military, but a month or two later he's back in your unit. That's a big problem and very disappointing because you have those soldiers who are trying, and it's going to be a cancer. It's going to cause problems if they don't get a handle on their military justice system.

1SG Bright is disappointed in the Iraqi logistics system.

The logistics system just flat sucks. For us to get stuff out of Taji is like pulling teeth. If they don't have an American presence down there, they need one. We've been fighting since we came on board in September about getting cold-weather gear just for our troops and getting replacement gear.

SFC Parrella addresses problems with Iraqi favoritism and corruption:

Accountability needs to be better. [As an example, in] our government back in the '20s and '30s, to the victor went the spoils, so when you took office, you got your brother, your nephew, and your cousin in, too. It's still here; it's alive and well in Iraq. When they [the Iraqis] take office, they bring their brother's company in to feed the Jundis, and we don't like it because we aren't getting any food here, and we make them go back and request new contracts. Then we get a new company—same guys, just a new name.

F. HUSAYBAH

The 2nd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade, was located at Husaybah, along the Syrian border. The IDA team traveled in a combined U.S. MiTT–Iraqi convoy to a small camp named Hue City, a combined Iraqi 2nd Battalion-Marine camp. The team met with the Iraqi battalion commander, company commanders, and staff in the headquarters building, an old bombed-out building without heat or electricity. During the interview, LTC Simpson accompanied the ISF to the market for food. Although the MiTT members were permitted to eat in the U.S. dining facilities, the Iraqis were required to feed themselves. Although it was difficult, the intent was to force the Government of Iraq to start picking up responsibility for the ISF. The Coalition was pressuring the Ministry of Defense to take care of its soldiers. This was one of the many problems the Coalition had with the Ministry of Defense.

1. MAJ Abed Al Jabar, Company Commander, and LTC Wisam Abad Razak, G2, 1st IIF Brigade

On 20 January 2006, the team interviewed MAJ Abed Al Jabar, Company Commander, 2nd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade, and LTC Wisam Abad Razak, G2, 1st IIF Brigade²⁹ at Hue City FOB in Husaybah near the Iraqi-Syrian Border (Figure II-28). Both participated in Al Fajr. MAJ Abed had been the convoy commander for the convoy that was ambushed by members of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia in April 2004 as

²⁹ The "G2" designation is normally reserved for divisions. But he was the Brigade Intelligence officer, and they called him the G2.

they drove from Baghdad to Fallujah to participate in Vigilant Resolve. This was a significant event because the news media carried the story of the Iraqi unit that refused to fight during Fallujah I, and this was an opportunity to hear the Iraqis' side of the story.



Figure II-28. LTC Wisam and MAJ Abed at Husaybah

MAJ Abed joined the 1st Battalion of the New Iraqi Army in August 2003. At that time, it was an independent battalion without a brigade or division higher headquarters (probably an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps unit). He later joined the 2nd Battalion when it was activated in January 2004 and moved from Kirkush to Taji. After conducting missions in the Taji area, the 2nd Battalion moved to the Baghdad area to search for insurgents.

When the unit was alerted to move to Fallujah, it was not given the details of the mission—just that it was going to Fallujah. Despite not knowing the details of the operation, which would have been provided by the U.S. advisors, Major Lane and Major Myers, MAJ Abed expressed great respect for them, even though they had just been assigned to the unit. MAJ Abed considered the Coalition's lack of consultation with the Iraqis during the April uprising as a big mistake—in particular, had the Coalition asked about the route to Fallujah, MAJ Abed and other Iraqis would have recommended a different route.

In April 2004, MAJ Abed was a captain working as the deputy G-3 for the battalion. He was the convoy commander and rode with the battalion commander in the first vehicle. The battalion deployed 2nd and 3rd Company and two platoons from the 4th Company—approximately 250 people. The convoy consisted of 25 vehicles. Vehicles consisted of Hyundai cargo vehicles and Nissan pickups, which were unsuitable for military use. Both Major Lane and Major Davis were with the convoy; other advisors were embedded at the beginning, middle, and end of the convoy.

Moving from Baghdad to Fallujah, they passed through an area called Shola and found concrete barriers in the road. As they drove through the area, insurgents shot at them. They attempted to speed up the convoy to get through the area. Unfortunately, the convoy had been infiltrated, and one of his drivers stopped his vehicle broadside in the street, jumped from the vehicle, and ran. This maneuver split and blocked the convoy. Complicating things, there were no communications between the front and rear of the convoy.

MAJ Abed said that the driver was Shi'a and probably worked with Muqtada al-Sadr's militia at the time. MAJ Abed indicated that about 90% of his unit were Shi'a and refused to fire against other Shi'a. Al-Sadr attacked the convoy because of problems he had with the Coalition.³⁰ Their objective was to stop the convoy from moving to Fallujah and demanded that the ISF turn over the American advisors, but the ISF refused.

Due to the number of wounded Iraqi soldiers and refusal of a large part of the battalion to continue to Fallujah, the convoy returned to Taji.

Before Fallujah II, the battalion operated south of Baghdad and trained intensely at FOB Ferrin Huggins and later at Taji. Then, on 2 November, they moved to the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp. MAJ Abed was then still a deputy company commander, and LTC Wisam was the Battalion Executive Officer.

The battalion was split out by company to work with U.S. battalions. For example, MAJ Abed's company supported 1/8 Marines. LTC Wisam spoke very highly of the battalion AST, in particular MAJ Miller. He also spoke with admiration of SSG Cornell, the AST member that was killed in Fallujah. He also spoke of Capt Simms's bravery and leadership.

³⁰ At the time, Bremer had issued a warrant for al-Sadr's arrest for the murder of a Shi'a cleric the preceding summer.

The interview was interrupted by a steadily increasing volume of gunfire.³¹ The interview stopped and everyone moved outside.

It seems that a truck (Figure II-29) had been speeding toward the checkpoint. (Figure II-30 is a photograph of the checkpoint and headquarters building taken from the truck.) The ISF guards fired warning shots and then fired at the vehicle as it continued toward the headquarters building. The driver then stopped, jumped out of the truck, and ran with the ISF in pursuit.



Figure II-29. Truck That Sped toward Checkpoint



Figure II-30. Photo from Truck to Checkpoint and Headquarters

Upon interrogation, the truck driver said that he was being pursued by men in a red car and that he was trying to outrun them. The truck driver knew that the ISF were in the building and thought he would be safe once he reached the checkpoint. But when he approached the checkpoint, the ISF fired at him.

³¹ The next interview would have been Mr. Moykhlis and Mr. Shadehin, who were with the Desert Protectors. This program appeared to be similar to the Chieu Hoi program during Vietnam that used former insurgents (Viet Cong) to support U.S. operations.



Figure II-31. Woman Talks to Jundi

With the volume of fire from the checkpoint and nearby ISF gun trucks and Coalition gun HMMWVs, it was expected that the driver would be dead and the vehicle riddled with bullets. Surprisingly, the driver was unhurt except for a gash on the head, inflicted by the Jundi that captured him, and the truck only had a few visible bullet holes in the passenger door and front grill and none in the windshield. The truck was empty and contained no explosives.

Figure II-31 shows a local resident talking to one of the Jundi about the incident. It appeared that she was voicing her concern about the large volume of fire that was directed down the street in the direction of her house and other residents.

G. CAMP VICTORY

On 21 January the team departed Al Qaim via Ch-53 to Al Asad. At Al Asad the flight to Balad was canceled. On the 22nd the 1100 flight on the Sherpa, a C-23 military airlift and utility aircraft, was canceled, but the team finally made it out at 1820 via C-130 to Balad. Upon arriving, a check of flights to Kirkush Military Training Base revealed another day of waiting. Having already lost a day at Al Asad, the IDA team didn't have any extra time, so the trip to Kirkush Military Training Base was scrapped, and the team caught a flight on the 23rd to the American Embassy and then to Camp Victory. On the 24th, having completed all the ISF coordination and meetings, Tony departed for Doha, and Bob and Bill met with MG Zahner, C-2, MNC-I, who provided them points of contact for Dr. Rubai'e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, and GEN Shawani, the Director for the Iraqi National Intelligence Service. Both would be interviewed later in Baghdad.

1. LTG Salim Abdul Qadir, Commander, Iraqi Ground Forces

On the 25th from 0900 to 1100 the team interviewed LTG Abdul Qadir (Figure II-32), Commander, Iraqi Ground Forces, at his office near Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory.

LTG Qadir was the Commander of Iraqi Ground Forces in Fallujah during Al Fajr. Before that, he was the Deputy for Operations. He is Sunni and originally from Baghdad.



Figure II-32. LTG Qadir

During Fallujah I, the Ministry of Defense had not yet been formed, so Iraqi forces above battalion level played no part in that operation.

The operation in An Najaf was crucial because it was the first time Iraqi Army units had worked with Coalition forces and Iraqi Police against the terrorists in An Najaf. According to LTG Qadir, An Najaf was significant because the Iraqi Government better understood the capabilities of the militias, in particular the Mahdi Militia and Badr Corps. Specifically, they learned that the militias' bravado much exaggerated their real capability and that the Iraqi Government and the Coalition could play one militia against the other. LTG Qadir also saw that in the next phase of the operation (speaking of January 2006), the militias were going to demand a lot more of their energies than the terrorists.

LTG Qadir commented that Samarra operation was a small, battalion-sized (Iraqi) operation and that the threat was much different than in Fallujah. He emphasized that in Samarra, the threat was religious extremists, in contrast to the foreign fighters in Fallujah.

He was impressed with ability of the Marines and Army to conduct reconstruction as combat operations were taking place in the same vicinity.

According to LTG Qadir, the significance of Fallujah was that it was the real center of gravity for the terrorists, in particular for their logistical network. LTC Qadir noted the number of caches that were found in the city during Al Fajr.

2. Iraqi Special Operations Forces Assault Demonstration

On 27 January, at 2230, Bob and Bill linked up with MAJ Franks and Chief Warrant Officer Travis of the 5th SFG at the ICTF headquarters near Baghdad International Airport to attend the Iraqi Special Operations Forces assault demonstration. The demonstration was being held for GEN Brown, U.S. Special Operations Command Commander. The purpose was to demonstrate Iraqi Special Operations Forces hostage rescue capabilities. The demonstration consisted of an alert; engagement of forces en route; assault of a facility, in this case the training shoot-house that had been built to train

the Iraqi Special Operations Forces; takedown of the facility; and killing or capturing the kidnappers, with the primary objective hostage rescue.



Figure II-33. Takedown



Figure II-34. Marksmanship



Figure II-35. Replacement Doors Stacked against the Back Wall

shows replacement doors stacked against the back wall. They will be used as soldiers train to crash through doors to enter facilities. The demonstration was completed by 2330.

Figure II-33 is a picture of an Iraqi Special Operations Forces Jundi entering the building and killing the kidnapper (the team observed from the catwalk). Figure II-34 reflects his marksmanship (holes in the kidnapper's bridge of the nose, right eye, and left cheek, all within 3 inches and none in the hostage). Figure II-35

3. LTC Dominik, Polish Liaison Officer



Figure II-36. LTC Dominik

Figure II-36 shows LTC Dominik, the Polish liaison officer at the Joint Operations Center. He was interviewed at the Al Faw Place at Camp Victory on 27 January.³² LTC Dominik was located in Karbala with the 1st Polish Brigade, Multi National Division-Central South, from February to July 2004. He said that his unit's mission was to stabilize Karbala and train the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. Multi National Division-Central South was responsible for five provinces, including An Najaf and Northern Babil.

Multi National Division-Central South consisted of 27 countries. Among them were El Salvador, Honduras, Spain, Philippines, and the Ukraine. The first clashes with the Mahdi Militia occurred in March/April of 2004. Since Poland's rules of engagement did not allow for offensive operations (i.e., their rules of engagement were defensive in nature, and troops were only performing perimeter guard and manning checkpoints), they were not conducting patrols. Hence, during April they asked for Coalition support when the Mahdi militia started getting out of control. Complicating this threat, the Spanish pulled out of An Najaf Province.³³

At the end of the interview, when asked if he had anything to add, LTC Dominik said, "This is the first time we [Polish troops] have fired our weapons [against a threat] since World War II."

³² The transcript for LTC Dominik's interview is in Volume II. Unless noted, interview transcripts from the Battle Site Survey, if available, are in Appendix C of this publication.

³³ Recall that after the Madrid bombing on 11 March, the Spanish opposition party promised, if elected, to withdraw Spanish forces from the Coalition. They won the election and by May had withdrawn all their forces.

4. COL Fahdil, Commander, Iraqi Special Operations Forces



Figure II-37. COL Fahdil, Second from Left, Provides Map Brief of Fallujah

At 1910, Bill and Bob met with COL(P) Fahdil at his headquarters at RPC South. COL Fahdil completed assessment and selection of the 36th Commandos in January 2004 and was assigned as the Bravo Company Commander. In that capacity, he participated in Fallujah I in April 2004. He outlined on a map (Figure II-37) the location of Bravo Company and how it supported the Coalition forces during Fallujah I.

COL Fahdil then narrated portions of a 41-minute video produced from two helmet cams (the kind used to take video during free-fall operations) worn by members of the 5th SFG and video from an attached combat cameraman. The consolidated video showed the 36th Commandos as they seized and cleared Fallujah General Hospital. COL Fahdil was the commander of the assault and had Alpha and Bravo Companies.

A comment often heard from previous interviews and found in documents was that the 36th Commandos were primarily former Pershmerga (Kurds) and that they enjoyed fighting the Sunnis, raising questions of loyalties.³⁴ This question of old hatreds of Sunnis and of loyalties—to the Kurds or to Iraq—will continue to be a challenge that extends to Shi’a, Sunni, tribes, and families.

H. BAGHDAD

On 29 January, the IDA team members started the third part of their journey. They completed their visit to the ISF units and interviews available at Camp Victory. The purpose of the moving to the embassy was to link up with George and start interviewing the political and military leadership in the Baghdad area. George did a great job coordinating the various interviews. Figure II-38 shows the team’s movement. These meetings took the team in and out of the International Zone.

³⁴ One of the Marines saw a commando spit on the Iraqi flag as he was directed to raise it above the compound. When asked why, he responded, “I’m not an Iraqi!”

Traveling through Baghdad was difficult. Due to the high volume of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) and other attacks, the Coalition initiated strict requirements for traveling in the Red Zone: three-to-five up-armored vehicles with a gun truck in the front and rear; passengers must wear body armor, Kevlar, and goggles/ballistic glasses; no indigenous vehicles can approach within 100 meters; the road must be clear to the front of the convoy.

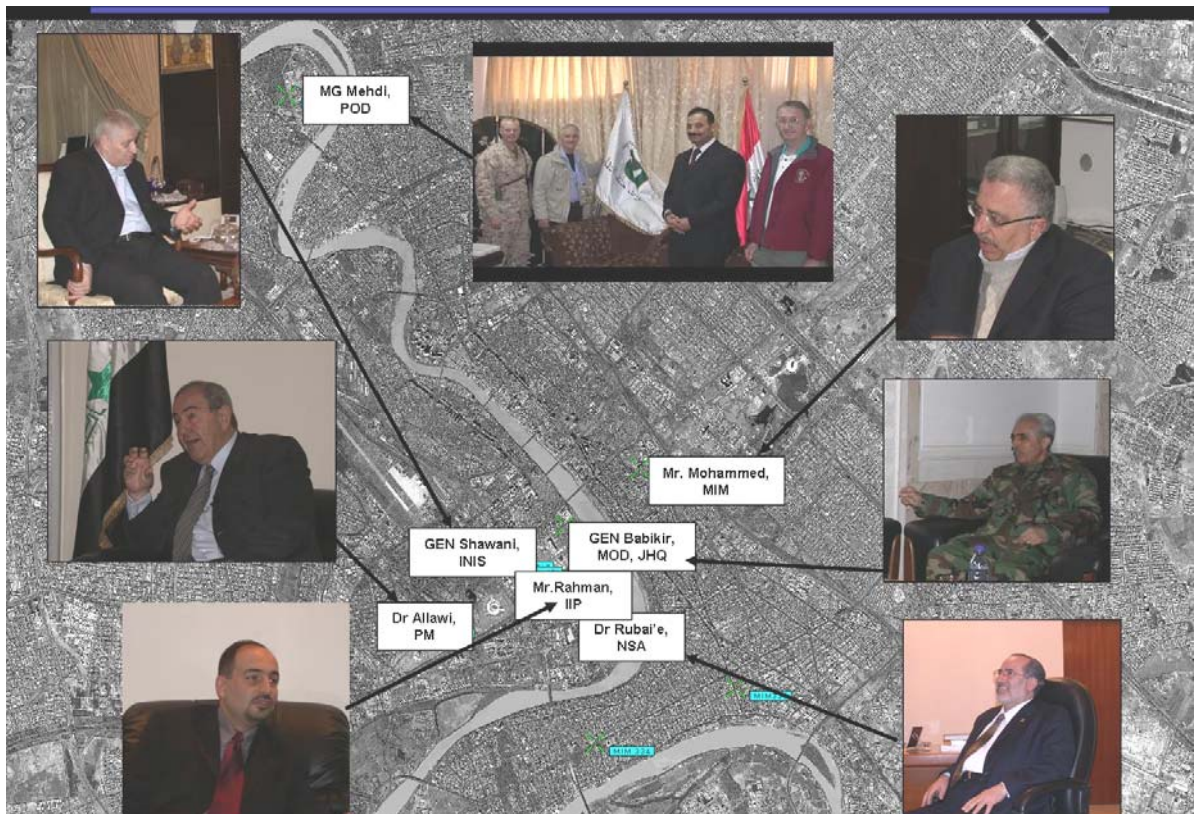


Figure II-38. Baghdad Meeting Locations

Figure II-39 is the convoy exiting the International Zone, and Figure II-40 is the convoy moving through Baghdad. To ensure that the populace knows that the convoy is approaching, the convoy blares sirens, and an interpreter speaks through a loudspeaker, providing general, or in some cases specific, directions to people. Figure II-41 is a photograph of the interpreter in the convoy commander's vehicle providing directions to the populace (e.g., "Move out of the way"). Figure II-42 is a photograph of a resident who's not quite sure what to do so he stops and raises his hands. The convoy stopped as the Iraqi is told to move to the side of the road. Once he did that, the convoy continues. It's a process that begs the question: Where's the balance between security and traumatizing the people?



Figure II-39. Gun HMMWV with Sign



Figure II-40. Convoy through Baghdad



Figure II-41. Interpreter on Loudspeaker



Figure II-42. Confused Civilian, Hands in the Air, Standing by His Car

1. Dr. Rubai'e, National Security Advisor



Figure II-43. Dr. Rubai'e

On 2 February 2006, from 2100 until 0030, the team interviewed Dr. Rubai'e at his home in Baghdad (Figure II-43). Dr. Rubai'e has been the National Security Advisor for Iraq since February 2004 when Ambassador Bremer appointed him. Dr. Rubai'e is Shi'a and a critical link to Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani in An Najaf.

a. Background

Dr. Rubai'e was born in Mosul to a Sunni mother and Shi'a father. As an adult he lived and worked in Baghdad. He was a member of the Iraqi Dawa Party between 1966 and 1996.

He was imprisoned three times—in 1973, 1976, and 1978—in Iraq for treason. In 1979, he went to London where he was educated, became a physician, and practiced medicine for almost three decades.

In 1996 Dr. Rubai'e worked for "community rights and democracy" for the Shi'a and Kurds. He said that although the U.S. Congress passed the Iraqi Liberation Act, President Clinton made every effort to circumvent and not implement it. "They were not terribly fruitful years," he said. "Horrible genocide" took place.

Dr. Rubai'e calls himself a Muslim Democrat, not an Islamic Democrat, a Muslim Democrat, like a Christian Democrat. I practice Muslim, but don't mix politics with religion. I think religion should play a pivotal part in the normal daily activities...It is complementary to the politics; it gives it moral values, ethical standards...The history of this country is all about religion.

Dr. Rubai'e entered Iraq with the Coalition forces in 2003.

b. Dissolution of the Iraqi Government and Iraqi Army

Dr. Rubai'e said that the U.S. post-combat plan (hearsay from a British general who worked with Pentagon planners) was to remove the top echelon (20,000 to 30,000 people) of the government and keep the state intact. However, when the top echelon was removed, the state collapsed. According to Rubai'e, Ambassador Bremer didn't have a choice.³⁵ The Iraqi state was rotten to the core. Saddam built Iraq in such a way that as soon as he left, it collapsed. In addition, Bremer did not disband the Army; the Army dissolved itself.

According to Dr. Rubai'e, after the state collapsed, people did not want to go back to their jobs. For example, in Sadr City the police quit. Under Saddam, they were forced to be police. The government persecuted, imprisoned, discriminated, gassed, and massacred the people. That's why the people looted and burned government buildings. They hated the government and disliked their jobs.

From 9 April to 13 July 2003, there was no government, no direction, and no security. "You can't have a country of 30 million people without a government."

³⁵ According to Dr. Rubai'e many people blame Bremer for the collapse of the Iraqi Government because of some of the policies that were initiated, such as deba'athification. Dr. Rubai'e said he wasn't defending Bremer. He hates his book and believes it is factually untrue. However, Rubai'e did like Bremer's seven-point plan.

c. 15 November Agreement

Dr. Rubai'e claimed that the agreement of 15 November 2003 was a turning point in Iraq. In October, Chalabi and Pacachi campaigned in Washington for a quicker than scheduled turnover of sovereignty to the Iraqis. Dr. Rubai'e thought that was the reason Ambassador Bremer was recalled to Washington in November 2003. Upon Bremer's return to Iraq, he opened dialogue on the 15 November Agreement.

Dr. Rubai'e was visibly frustrated and irritated over the mention of "caucuses" in the agreement. "The 15th of November agreement...[discussed] the concept of the caucuses; that is an alien principle. There is no translation. What is caucus"? Where are we, in Ohio?" Bremer also claimed that he had obtained Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani's approval for the agreement. However, when Rubai'e talked to Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, he said he knew nothing about "caucuses." So they had to find a face-saving formula for Bremer to proceed with the political process.

d. An Najaf and Fallujah—They Are Different

Dr. Rubai'e explained that al-Sadr's uprising in Sadr City and south of Baghdad was completely different from the one that occurred in Fallujah. "Al-Sadr recognized the new order, but the Fallujans didn't. Al-Sadr wanted to find a place in this new order." Dr. Rubai'e thought you could "bring him into the process easily, [but] once you alienate him, then you have a problem." On the other hand, "This [Fallujah] is the real enemy. These people don't recognize the new order....These people we should take on, not only militarily, but politically."

e. Dissolving the Army

According to Dr. Rubai'e, "Bremer could not have recalled the Army because they had nothing to come back to. The camps, the army barracks, were all looted, burned, and destroyed."

f. Fallujah I, Vigilant Resolve

Dr. Rubai'e didn't think options other than going into Fallujah the first time were available to the Coalition, but he was concerned about the Fallujah Brigade. First, the Iraqi Governing Council was not informed about the formation of the Fallujah Brigade. He found out about the Fallujah Brigade through *The Washington Post*. He thought this official recognition of elements of the former regime by the Coalition was another turning point in the increased influence of the insurgency. The old Army had been gone

for a year, and now “the Beret, the Republican Guard, the 100 with the uniform and the same rank came back, and they are parading.” This CPA-sanctioned formation of the Fallujah Brigade gave them legitimacy. Further, the designated head of the Fallujah Brigade, Major General Jassim Mohammed Saleh, had held the third highest rank in the Baath party.³⁶ This sent the wrong message. He was eventually replaced. After that, the insurgents entrenched themselves in the city, “and the city was a symbol, even in the Arab world.”

g. Transition from Iraqi Governing Council to Iraqi Interim Government

Dr. Rubai’e contends that turnover of sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government was premature. After 35 years of tyranny they needed to do this gradually. The prime minister’s office was overwhelmed, and the government wasn’t functioning because of these new, unfamiliar responsibilities.

h. An Najaf

Dr. Rubai’e was responsible for negotiating with Muqtada al-Sadr when al-Sadr was holed up in the Imam Ali Shrine.

Al-Sadr’s Mahdi Militia had attacked the Marines in An Najaf in early August, and Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani had left for heart surgery in London on 6 August. Additional Coalition and Iraqi forces were called in to quell the Militia, and eventually al-Sadr was trapped in the Shrine. Allawi called in Rubai’e one day in mid August and asked, “What does it take to disarm, to finish this peacefully?” Rubai’e drafted an agreement, coordinated it with GEN Casey and Ambassador Negroponte, had it blessed by Allawi, and sent it to al-Sadr. Rubai’e used an Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps member as a contact for al-Sadr.

After aborting the first meeting with al-Sadr, due to Coalition intervention, Dr. Rubai’e finally got al-Sadr to look again at the agreement in late August. After a couple of changes, al-Sadr was prepared to sign it. Rubai’e coordinated the agreement with Casey and Negroponte and received what he thought was PM Allawi’s approval. Dr. Rubai’e prepared for the 2-kilometer walk from the government buildings in An Najaf to the Imam Ali Shrine by putting on body armor, and he recited a lot of verses from the

³⁶ The Coalition’s initial choice, General Mohamed Jasim Saleh, who outraged victims of the Ba’athist regime because of past service in Saddam’s feared Republican Guard, said he was stepping aside, leaving command of the new Fallujah Brigade to a former intelligence officer, Mohammed Latif (Joseph Logan, “New General Appointed to Fallujah,” *The Scotsman*, 4 May 2004).

Koran, “because there are zillions of snipers on the way, and RPGs of Jaish al-Mahdi, and the Marines...” However, at the last minute he received a phone call from PM Allawi who told him to return to Baghdad. PM Allawi said, “Don’t sign, there’s no agreement, no negotiation, nothing, absolutely. You come now. You drive to the airport; your helicopter is waiting for you.”

In the meantime, Dr. Rubai’e received word that Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani was prepared to return to Iraq and reported this to PM Allawi. But Allawi asked, through Rubai’e, that Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani delay his return for 48 hours. By then Sistani had departed Heathrow Airport, and by the next day was in Kuwait. When Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani returned, he negotiated with al-Sadr for the return of the Imam Ali Shrine.

i. Fallujah II, Al Fajr

PM Allawi spoke with various delegations from Fallujah in an attempt to reconcile the Fallujah situation. He also talked to King Abdullah II of Jordan, the Saudis, the Emirates, and others. He told them that the assault on Fallujah was necessary because al Qaeda was in control of the city and Fallujah had grown as a symbol of the insurgency. Rubai’e also spoke of a merger of al Qaeda and Ba’athists. He described the Ba’athists as being very adaptable and embracing philosophies that helped them gain power.

Dr. Rubai’e said that he didn’t think the administration had a choice this time. Military action was the only option. However, he did question the timing. He felt the assault could have been done after the Iraqi elections. Al Fajr created a lot of animosity and negativity. He thought they could have isolated the city and gone ahead with the elections without the Fallujans.

j. Two Different Cultures, the Sunni Triangle and Southern Shi’a

According to Dr. Rubai’e, the mentality in the Sunni Triangle is Bedouin; this is a culture of force and violence. “The Bedouin mentality combined with the Wahabism or Salifism...will not respect anything but force.”

In the south, “We are used to this; we are used to this force. Saddam persecuted us, killed us; after all, we go to paradise. Like Imam Hussein, like Imam Ali, they were killed, we go to the same [place]. These people, they don’t respect force down south; they fear force. There is a difference.”

k. Lessons from Fallujah

Dr. Rubai'e listed some of the lessons he learned from Fallujah.

1. Once you start, don't stop.
2. The Fallujah Brigade was an unmitigated disaster.
3. Drive a wedge between people, the Ba'athists and the Salafists, early on.
4. "We isolated the city, and then the services ran down. Let the [Fallujan] people turn to the Salafists and say, 'This is all because of you.'"
5. "This is an intelligence-led war. This is not tanks for tanks and airplane for airplane, and soldier for soldier; this is an intelligence-led war; and we were really lacking any intelligence within that city."
6. "We could have used the tribal sheiks versus the clergy."

l. Information Operations

According to Dr. Rubai'e, during Fallujah I an Al Jazeera reporter in Fallujah was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, and his reporting was very emotional. He used to report that the "Mujahadin is killing the infidels...and the infidels are running away from the Mujahadin." This type of emotional reporting to the Arab world "created Fallujah as a symbol." But, during Fallujah II the Coalition controlled the media; there were only embedded journalists, and Al Jazeera was kicked out of the country.

m. Comments on Democracy

After 30 January 2004, many Iraqis thought that PM Allawi would be reelected, but he lost. "What happened? This is serious democracy...I think this is one of the golden rules. I heard it from George W. before the first election... 'We are not picking sides; we are supporting the political process, whatever that will bring.' It's a huge risk, but I think that is the beauty of democracy. It will pay off in the long term."

Dr. Rubai'e cited another example, "How can these Americans allow Hamas to win the elections? Well, no, it is not the Americans allowing or not allowing, it's this paper [Rubai'e was waving a ballot for the constitutional referendum], and this magic paper goes to the ballot box. It's the process."

2. National Joint Operations Center

On 30 January, at 0930, the team departed the American Embassy and after a 1/2-hour trip arrived at Adnon Palace to meet LTC Williams, Civilian Police Assistance Training Teams POC for Ministry of Interior. The IDA team was supposed to meet with

MG Hekmet, who was in the Ministry of Interior (and listed by Frank Ryan as a member of the Elections Committee for January 2005). The Adnon Palace is the residence of the Minister of Interior and not the site of the Ministry of Interior itself, which is located across town.

As we waited to meet with members of the Ministry of Interior, Major Fonesca gave the IDA team a tour of the National Joint Operations Center (NJOC). An advisor to the NJOC, he serves as a liaison officer to the United States. The Ministry of Interior runs the NJOC. It links into the Provincial Joint Coordination Centers in the various provinces. Each province may have Joint Coordination Centers in the various cities that report to the provinces. The NJOC receives information feeds from the Ministry of Defense, NSIS, and others.³⁷

MG Hekmet was not at work, so LTC Williams escorted the IDA team to MG Adnon's office at the Republican Guard's barracks for a meeting.

3. MG Adnon, Ministry of Interior Member in 2004



Figure II-44. MG Adnon

MG Adnon (Figure II-44) was arrested for conspiracy under Saddam Hussein's regime and sentenced to death in 1997. His sentence was changed, because he was a tribal leader, to life imprisonment and he was released from Abu Ghraib in 2002 as part of an amnesty program. MG Adnon was currently the commander of the Iraqi Special Police. He established the Special Police unit in 2004 and they consisted of two divisions and a mechanized brigade. The 1st Division has four brigades of commandos, and the 2nd Division has four Public Order Brigades. Each battalion is authorized 750 people, and each brigade 2,500. He currently has 22,301 people under his command.

³⁷ Major Fonesca was frustrated with his inability to get someone to respond to some of the reporting. As an example, he discussed reporting he received from a source concerning the 57 election observers that were abducted, many of whom were killed. His source said that they were being held in a sawmill adjacent to the hotel where they were staying, but the 3rd Infantry Division didn't act on the information (the reason was not known). Later, they found that terrorists had killed and cut up many of the bodies of the 57 people.

In December 2004, he participated in operations in Mosul. Bill asked about Fallujah, and MG Adnon said that a Public Order Brigade participated in Fallujah in November 2004. Bill mentioned MG Mehdi, a commander of the Public Order Brigade, but MG Adnon didn't seem to understand. This confusion would be cleared up the following day with COL Davis, the MiTT commander embedded with MG Mehdi's unit.

4. MG Mehdi, Commander, Public Order Division



Figure II-45. MG Mehdi

On 31 January at 1240, at Camp Justice, the IDA team linked up with COL Davis, the Commander of the MiTT supporting the Public Order Division. COL Davis provided a quick brief on the Public Order Division and explained the relationship between MG Adnon and MG Mehdi.

The Public Order Division is part of the Special Police commanded by MG Adnon (MG Mehdi's commander). MG Adnon is a political appointee. COL Davis said that there was some friction between the two, and his comment about Adnon being a political appointee is probably the source of that friction and may also explain MG Adnon's confusion when asked about Mehdi.

The team met with MG Mehdi (Figure II-45) at 1315, talked until 1515, then had lunch. MG Mehdi provided some personal background and then discussed Fallujah.³⁸

MG Mehdi joined the Iraqi Army in 1981 and was a second lieutenant in 1982. In 1994 he was a brigadier general and stationed in Kirkuk. In 2004 he joined the Special Police Force, which consists of a Public Order Division, a commando division, and a mechanized brigade. He now commands the Public Order Division that consists of four brigades of about 800 people per battalion and 2,500 people per brigade.

In October 2004, commanders in the Special Police Force were asked if they would go to Fallujah. Nobody accepted, except for Mehdi. There were several reasons:

1. Fallujah was an open area for insurgents.
2. This was the first time the Public Order Brigade would be used—they had no experience and were not familiar with Fallujah.

³⁸ George was an excellent double check on Sammy, our interpreter. On a number of occasions George set the record straight on what MG Mehdi said and alerted Bill to be more cautious about accepting some of the responses Sammy provided.

3. Some felt that this would be Iraqis fighting Iraqis.

But MG Mehdi convinced his soldiers they should fight. It was for Iraq's future.

MG Mehdi had two tasks—rebuild the city and chase insurgents. The first soldiers from his unit attended a 45-day course in Jordan on how to fight insurgents. MG Mehdi's soldiers graduated on 15 November. He put them on leave from 25 November to 1 December; everyone returned from leave. On 3 December they deployed to Fallujah. He had 800 soldiers in the battalion.³⁹ He had delayed their departure until 1 December to ensure he had the resources for Fallujah—Fallujah was the first priority.

According to MG Mehdi, initially, there was no trust between the Marines and the Iraqis. But MG Mehdi began to see a growing trust. By the third week the Marines would sleep while the Iraqis pulled guard duty and vice versa. COL Shupp later called them the “Marines of Iraq.”

MG Mehdi had two very hard days/periods. The hardest day was the third day (according to him it was 8 December). His troops were ready to quit. He met with the troops and talked to them and 17 of them left. He told his troops he would sleep and work with them, and he did. MG Mehdi was in the field with soldiers, and they learned to trust him, and he learned to trust them.

After the approval of the Ministry of Interior and Governing Council of Fallujah, civilians were allowed to return to their homes on 23 December in a very controlled manner. At 1100, MG Mehdi went to the entry control point to talk to the residents. He tried to build their trust. Many were afraid; they had no idea what to expect in Fallujah. At 1220 he led in the first groups. He went with them to ensure that they were not assaulted by anyone.

MG Mehdi's comments at the end of the interview:

Why did the terrorists pick Fallujah? Because of its location in central Iraq with lines of communication to the north, south, and west. It has plenty of money, and the schools taught the strict Islamic fundamentalist philosophy.

During Fallujah I, when the Marines left, it was a turning point. The insurgents gained strength from that event.

We need to negotiate and talk—fighting is not the objective, the political resolution is the objective.

³⁹ The second battalion later deployed to Samarra.

Fallujah was a turning point for the Ministry of Interior. This was the first combat for the Public Order Brigade, and they succeeded.

Fallujans are good people—95% good and only 5% bad. During the IED attack on him, it was a Fallujan boy that warned me and a police officer that pulled me from the burning vehicle and laid on top of [me] to protect me. You have to build trust, with the Coalition and the people.

The Public Order Brigade returned from Fallujah between 28 October and 1 November 2005, following the Iraqi Constitutional Referendum.

5. Mr. Mohammed Abdul, Deputy Minister, Minister of Industry and Minerals

At 0930, Bill and George linked up with members of the Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office to convoy to the Ministry of Industry and Minerals. The Ministry is located north out of the Assassins Gate and to the east, across the river, only a 2-kilometer trip. However, because three IEDs had been located near the bridge and Ministry the day before, the contracted Personnel Security Detachment departed the Green Zone south across the 14 July bridge, then east and north through the city, a 10-kilometer trip in congested Baghdad traffic. The point is, the Personnel Security Detachment considered the longer trip, in congested Baghdad traffic, to be safer.

The IDA team arrived at the Ministry at 1000 and met with the Deputy Minister, Mr. Mohammed Abdul (Figure II-46). Mr. Mohammed was also the deputy during Al Fajr and headed the Fallujah Inter Ministerial Reconstruction meetings in Baghdad. Attending the meetings were the Deputy Minister of Commerce, Minister of Finance, Minister of Oil, Minister of Municipalities, Minister of Electricity, and others.

The following are Mr. Mohammed's comments on Al Fajr and suggestions for future operations.



Figure II-46. Mr. Mohammed Abdul

a. Internally Displaced Personnel

Before the military strikes on Fallujah, we should have made temporary camps so that all internally displaced personnel could have been displaced to a comfortable and accessible area. It was very difficult for us (and our contractors) to reach places with food, medicine, and the like. Military

conditions made it extremely hard because there was a threat to our safety from both sides.⁴⁰

b. Damage Assessment Teams

One of the foremost tasks of restoring normal life to Fallujah and its residents was forming damage assessment teams...We had 500 engineers and made 150 teams. Each team had an engineer, a cameraman, and two others. The assessments took 1 month. They were able to complete 36,000 homes within 1 month. The overall assessment for damages to homes alone was \$492 million. This dollar amount does not include commercial properties, industrial buildings, or private businesses. After the assessments were completed, we obtained \$100 million from the Iraqi Government. Since the initial allocation, we have received an additional \$75 million....These damages [negative psychological effects] could have been reduced if we had planned for the restoration and rehabilitation phase.

c. Reconstruction

When it was time to begin the reconstruction process in Fallujah, we utilized the project management system. Through this process, we were able to coordinate the delivery of materials, the recruitment of a work force, and all other important functions that must be put in place. The Iraqi Government contributed \$100 million for reconstruction and the MNF contributed \$192 million.

The Fallujah water system was destroyed. The interim solution was to put 32 water tanks [with a capacity of 10 cubic meters each] in Fallujah. We used 20 water tankers per day until we completed the system and pipes. It took 45 days to complete the distribution system to 50% of the city. During the rainy season, most houses flooded with sewage water. We were forced to install a huge pumping system to evacuate this water. We then repaired the rainwater drain system within 2 months.

d. Ambulances

Ambulances must have special markings so that they can get into the affected area during military operations. Because we did not have such a system in place for Fallujah, ambulances were delayed far too long when it is evident that every second counts.⁴¹

⁴⁰ There were a number of reasons why the Coalition did not want to establish these areas ahead of time. One was OPSEC—they didn't have the forces to establish camps with the requisite security and prosecute the battle at the same time.

⁴¹ It was reported on many news channels in the United States that the insurgents had confiscated ambulances and used them to penetrate Coalition and Iraqi security forces around Fallujah. Through this process, the insurgents were able to plant explosives in these vehicles and get them past security

6. GEN Babikir, Chief of Staff, Joint Headquarters, Iraqi Armed Forces



Figure II- 47. GEN Babikir

On 3 February 2006, GEN Babikir Baderkhan Zibari, Chief of Staff and Commanding General of the Iraqi Joint Forces (Figure II-47), was interviewed at his office at the Ministry of Defense. GEN Babikir was the commander of all Peshmerga forces in Dahuk and Mosul districts until 2003, when he fought alongside the Coalition forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom. In January 2004, he went through a series of interviews at the CPA. In January-February he attended school in the United States, and by March 2004, he was in Iraq assigned as an advisor to the CPA/Ministry of Defense (Ambassador Paul Bremer). He was then assigned as the Chief of Staff, Joint Iraqi Forces, in July 2004. GEN Babikir commented on a number of topics.

a. Lesson from Al Anbar

Soldiers who were recruited from their province and subsequently assigned to duties within their province were more prone to support the local powers than the national government. This loyalty resulted from pressures from family, friends, and tribes and coercion by criminals and insurgents. According to GEN Babikir:

We had seven battalions in Al Anbar Province, but they were biased because they were from that area and took sides with the people of the area. We decided not to recruit people from the same area and have them perform their service in their own villages and towns. So we had recruitment centers all over the country at the various governates. They would be recruited for the Army and distributed all over.

b. Muqtada al-Sadr

GEN Babikir said that the CPA actions against al-Sadr in March-April 2004 that resulted in the uprising in Sadr City, Karbala, and An Najaf were a “huge mistake” because the timing was wrong. He recommended that they finish Fallujah first and defer the al-Sadr issues until later:

c. Lessons from Al Fajr

GEN Babikir provided some of the lessons from Al Fajr:

before they detonated the explosives. These incidents resulted in a great deal of paranoia on the part of both Coalition and Iraqi forces regarding ambulances.

[1.] The insurgents connected all the houses by tunnels underneath the ground. Also, each house had weapons and ammunition, so all they had to do was move from one house to another. The water towers would have two layers. The top layer would have water, but the bottom layer is where the snipers would hide and fire from. The houses had many false walls, and insurgents would fire from [them] and blow themselves up. They would have holes in the wall and start shooting and then move. When we saw this, we realized they had taken this from the battle at Khoramshahr, Iran, when they [the Iranians] were fighting the Iraqis. None of us knew that this is what was going on in the Coalition, but when we found out, we realized we had to go house by house. And we found so many caches, it was unbelievable; booby traps [were] everywhere.

[2.] This was a front for the insurgents. They were fighting a classic war and were able to evacuate their wounded to that area and build their IEDs. Many of their activities they were doing from this Fallujah, but we took that away from them [i.e., we gave them no sanctuary].

[3.] We learned a lot from their tactics of hiding in walls and using the roofs and holes in the walls. They knew that they couldn't fight a classic war and that we inflicted a lot of casualties on them, and [they] lost all their equipment. They were thinking about creating a Republic of Fallujah in that area. An off-limits area—just like in Samarra, they thought they could produce a Republic of Samarra. But now there is nowhere in this country that they can hide.

d. Major Issues – Things the Coalition Did Wrong

GEN Babikir ended the interview with six mistakes he felt the Coalition had made on the initial conduct of the war: looting and lawlessness, deba'athification, the Coalition as occupiers rather than liberators, embarrassing friends, unsecured borders, and dissolving the military. His comments for several of those topics are provided here:

1. Deba'athification.

Telling the high-ranking Ba'athists not to come back to any government jobs. By letting them go and cutting off their salaries they turned. We should have set up some camps and taken care of them and supported their families by giving them some sort of salary and tried to teach and reform them.

2. Occupiers vs. Liberators:

They should never have called themselves the occupier; they should have continued to call themselves the liberators. The people were then embarrassed when the Americans called themselves the occupiers.

3. Embarrassing friends:

They [the Coalition] were not listening to the advice of their friends in this country. For instance, we were with the Coalition in Mosul and we said, “If the Kurdish forces stay with you, they will help you.” When Mosul capitulated they [the Coalition] embarrassed them by kicking them [the Kurds] out. They took their weapons away, and when the enemy saw this they were encouraged by it and took advantage of it. And the first fight took place in Mosul. Taking the brown bag and putting it over the Kurdish forces in Mosul, that wasn’t a good thing. You should never try to give advantage to your enemy at the expense of your friends. And they are still doing that. Some people will always be your enemy, and no matter what you do, they will not be your friends.

7. LTG Nasier Abadi, Deputy Chief of Staff, Iraqi Armed Forces

At 1230, the team met LTG Naser Abadi (Figure II-48), the Deputy Chief of Staff, Iraqi Armed Forces, also located in the Ministry of Defense building.

LTG Abadi attended school in India and returned to Iraq in 1970. He flew MiG-21 aircraft in the Iraqi Air Force. As an instructor in the air combat wing, he fought the Iranians in the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq war. In 1986, he was promoted to general, and in 1988 he was head of research and development for the Air Force. “In 1992 they decided that I should retire.”



Figure II-48. LTG Abadi

During 2003 and 2004, LTG Abadi was an advisor to MG Paul Eaton, “the first MNSTC-I Commander.” LTG Abadi spoke of lessons learned from 2004:

Leadership in the Iraqi Army is one of the weaknesses that emerged from Fallujah. We need noncommissioned officers. There were no NCOs in the old Army. There were only officers and privates. We have sent soldiers for training in the Kingdom of Jordan to fill this need. Logistical support is a problem, and we are working on it.

We have other shortcomings—no fire support, medical support, inadequate communications, and inadequate intelligence. In fact, we just placed some soldiers in a training course so that we can field reconnaissance and surveillance companies in the future.

Information operations were a failure because they have no means to train people for information operations:

[We learned from Fallujah that] Iraqis can communicate to our [Iraqis] better than the Coalition. Our audience has two extremes. We have a

relatively small, educated audience on the one hand, and we have a much larger audience consisting of people who are looking for simple things in life. We have no one in between these two extremes—no middle class. Saddam eliminated our middle class. Many people fled to Jordan, the UAE, the U.S., and to other places of refuge.

He spoke of the establishment of the Iraqi National Guard:

With respect to the year 2004 and the many transitions, we had only three divisions, and we knew that we couldn't defend the country with so few forces. This motivated us to create the Iraqi National Guard units. Another important event of 2004 was that initiatives at that time set the foundation for where we are now headed.

In January 2005, PM Allawi declared there would be no more ING. According to LTG Abadi:

His initial inclination was to transfer Iraqi National Guard units to the Ministry of the Interior; however, he decided in the end to transfer them to the Iraqi Army. The 1st Div, 3rd Div, and 5th Div were the first Army divisions. The 2nd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th Divisions, which were initially Iraqi Civil Defense Corps and Iraqi National Guard units, became light infantry units. The 9th Iraqi National Guard Division became a mechanized division.

8. Mr. Saif Rahman, Chief of Staff for Dr. al-Hassani, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament and Member of Iraqi Islamic Party



Figure II-49. Mr. Saif Rahman

On 5 February 2006, Mr. Saif Al-Din Dawood Abdul Rahman (Figure II-49), Chief of Staff for Dr. al-Hassani, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament and member of Iraqi Islamic Party, was interviewed at his office at the Convention Center in Baghdad (within the International Zone).

Mr. Saif was born in Baghdad in 1978. His family left Iraq when he was 6 years old. They have lived in the United States since the mid-1980s, except for 5 years they spent in England. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland. The Speaker, Dr. al-Hassani, is a friend of his family. Mr. Saif visited Iraq after

the end of the major combat phase in October 2003 and began his present position in 2004.

Mr. Saif sat in on the meetings of the Governing Council and could see the posturing and positioning of the different players. He felt that the turnover of sovereignty was premature and the Iraqis were rushed through this “get-acquainted period.”

He immediately identified what he perceived as the “artificial separation of the Sunni and Shi’a” as a major U.S. mistake. “This phenomenon was accentuated by the U.S.”

Mr. Saif commented on the dissolution of Iraq’s security forces as another major mistake:

In my judgment, over 70% of the Army would have returned if they had been recalled. These people had everything to gain by coming back. They were receiving a salary and they were trained. Many were from Sunni areas, and they returned to those areas when the Army dissolved. As fate would have it, this is where we see many of the attacks coming from today. We are seeing new tactics and techniques used today that are probably a result of some of the training received by these former Army people. The former military [Iraqi Army] should have been preserved. Their existence and deterrent value would have weakened the foreign fighters in Iraq.

When asked if there was any single incident that sparked the distrust and anger among the residents of Fallujah, Mr. Saif cited the incident in April 2003⁴² where U.S. forces fired on a peaceful demonstration (Fallujan perspective) and killed several of the demonstrators.

During Fallujah I, Mr. Saif recalled the first meeting with representatives from Fallujah. The meeting was in Mosul. When asked about their grievances and what they wanted, the people listed several things:

1. “They resented the shooting incident of the demonstrators in 2003.”
2. “Attendees described what they considered the ‘insensitivity’ or indifference of U.S. military to Iraqi citizens.”
3. “The third issue took the form of a demand for the U.S. military to withdraw to the pre-April 4th places. In return, the attendees promised to calm down the city.”

⁴² He said October-November 2003, but his description of the events matched the cited April 2003 event.

Mr. Saif describes this period of negotiations:

By this time, the U.S. military had taken a significant part of the city. After the initial meeting, there were some side meetings to put together selected [Iraqi] people with the representation from the CPA to negotiate a settlement. These people were called the Fallujah negotiators. The main ensuing problems were that we would reach an agreement to cease fire, but the citizens would complain about [U.S. military] snipers. There was widespread distrust between the two sides, and the snipers played a huge role in these attitudes.

We went to Fallujah at least 10 times to find the right kind of people to participate in the negotiations. During this time, the Iraqi Islamic Party decided that the U.S. was not negotiating in good faith. The IIP decided to pull out of the negotiations. Dr. al-Hassani and I overheard General Abizaid say to Ambassador Bremer, "Give me 3 days and I will finish Fallujah." Dr. al-Hassani said in response, "If you do, all of Iraq will become a Fallujah." I told General Sanchez that we need a complete cease-fire so we can have real negotiations. We reached an agreement to a unilateral cease-fire at 9:00 A.M. the following day [12 April 2004].

The solution was that the Marines would withdraw and the Fallujans would provide their own security. The Fallujah Brigade was born, and according to Mr. Saif, it was supporting the intent of the agreement. "To illustrate the good faith of the local residents in maintaining the cease-fire, I would relate an incident. One night someone in a pickup truck was riding around firing mortars on the U.S. Marines. The local Fallujans actually fired on the pickup truck."

He contends, however, that the Fallujah Brigade was not armed properly, and "the insurgents, who came back into Fallujah [after the cease-fire], were better armed than the soldiers of the Fallujah Brigade. The result was that the Fallujah Brigade fell apart."

Mr. Saif also contends that the Iranians were supporting the conflict in Al Anbar:

Our eastern neighbor [Iran] is funding things in the Western Province [Al Anbar]. Our eastern neighbor gains from having influence in western Iraq and Baghdad, because such a situation bolsters Iran's strategy. This strategy is to support the Western [Sunni] Provinces [so that anti-U.S. elements will have the means to perpetuate the insurgency] and have the U.S. kill them off. Later, their allies in Iraq [Shi'a] will be in control.

By October, Fallujah was in turmoil. According to Mr. Saif, the "situation had reached a point of unacceptability for a sovereign government. The insurgents were well-armed and well-organized."

9. GEN Shawani, Director, Iraqi National Intelligence Service

On 5 February 2006, GEN Mohammed Abdullah Shawani, a former commander of Iraqi Special Forces and a Turkman and Sunni from Mosul, was interviewed at the INIS Headquarters in Baghdad. GEN Shawani lost two sons in a failed coup attempt in June 1996. In the run-up to war, Shawani played an important role in the Coalition's effort to encourage Iraqi officers to surrender or defect.

According to GEN Shawani, when the Coalition forces entered Fallujah, the Fallujans greeted them. However, conflict between the Fallujans and Americans, instigated by Iranians,⁴³ resulted in the Coalition raiding Fallujan homes. Coalition forces would put a husband on the ground and cuff him in front of his family. The Americans also arrested women. GEN Shawani exclaimed, "This is a tribal system; they [Coalition forces] didn't know the culture...This [behavior] does not work in this country. They [the Fallujans] feel like they have to retaliate for their dignity."

These incidents started to spread from Fallujah to Ar Ramadi and other locations in Al Anbar. As the situation worsened in March and April 2004, LtGen Conway asked GEN Shawani if he could help. GEN Shawani met with former Iraqi Generals and religious people from Fallujah. According to GEN Shawani, most were insurgents. He tried to convince them that the real enemy was not the Coalition but the Iranians.

GEN Shawani initiated the negotiations that led to the Marine withdrawal from Fallujah and the development of the Fallujah Brigade, a force of approximately 2,000 former military from Fallujah. The Marines provided uniforms and equipped, paid, and armed the Fallujah Brigade. GEN Shawani claimed that this worked for a while. However, according to GEN Shawani, this was not supported by the Iraqi Governing Council and was opposed by Bremer. When the Coalition tried to align the Fallujah Brigade with the Ministry of Defense, they opposed the idea.⁴⁴ Without the support of the IGC, Fallujah Brigade members' salaries were cut. Al Qaeda offered to pay them, so they quit the Fallujah Brigade and became insurgents.⁴⁵

⁴³ GEN Shawani said that some of the Iraqis had been recruited by the Iranians. When they were questioned by U.S. Military Intelligence, they provided information on Fallujan residents. Those residents were then the subject of Coalition raids.

⁴⁴ GEN Babikir, Chief of Staff said that the Ministry of Defense was not going to pay for this Fallujah Brigade that was composed of insurgents. Interview with GEN Babikir on 3 February 2006.

⁴⁵ GEN Shawani proposed that they establish the same type of arrangements in Ramadi, but Bremer did not approve it.

GEN Shawani also spoke of developing the Shawani forces. At the request of Gen Conway, he helped form a company of approximately 150 former Iraqi Special Forces soldiers to support the MEF. Most of the initial recruits had worked for him when he was in charge of the Special Forces during Saddam's reign. This "Shawani" force eventually grew to a brigade-sized unit. However, GEN Shawani made it clear that this unit was developed to support the Marines. It was not his unit and they were not sponsored by the INIS. The Shawaniis outgrew their usefulness and were eventually disbanded. Members were offered the opportunity to join the regular Army.

GEN Shawani spoke of some of the Coalition mistakes:

Disbanding the military: "The first mistake was that Ambassador Bremer, he disbanded the Army; this is the biggest mistake."

Looting. According to Shawani, Bremer not only disbanded the Army, "He let the religion parties loot the Iraqi equipment to their locations. I mean it is sad...to see there is 200 times more equipment with the PUK. The PUK guy, he is a President of Iraqi,⁴⁶ and he has 200 times more Iraqi equipment [than the Iraqi Army], and Iraqi Army doesn't even have a tank."

Forming the military along sectarian lines. GEN Shawani said that the Coalition formed the Iraqi Army on the basis of religion and ethnicity. "One company of Kurds, one company from this party, one company from this party, so they put one of these guys as commander from one party. If he dies, which party is going to lead the unit?"

Militias. GEN Shawani accused the elected officials of bringing their own militias with them, "Every party that wins, he has 1,000 militia, and he imposes things....If you go outside [Baghdad], you can see militia very clearly. Go to Diyala, you can see them...so everybody now has their militia or insurgents."⁴⁷

Deba'athification. According to Shawani, not all of the former regime employees are bad. But the Coalition, made them the enemy. "You are pushing them to be insurgents and join terrorist organizations because there is no way of living. They don't have their salary; they didn't get their retirement. You cannot take retirement from a family, not

⁴⁶ Jalal Talabani, first (during the IGC in April 2004) and current President.

⁴⁷ GEN Shawani's American aide said there was a new acronym for those groups/militia, they are called EGAGs, Extra Governmental Armed Groups.

only himself, [but] here with big families, one man, he is helping maybe five or six persons. All of them then become enemy of the government...”

Security. “The United States are occupying this country and they are responsible for the security of the people, of the civilians.” According to Shawani, in the minds of the Iraqis, security is still the responsibility of the United States.

GEN Shawani said that things have gotten progressively worse since the Coalition arrived.

10. Dr. Allawi, Former Prime Minister of Iraq, Interim Iraqi Government

At 1230, 6 February, former Prime Minister Allawi’s Personal Security Detachment transported the IDA Team to his residence in the Red Zone, for the interview.



Figure II-50. Dr. Allawi

Dr. Ayad Allawi (Figure II-50), born in 1945, was the Prime Minister of Iraq for the Iraqi Interim Government from June 2004 to April 2005. He also served on the Iraqi Governing Council, the predecessor to the Iraqi Interim Government in 2003–2004, established by Mr. Bremer, CPA. He rotated in as the president of the Iraqi Governing Council in October 2003 and reportedly resigned as head of the Iraqi Governing Council security committee in April 2004 over concerns about the U.S. bombing of Fallujah.

A former Ba’athist, Dr. Allawi established the Iraqi National Accord, which is an active political party. Dr. Allawi lived about half of his life in the UK and retains British citizenship. He survived attempted assassinations in 1978 and 2005. A summary of his comments follow.

a. Conditions entering 2004

According to Prime Minister Allawi, the conditions in Iraq, entering 2004, were politically turbulent, and the lack of security made Iraq susceptible to regional intervention. “As incidents in Fallujah started, events occurred throughout the country in Samarra, Mosul, An Najaf, and Nasiriyah.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

In June 2004, Allawi was appointed as Iraq's first prime minister. One of the first actions of Prime Minister Allawi's government was to deal with al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia uprising in An Najaf in August 2004.

Prime Minister Allawi's plan was to isolate al-Sadr in Najaf. First, he met with the clerics in Sadr City, paid for weapons, and committed to reconstruction in Sadr City. He also worked with the Multi National Forces to block the link between Fallujah and An Najaf. Next he went to An Najaf to enlist the help of the tribes. He also called the National Assembly to support his actions and make a public statement to pressure al-Sadr. "So that he knows that it is not only the government but it is the National Assembly people of Iraq." Al-Sadr gradually became more and more isolated. According to PM Allawi,

Al-Sadr then knew there was no way for him but to surrender. As he was barricading himself in the Imam Ali Shrine, he lost a lot of credibility in the eyes of the Shi'a, Iraqis, and Muslims. They saw it as a cowardly act that he would hide in the shrine.⁴⁹

Eventually, with the help of Grand Ayatollah Sistani, al-Sadr and his militia left the Shrine.

b. Fallujah

In preparation for the assault on Fallujah, PM Allawi "Dismantled the Fallujah Brigade...beef[ed] up the intelligence on Fallujah...engage[d] the Iraqis, and embarked on a media campaign."⁵⁰

Engaging the Iraqis included meeting with people at his house "who had influence and were directly linked with the insurgents."

Another major consideration was, "What should we do after we liberate Fallujah?" So he formed a team, headed by Dr. Hachem al-Hassani, a prominent Sunni, to prepare a program to deal with Fallujah "after we have taken it from the terrorists and insurgents."

PM Allawi understood the power of the media and was committed to keeping the Arab world, Iraq, and Fallujah residents informed of what was happening in Fallujah and why it was happening.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

As the assault seemed imminent, PM Allawi tried one last time. He contacted the delegation from Fallujah and gave them 24 hours to surrender Zarqawi. He then went on the television and told the people of Iraq, “I have warned the Fallujah people and the guys who are linked to the insurgents.” He also understood that this needed to be perceived as an Iraqi operation and changed the name from “Phantom Fury” to “Al Fajr,” New Dawn.⁵¹

Negotiations exhausted, PM Allawi approved the commencement of Al Fajr.⁵²

The IDA team departed Dr. Allawi’s residence at 1305 for a 1330 meeting with GEN Casey, their final interview of the trip.

11. GEN Casey, Commander, Multi National Forces – Iraq

On 6 February, The IDA Team interviewed GEN George Casey at his office at the American Embassy. GEN Casey assumed command of the MNF-I on 1 July 2004. This was during the various Iraqi and Coalition transitions during the summer. That is, MNF-I and MNC-I recently stood up and the CJTF-7 stood down, the Iraqis recently received sovereignty, the CPA was dissolved, and the American Embassy was established.

GEN Casey met with Ambassador Negroponte in Washington before deploying to Iraq. They generally agreed that a primary objective was to ensure successful elections in January 2005. They also understood that to be successful, the military and civil side had to work together, so they agreed on one team, one mission.

One of their first actions was to convene a Red Team to determine the threat. The Red Team reported in 30 days: the most dangerous threat to the accomplishment of the objectives was the former regime elements of the insurgency, and the nature of war they were fighting was counterinsurgency. They published their report, turned it into a mission statement, and used it as a basis to develop and subsequently publish a counterinsurgency campaign plan.

Approximately 2 weeks in country, after meeting with the Iraqis, GEN Casey realized that there really was a sovereign Iraqi government in Iraq, and that “one team,

⁵¹ Prime Minister Allawi translated al-Fajr as “New Dawn,” but most interpreters will say it simply means “Dawn.”

⁵² Many question whether Prime Minister Allawi had the final word. GEN Casey said that we couldn’t have done al-Fajr without Prime Minister Allawi.

one mission” had to include the Iraqi government. So they set out to help make the Iraqi government successful.

At the beginning of August, Muqtada al-Sadr used a series of incidents as an excuse to restart the violence in An Najaf. GEN Casey saw al-Sadr’s disturbances in An Najaf as an opportunity to help this new Iraqi government succeed. There were a number of lessons from An Najaf that became part of the planning for Fallujah. Per GEN Casey:

[1.] Once the Coalition and Iraqis go in and fight to take over a place, they will only relinquish control of it to capable ISF—clearly a lesson from Fallujah,

[2.] Work reconstruction efforts; that is, work the other lines of counterinsurgency operation to enhance the success. That started in An Najaf.

In addition, An Najaf gave Allawi and the government a success. People have questioned whether it was a Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani success or an Allawi success. The bottom line, according to GEN Casey: “The government came together, they had crisis, they solved the crisis together with our help, and then came out of it a winner. So that’s an important element to going into Fallujah.”

The Coalition then had a series of meetings with PM Allawi where they developed the seven-cities program and where they looked at where to go next. One of the objectives in the campaign plan was to eliminate safe havens inside Iraq before the January elections. According to GEN Casey:

Samarra was the next place, and we had to delay that until October because we were generating Iraqi forces as they were coming. That was not quite the scope of An Najaf in either duration or in number of units. I think we had a couple of our battalions and a couple of Iraqi battalions. That was about a 40- to 72-hour operation, and we pushed them [the insurgents] out. Samarra, on its own, was a much different challenge because the people there were never sure of whether they wanted to stick with the insurgents or they wanted to stick with the government, and the city was really divided. We never did get the level of intimidation to the point where they would come completely with the government. So we really haven’t had the success in there that we’ve had in An Najaf.

GEN Casey highlighted the importance of all the political discussions that took place in developing military operations: “because in all of these they wanted to make sure that they could say that they explored all the possible political solutions. So, all the dialogue that was going on before these things set the political conditions.” At the same

time, they had to “generate Iraqi security forces and then set and find the money and the projects for the post conflict.”

Next was Fallujah. GEN Casey: “I went through a metamorphosis in my own thinking here.” They were successful in attacking discrete targets in Fallujah, so he didn’t arrive in Iraq with a preconceived notion that they had to take Fallujah by assault. So the Coalition went through a series of Leavenworth-style decision briefs and discussions with Allawi, looking at pros, cons, and risks. PM Allawi took the brief and did the same thing with his cabinet, Imams, and the sheiks. According to GEN Casey,

We ran it by the cabinet, and built a consensus for this thing. We were very, very pointed with them all along, saying, “Look, this is going to be really hard, and if we start this together, we’ve got to stay together and finish it.” That was our little mantra, “Start it together, stay together, finish together”; we can’t be getting cold feet on this.

So an awful lot of political work to set the conditions....Additionally, we also sent teams to all the regional countries—all the countries in the region—and they [the teams] said, “Hey, we are going to do this.” You can imagine for a new government to orchestrate this, and they are launching guys to go tell leaders like Assad.

On the military side, GEN Casey was concerned about the situation in Fallujah and looked to the Iraqi Government to help them:

As you can imagine, IEDs and all of that in the street. We’re finding all these cars parked along the street. Are they car bombs? Just a hugely difficult urban fight, and we thought there [were] about 3,000 or 3,500 hard-core [insurgents] in the city, and we had to fight our way through. So we started asking ourselves, what can the government do for us that will make our job easier? [PM Allawi issued an] emergency decree...24-hour curfew imposed. No one allowed outside, no one’s allowed to carry guns, the police force is disbanded, and they should stay in their houses because the police force was just completely infiltrated by the insurgents. No driving—there was a movement ban all through the city area—and what we basically did was get the government to sign up and arrange measures that made target selection and engagement [clear]. They took the uncertainty [out] of that for the troops, and they had the courage to do that.

Several times GEN Casey stressed the importance of the political-military interaction in planning for military operations, and how, in this case, “these decisions—political-military interaction coming out of the political side sets up military success.”⁵³

⁵³ GEN George Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

According to GEN Casey, PM Allawi was worried about the number of U.S. news media embeds that would be with the Coalition. “There are so many different audiences; we’re concerned about the Arab audience. We could not have this seen in the Arab world as another U.S. assault on Fallujah, and so we were benefiting from the fact that this was a joint operation.”

The timing for Al Fajr was complex. “That’s another part of the political-military interaction. We are working this around Ramadan, Eid, elections [U.S. elections in early November and Iraqi elections in January], and...a conference [Sharm El-Sheikh Conference in late November] involving Iraq, and nobody wanted the pictures on the TV of buildings blowing up in Fallujah.” But GEN Casey said that the U.S. elections weren’t the issue:

My guys kept putting it [U.S. elections] in the slide. I said, “Forget it.”⁵⁴ I actually wanted to start it before the U.S. elections because I didn’t think anybody would believe we’d do it. Allawi couldn’t make the timing. They needed just a couple more days to do things, and I think we started on the 7th. [But setting the conditions for the Iraqi elections,] that was the most important thing.

They also knew that when this started, they were going to get a backlash around the country. “When we are managing the consequences that were happening around the country, Mosul was the premiere player; there was a big spike in activity all throughout the Sunni areas.”

GEN Casey provided some final thoughts:

I don’t believe that the elections would have come off like they did if there was still a safe haven in Fallujah. I’m absolutely convinced of that. It was part of the overall psychological impact on the Iraqis to say, “Maybe we *can* do this,” and it was one of the things that caused them to step up and vote and make a choice, and they did.

You win [battles] because of conditions set for the victory before you get there, and the conditions were set for victory in Fallujah before we got there.

The political, military, and strategic communications effects...the Iraqis set, and we couldn’t have done that; so it’s a good case study in political-military interactions at the highest level.

⁵⁴ GEN Casey goes on to say, “That really wasn’t a factor, and the President we have gave you that flexibility as a commander, and it just wasn’t a factor.”

I. DEPARTURE

The IDA team had two final meetings left at Camp Victory en route to Baghdad International Airport for departure. They were the exit briefs to Col Johns, C-3, MNC-I, and then to MajGen Donovan, Chief of Staff, MNF-I.

After the exit briefs, the IDA team was transported to Baghdad International Airport, departed the airport late on 8 February, and arrived at al-Udeid, Qatar, on 9 February. Due to the in-country extension, the team members had to exchange or purchase new tickets at Doha International Airport. The team received great administrative and logistical support from SFC Fluker, representing the JCOA at Doha to support JCOA teams, on the return trip, and from Dianne Fuller, in the JAWP Simulation Center, who provided administrative support for the entire trip. All Team members departed Qatar for the States by 11 February.

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III. BATTLE FOR FALLUJAH—CHRONOLOGY/STORY LINE

The trip to Iraq was invaluable to the IDA team's research. The opportunity to see and smell the ground, feel the passions of the people, and record the supporting or counter-arguments to previous research provided a necessary perspective. Since perceptions are important in this war, hearing it from the Iraqis was critical to the research.

This chapter provides Iraqi perspectives and comments relevant to events and activities during 2003 and 2004 that had an impact on U.S. objectives in Iraq.

The structure follows a story line—chronological and focused on project objectives—developed before the team's trip. The purpose of the trip was to make sure the story we would tell would be accurate and inclusive of the Iraqis' perspective.

A. 2003: SETTING THE CONDITIONS FOR 2004

Although the project focused on major events in 2004, interviews began by discussing 2003 events and how those events set the conditions for 2004.

Those who were interviewed almost unanimously wanted to discuss security and the disbanding of the military, deBa'athification, insufficient troop levels, the Coalition's status as occupier versus liberator, looting, lawlessness, the lack of control on weapons and ammunition stockpiles, and open borders. The Iraqi interviewees pointed out that the lack of security by the Coalition and the CPA, through certain policies it established, alienated the people and set the conditions for the insurgency.⁵⁵ These actions also enabled foreign fighters and criminals to prosper. A selection of interviewees comments are provided below.

⁵⁵ Comments such as "Bring 'em on," by President Bush on 3 July 2003 (Sean Loughlin, "Bush Warns Militants Who Attack U.S. Troops in Iraq," CNN.Com/Inside Politics, CNN Washington Bureau, 3 July 2003) and SecDef Rumsfeld's characterization of the insurgents as "dead-enders, foreign terrorists and criminal gangs" (Douglas Jehl with David E. Sanger, "Iraqis' Bitterness Is Called Bigger Threat Than Terror," *New York Times*, 17 September 2003) underestimated the power, depth, breadth, and momentum of the building insurgency.

1. Security and Disbanding the Army

Prime Minister Allawi indicated that security was his biggest challenge and that he “was disappointed when the military was dismantled.”

Security cast a strong shadow on the entire situation. We had a very difficult situation, both from a political and security point of view. This kept turbulence in the political scene, and the turbulence and inadequacy of the security opened the doors widely to regional intervention and local insurgency prevailing in various places in the country.⁵⁶

2. Deba’athification

Dr. Rubai’e discussed deba’athification: “We have to immediately revisit deba’athification. We need to recognize the top generals [and] give them an advantage.” Deba’athification and dissolution of the Army humiliated 12,000 top generals and sent them to the street. Instead,

We should have made the deba’athification a judicial process, not a political process. It’s a law, it has to be. Who applies the law? Politicians? You don’t give it to politicians because then it becomes a political settlement.⁵⁷

3. Occupier vs. Liberator, Open Borders, Looting and Lawlessness

GEN Babikir passionately discussed what he concluded were Coalition mistakes immediately following the invasion. Those included the perception of the Coalition as an occupier rather than a liberator, security issues like insufficient troop levels to protect the borders, and the looting and lawlessness that occurred after combat operations:

When the Americans were here and they saw people were looting everything, they were actually closing their eyes...a lot of ammunition and weapons fall into hands of the wrong people and they would let it go. They thought these weapons and ammunition would go away but it came back to haunt them.⁵⁸

4. Catalyst for the Insurgency

By most accounts, Fallujah was initially friendly to the Coalition as it entered Iraq.⁵⁹ What changed that? Although many factors contributed to the development of the

⁵⁶ Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

⁵⁷ Dr. Mowafak al-Rubai’e, interview with the author, Baghdad, 29 January 2006.

⁵⁸ GEN Babikir Baderkahn Zibari, interview with the author, Baghdad, 3 February 2006.

⁵⁹ GEN Mohammed Abdullah Shawani, interview with the author, Baghdad, 5 February 2006.

insurgency, one of the IDA research leads was to determine which event (or events) was the catalyst for the insurgency—that is, which event seemed to have the most impact on the development of the insurgency. The team proposed that it was the March 2004 Blackwater incident. Mr. Saif Rahman disagreed:

The Blackwater incident was not the catalyst. Resentment was already bubbling beneath the surface.... The anger among the Fallujans simply manifested itself in their treatment of the men from the Blackwater Personal Security Detachment.⁶⁰

On 28 April 2003, Coalition forces, responding to small-arms fire, fired into a crowd of demonstrators in Fallujah, killing several people. Interviewees repeated this incident as the principle catalyst for the insurgency in Al-Anbar. Mr. Saif Rahman agreed.

The Fallujans say that there was one incident in [April 2003]⁶¹ that cast a dark shadow on their relationship with the U.S. military. From the Fallujans' perspective, they were having a peaceful demonstration at one of the schools in the city. U.S. Forces fired on the demonstrators and killed several of them. After that incident, things went sour. Al Anbar is a traditional tribal area with tribal law. Because the Fallujans felt that the U.S. military killed one of them, then they were *honor-bound* to exact *revenge* [emphasis added].⁶²

Some contend that the implications were much greater than violence in Fallujah and with that event the insurgency in Iraq was born.⁶³

B. CHAOS: JANUARY TO MAY 2004

January through May 2004 was a period of chaos in Iraq, resulting from major Coalition force rotations, flare-ups in the Sunni town of Fallujah and Shi'a communities in Baghdad and cities south of Baghdad, and conflicting relationships among the major players in Iraq. Then, revelations at Abu Ghraib fueled the insurgents' information operations. Some of those contributing events are discussed below.

⁶⁰ Mr. Saif Rahman, interview with the author, Baghdad, 5 February 2006.

⁶¹ Mr. Saif refers to the October and November time frame throughout this transcript; however, the events he describes took place on 28 April 2003.

⁶² Mr. Saif, interview with the author, Baghdad, 5 February 2006.

⁶³ National Public Radio broadcast in April 2006, attributed, from Iraqi interviews, the birth of the insurgency to that event. Steve Inskeep and Ren'ee Montagne, "Spread of Iraqi Insurgency Feared in Arab World," NPR, *Morning Edition*, 3 April 2006.

1. Vigilant Resolve, Fallujah I

On 31 March 2004, 4 days after the MEF Transfer of Authority with the 82nd, four U.S. contractors were ambushed in Fallujah. Brutally beaten and burnt, the charred remains of two of the bodies were hung from the ramparts of the old North Bridge near the hospital. During the savage demonstration, local residents and demonstrators cheered and chanted, “Death to the Americans.”⁶⁴

Although the Marines cautioned against hasty action that could play into the insurgents’ hands, they were ordered to assault the city in search of the perpetrators.⁶⁵ Mr. Saif Rahman explains how public opinion quickly turned against the Coalition:

The 4th or 5th of April the Jazeerah reporter starts talking about the civilian casualties in Fallujah and the humanitarian disaster, which enrages the Sunni populations...We told them [Ambassador Bremer, General Sanchez]...the IIP was considering pulling out of the governing council unless the situation was stopped.⁶⁶

The loss of the IIP, a major Sunni constituency, threatened to jeopardize the transfer of sovereignty in June. Ambassador Bremer reconsidered the assault.⁶⁷

The CPA directed a cease-fire, and Vigilant Resolve was terminated. The accepted alternative was the Fallujah Brigade. Some Iraqis lauded the Fallujah Brigade, an ad hoc organization consisting of Saddam’s former Iraqi military leaders, residents, Jundi, and insurgents, as “Fallujans securing Fallujah.” But there was considerable controversy over the stand-up of the Fallujah Brigade. Allawi, Head of the Security Council and later Prime Minister, opposed standing up the Fallujah Brigade:

Some groups within the CPA and Multi-National Force advocated establishing a militia in Fallujah made up of the old Army, later called the Fallujah Brigade. I was adamantly against this concept. Instead of adding

⁶⁴ Colin Freeman, “Horror at Fallujah,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 April 2004.

⁶⁵ The Marine assault, cease-fire, and withdrawal were made over objections of Gen Conway, I MEF Commander. CNN *Frontline* interview, October 2004.

⁶⁶ Mr. Saif, interview with the author, Baghdad, 5 February 2006.

⁶⁷ Dr. Rubai’e indicated that Ambassador Bremer “could not wait to go home,” was on a “countdown to June,” and didn’t want anything to prevent his departure.

another militia to ones that already existed, we needed to dismantle them.⁶⁸

LTG Abadi echoed Prime Minister Allawi's concerns and expressed his doubts about the intentions and commitment of the Fallujah Brigade.

The problem was that many of the people in these units were old Saddam military.... The members of this newly formed brigade refused to wear our [new Iraqi military] uniforms. In fact, they insisted upon wearing old, green Iraqi Army uniforms. This, at least in my mind, was an indication that they had no intention of cooperating.... This brigade, which was formed from local Sunnis, was just playing for time and wanted money for their so-called services.⁶⁹

Some say that the Coalition and Iraqi Government did not give the Fallujah Brigade a chance. GEN Shawani claims that the Fallujah Brigade was successful until they stopped receiving salaries:⁷⁰

They secured the city for 5 months, not a single bullet. No one gets killed in Fallujah, and nobody fired at an American—not even a bullet. But this was against the government agenda.⁷¹

However, the Marines and Army could no longer fund the Fallujah Brigade, and according to GEN Shawani, the Iraqi Government would not:

These guys don't believe in the MOD...and the MOD doesn't recognize them. They cut their salaries, no more money, and nobody wanted them anymore. Al Qaeda came. They started giving them between \$500 and \$1,000, so most of them quit and became insurgents.⁷²

Saif agreed with Shawani's comments in general, adding that the Fallujah Brigade was not equipped to fight the insurgents. He also contended, in consonance with GEN Shawani, that the Iranians were supporting the conflict in al-Anbar.⁷³

⁶⁸ Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

⁶⁹ LTG Nasir al-Abadi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 3 February 2006.

⁷⁰ According to GEN Shawani, the Army and Marines were paying the salary of the Fallujah Brigade members. The IG never paid them. GEN Babikir, confirming GEN Shawani's comment, indicated that the MOD wasn't going to pay the salaries of the Fallujah Brigade because the Fallujah Brigade wouldn't take orders from the MOD.

⁷¹ GEN Shawani, interview with the author, Baghdad, 5 February 2006.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Mr. Saif, interview with the author, Baghdad, 5 February 2006.

According to Dr. Rubai'e, the Marine assault, withdrawal, and subsequent handoff of Fallujah's security to the Fallujah Brigade was truly a turning point in the war because it sent a signal that the Coalition could be repelled by the insurgents and then gave credence to the Fallujah Brigade, which was made up of former Iraqi military and insurgents. According to Rubai'e, "After that [the handoff to the Fallujah Brigade], the bad guys entrenched themselves in the city, and *the city was a symbol*, even among the Arab world."⁷⁴

MG Mehdi echoed comments by others, like Dr. Rubai'e and Prime Minister Allawi, that Fallujah I was a turning point in the war, in favor of the insurgents, "During Fallujah I, when the Marines left, it was a turning point. The insurgents gained strength from that event."⁷⁵

2. Shi'a Uprising

Almost at the same time as Vigilant Resolve was the alienation of much of the Shi'a community and the armed flare-up of Muqtada al-Sadr's supporters in Sadr City, Karbala, Najaf, and al-Kut. This resulted from several events:

1. On 28 March 2004, the CPA shut down Muqtada al-Sadr's newspaper, *Al Hamza*, for "inciting violence."
2. On 2 April the Coalition arrested a key al-Sadr lieutenant, Mustafa al-Yacoubi, for the murder of Ayatollah Abdul Majid al-Khoei in June 2003 in Najaf.
3. On 5 April, the CPA issued an arrest warrant for Muqtada al-Sadr for the murder of Ayatollah Abdul Majid al-Khoei in June 2003.⁷⁶

GEN Babikir advised Bremer that it was a mistake to arrest al-Sadr, but Bremer continued.

These were huge mistakes...all of a sudden a war broke out...we advised them [the CPA] to defer the al-Sadr issue until later. I said, "Let's finish up the Fallujah issues first."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Dr. Rubai'e, interview with the author, Baghdad, 29 January 2006.

⁷⁵ MG Mehdi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 31 January 2006.

⁷⁶ GEN Babikir, interview with the author, Baghdad, 3 February 2006. During March–June 2004, GEN Babikir was assigned to the Ministry of Defense, under the CPA. GEN Babikir advised Paul Bremer to defer pursuing Al Sadr until they had resolved events in Fallujah because they didn't have the resources to address a "second front"—Fallujah being the "first front."

⁷⁷ GEN Babikir, interview with the author, Baghdad, 3 February 2006.

Many contend there was no collusion⁷⁸ between al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia and the insurgents in Fallujah. Prime Minister Allawi disagreed.

There was a flare-up, and people linking themselves to Fallujah...creating links to the insurgency from Fallujah to Samarra and Mosul to Baghdad. And there were meetings between Muqtada al-Sadr and the...outfit in Fallujah and Sunni.⁷⁹

3. Organizations and Relationships

In addition to events that contributed to the chaos during January to May 2004, the IDA team asked Iraqis about organizations and relationships. Which organizations were in place to support teaching, coaching, and building, and how well did the various organizations work together?

LTG Abadi, Deputy Chief of Staff, Iraqi Joint Forces, was the advisor to MG Eaton, whom some call the Father of the Iraqi Army.⁸⁰ He explained how establishing the Iraqi Army evolved and noted problems between it and the Ministry of Defense:

My position was advisor to General Paul Eaton, who was the first MNSTC-I commander. He was a real gentleman. He started the Iraqi Army. He had to start from scratch.

The initial proposal was to field three divisions of light infantry. We started the training school in Kirkuk with the ultimate goal of training and equipping 27 battalions. The last unit was supposed to be ready in February 2006.

There was a disconnect between the Ministry of Defense and the Army. In June 2004, when authority was transferred to Iraq, this issue reached a crisis point. David Gunford was recruiting civilians for the MOD; however, something went wrong with the connection with the Army. Paul Eaton always tried to see that there was a connection between the military and civilian leadership. Come June, we had two [disparate] organizations. Many problems persist because too many things were done in the MOD and not in the military.⁸¹

The question of relationships was relevant because teaching, coaching, and building depend on an environment of cooperation and mutual support. Both Prime

⁷⁸ One of the research leads was to determine if the insurgents in Fallujah were colluding with al-Sadr's militia in Najaf.

⁷⁹ Prime Minister Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

⁸⁰ MG Paul Eaton, telephone interview with the author, 14 November 2005.

⁸¹ LTG Nasir al-Abadi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 3 February 2006.

Minister Allawi and Dr. Rubai'e noted that the CJTF-7 (predecessor to MNF-I), CPA, and IGC did not work well together. Bremer's attitude toward the IGC disappointed Dr. Rubai'e:

He formed the governing council, but he didn't give it any authority, and he referred to it in the book⁸² in a very rude way. He said the council can't organize a parade, let alone lead a country. He was looking at us in a derogatory way. I understand his language. Nine out [of] ten of my colleagues of the 25 [in the council], they don't understand; a lot of them, they don't understand English, the way he was talking, very patronizing.⁸³

Prime Minister Allawi spoke tactfully of the relationship between Bremer and Sanchez.

I tried to explain things to Bremer and Sanchez. Sanchez was a good person, but it didn't seem to me that the chemistry between Sanchez and Bremer was that good, so this led to more confusion.⁸⁴

GEN Babikir's response to a question about the MEF's actions during Vigilant Resolve and the development of the Fallujah Brigade provided insight into the relationship among the CPA, MEF, and CJTF-7:

Even Bremer was against it [Fallujah Brigade]. But he didn't want to disappoint the Marines. He didn't want to give an order. I didn't know why that was; why he didn't give an order. Didn't he have the authority to give the order? Every week we had a national Security Council meeting. And by then Paul Bremer was acting as MOD too.

[Complicating this,] The Marines had their own orders. When I told LTG Sanchez what we should do, he said, these are Marines and we can't tell them what to do. I was always confused. Is this the military? Who is running these guys?⁸⁵

On the other hand, there seemed to be a lot of respect for the Coalition advisory effort. LTG Abadi and Mr. Mazin spoke highly of MG Eaton's efforts to organize the Iraqi Army. The Iraqi forces also spoke highly of the ASTs that worked with them.

⁸² Dr. Rubai'e refers to Paul Bremer's book, *My Year in Iraq: The Strategy to Build a Future of Hope*.

⁸³ Dr. Rubai'e, interview with the author, Baghdad, 29 January 2006.

⁸⁴ Prime Minister Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

⁸⁵ GEN Babikir, interview with the author, Baghdad, 3 February 2006.

4. Most Iraqi Forces Refused to Fight

Coalition actions directed against Muqtada al-Sadr enraged the Shi'a community; al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia revolted in Sadr City, Karbala, Najaf, and Al Kut. In addition, elements of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, composed primarily of Shi'a, refused to fight. During April 2004, 30% of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps Jundi, about 10,000 of the 33,000, did not show up for work, and some switched allegiance to the insurgency or to al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia.⁸⁶ The 505th and 506th Iraqi Civil Defense Corps Battalions in Fallujah isolated themselves from the conflict—they did not want to fight other Iraqis, and with families and friends in Fallujah, they were easily intimidated.

On or about 4 April 2004, the 2nd Iraqi Battalion was alerted in Taji to move to Fallujah. MAJ Abed, the convoy commander for the 25-vehicle convoy, said that the Coalition left the Iraqis out of the convoy planning process and routed the convoy through an area that the Iraqi forces would not have recommended.

When we started moving to Fallujah from Taji, we arrived in an area in Baghdad called Shohola [phonetic].... When we passed this area, the enemy shot at us, so we drove fast. One soldier, a driver...stopped his truck in the middle of the street; the convoy divided into two parts. When they attacked us, all the soldiers dismounted...to protect the convoy. [But] this is a Shi'a army and because Muqtada al-Sadr is a Shi'a, they [Iraqi forces] refused to shoot them [Mahdi Militia and insurgents].⁸⁷

MAJ Abed went on to say that al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia had attacked the convoy because of previous actions, instigated or executed, by the Coalition forces, such as the warrant for al-Sadr's arrest.

According to MAJ Abed, the purpose of al-Sadr's militia attack on the convoy was twofold: (1) to stop the Iraqi unit from going to Fallujah and (2) to kidnap the American advisors. Although the Iraqi battalion refused to continue to Fallujah, according to MAJ Abed, they did not betray the American advisors:

I remembered a good thing. Some militia wanted to attack the Americans soldiers, and they want to kidnap them or attack them or shoot them, but the [Iraq] soldiers protected them and saved them from...this militia.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ During interviews with ISF members that fought against the Mahdi Militia, the interviewer was corrected several times when referring to the Mahdi Militia as insurgents. The interviewer was told they were not insurgents, they were al-Sadr supporters.

⁸⁷ MAJ Abed al-Jabar, interview with the author, Hussaybah, 20 January 2006.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

MAJ Abed added, in defense for their refusing to fight other Iraqis, that the New Iraqi Army was not designed for this type of mission. Others reiterated this: The Army was chartered to fight an external enemy, not other Iraqis.⁸⁹

When asked if there was a relationship between the Mahdi Militia and Fallujah insurgents, MAJ Abed said that there was not:

There is no relation between the Mahdi Militia and the insurgents in Fallujah. Muqtada al-Sadr ordered the attack on the convoy because there were some problems between him and the Coalition forces.

However, not all of the ISF dissolved or refused to fight. One glimmer of hope was the 36th Commandos. The 36th Commandos were organized, trained, and mentored by the 5th Special Forces Group and fought in support of the Coalition throughout 2004.

5. January to May Summarized

Prime Minister Allawi summed up the period of January to May 2004:

As we went to June, everything was boiling throughout the country; there were linkages between all of these [the events in Fallujah, Sadr city, Najaf, Karbala, Al Kut]. So this was the scene as sovereignty was transferred. I think the reason was a lack of vision and a lack of real consultation with the Governing Council and Security Committee. I think half-hearted and half-cooked measures were taken on the operations. On the political front, the landscape was very confused with no attempt to link the political landscape with the insurgency.

C. TRANSITION AND VISION: MAY TO AUGUST 2004

A number of transitions added to the chaos of the first 5 months of 2004. In May, the CJTF-7 transitioned to MNF-I and MNC-I. In June, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1546 replaced UNSCR 1511, the IGC dissolved, and the Iraqi Interim Government was established. With that, sovereignty transferred from the CPA to the Iraqi Interim Government. Upon sovereignty transfer, the CPA dissolved and the U.S. Embassy was established. In addition, the MNSTC-I was established in June 2004 to help the Iraqi Government stand up the ISF. Despite contributing to the chaos, those transitions brought a new team, additional resources, a campaign plan, and an objective—successful 30 January 2005 elections.

⁸⁹ Hence, the stand-up of the IIF in August 2004 by Prime Minister Allawi. This force was chartered to fight insurgents.

Although there were many transitions, this new regime recognized the value of building relationships. According to GEN Casey:

The military and civil side had to work together, so we agreed on the one team, one mission concept. We were here about 2 weeks after meeting with the Iraqis and realized that, no kidding, there really was a sovereign Iraqi government here, and that “one team, one mission” had to include the Iraqi government. So, we updated our notion. We set out to help make the Iraqi government, this Interim Iraqi Government, successful.⁹⁰

1. Iraqi Interim Government and Sovereignty

On 1 June, the Iraqi Interim Government was appointed with Sunni Muslim Sheikh Ghazi al-Yawar as president; Ayad Allawi, a Shi’a Muslim, as prime minister; 2 deputy presidents; and 26 ministers.

On 28 June, 2 days earlier than planned,⁹¹ sovereignty transferred from the CPA to the Iraqi Interim Government. Prime Minister Allawi, proclaiming security as his most important challenge,⁹² immediately instituted several actions to improve security:

1. *A National Safety Law*. Allowed the Government to impose a state of emergency for 60 days and included provisions for curfews, checkpoints, detaining suspects, and eavesdropping.
2. *The ISF*. Established the IIF as a counterinsurgency force,⁹³ renamed the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps as the Iraqi National Guard,⁹⁴ and established a National Directorate for internal security.
3. *Amnesty*. An amnesty plan for insurgents, including militia members.
4. *International Support*. Allawi requested international support to help train and equip his new security forces.

⁹⁰ GEN George Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

⁹¹ The CPA transferred sovereignty 2 days early to diffuse insurgent activities targeted at the ceremony on the announced date of 30 June 2004.

⁹² Prime Minister Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

⁹³ This was in response to the 2nd Battalion’s refusal to fight in Fallujah. Recall that one of the reasons the Iraqi soldiers didn’t fight was because they didn’t want to fight other Iraqis and didn’t think the Army’s mission was to fight other Iraqis. The IIF was chartered to fight the insurgency (other Iraqis as well as foreign fighters) and the leadership ensured everyone that joined the IIF knew that.

⁹⁴ He recognized that units recruited to fight in their local area could be intimidated in their local area. The trend would be to transition the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps into the Iraqi National Guard, and by January 2005, the Iraqi Interim Government would start integrating the Iraqi National Guard into the Iraqi Army.

2. U.S. Embassy, MNF-I and a Plan

With the transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government, the CPA dissolved and the U.S. Embassy was established. Ambassador Negroponte arrived to take charge in July with GEN Casey, the new MNF-I commander. Casey met with Negroponte in Washington before arriving in Iraq. They discussed an initial strategy and agreed to work as a team.⁹⁵ Upon arriving they commissioned a Red Team to determine the threat. From the Red Team's findings they developed a campaign plan and agreed on the objective: successful elections in January 2005.⁹⁶

3. The New Iraqi Government Deals with Muqtada al-Sadr

During August, Muqtada al-Sadr again roused the Shi'a community, primarily his Mahdi Militia, in Najaf. As the situation started to heat up, GEN Casey asked himself, "How can we help this new Iraqi Government succeed?"

We set out in Najaf to help the Iraqi Government achieve their first success. We told ourselves that this could be a unifying event for this new government....it was really an opportunity for Prime Minister Allawi to demonstrate his strength as a leader, and he really did.⁹⁷

Although Muqtada al-Sadr claimed his militia was responding to Marine attacks, it was suspected he was just looking for a chance to create chaos. On 5 August, the Mahdi Militia attacked the police station in Najaf; the Governor requested assistance from the Iraqi Government and the Coalition. On 6 August, Grand Ayatollah Sistani, who lived in Najaf and had served as a calming influence on al-Sadr and the Shi'a community, departed for London for heart surgery.

Allawi took steps to counter al-Sadr:

As Najaf was brewing, I was to do several things. One was to influence the territory of al-Sadr to get rid of the insurgency in Baghdad and elsewhere to isolate Najaf. The second was to arrest key members of Sadr who are uncompromising and who are assets to the Iranians. The third thing was to cut out the linkage between al-Sadr, Najaf, Fallujah, and northern Babylon.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ GEN Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Prime Minister Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

Prime Minister Allawi also spoke to King Abdullah in Jordan, President Mubarak of Egypt, and the Chief of Staff of the Army in UAE. Jordan sent armored vehicles (not in time for Najaf, however) and Egypt sent weapons. This was encouraging news for the Iraqis in Najaf. Prime Minister Allawi then held almost-daily meetings with GEN Casey and Ambassador Negroponte. They agreed to several principles:

We decided on the objectives: [Sadr's militia must] surrender their arms, leave the shrine, leave the city, and never come back to the city. The final point, that criminal charges against Sadr—he has to deal with them through the judicial system or through the tribal system here in Iraq; we would give him time. So we agreed with these conditions with the MNF; we should not back away from these principles.⁹⁹

Prime Minister Allawi then went to Sadr City, met with the clerics, and paid about \$12 million to buy their weapons from them. Next, he went to Najaf to enlist the help of the tribes.

Dr. Rubai'e, Iraq's National Security Advisor, was the principle Iraqi Interim Government official who dealt with al-Sadr. He drafted terms for a cease-fire, coordinated it with the Ambassador and GEN Casey, got it approved by the Prime Minister, and sent it to al-Sadr via an IRGC representative. Allawi then asked him to go to Najaf and meet with al-Sadr. Dr. Rubai'e was reluctant but acquiesced. He spoke of the first scheduled meeting with al-Sadr and how it was derailed:

I stayed with the Marines for 3 days there, so I set everything to meet al-Sadr at 6 o'clock in...an agreed upon address...I was delayed by General Hejlik. The meeting was meant to be 6 o'clock; I was delayed until 7 o'clock;...the Marines swooped in on that address, killed a few...but he [Sadr] was clever enough not to be [there]...he was three or four doors away. There was no way on earth anyone can convince me that it was not a setup. I was infuriated, I could have been told!...I lost his [Sadr's] trust. He never left the Shrine after that.¹⁰⁰

Although the operation to capture al-Sadr failed, Dr. Rubai'e regained al-Sadr's trust and coordinated new terms. Dr. Rubai'e successfully got al-Sadr to sign the plan, but before he (Dr. Rubai'e) could sign it, Allawi directed that he not sign the plan and return immediately to Baghdad.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Dr. Rubai'e, interview with the author, Baghdad, 29 January 2006.

When I got back, I went straight to Allawi's office. I said, "What is going on?" Allawi responded, "We don't want to negotiate with this man."

Up to this moment in time, I don't understand what happened [why I, Dr. Rubai'e, was not allowed to complete the agreement].¹⁰¹

Dr. Rubai'e speculates, "He [al-Sadr] was not reduced enough; this is why."

Prime Minister Allawi's account of the situation and his guidance to Dr. Rubai'e was somewhat different:

I recall once there was a national security advisor [Dr. Rubai'e] that...went there and instead of telling them these are the demands of the government, he went there to negotiate. He made it public in the media that the government was negotiating....there were no negotiations; they are demands....This guy called it negotiations, and I removed him.¹⁰²

As the Iraqi Government, primarily Allawi, Rubai'e and other members of the staff, played a major role in Najaf events, the ISF was still developing. The Coalition forces provided the majority of combat power in Najaf, however, the ISF deployed the 36th Commandos, the ICTF, the 2nd and 4th Battalions of the 1st IIF Brigade (the new counterinsurgency force), and elements of the Iraqi National Guard.

COL Fahdil, Commander, 36th Commandos, trained his unit under the mentorship of the 5th Special Forces Group and was prepared to physically remove Muqtada al-Sadr's force from the Shrine. According to Dr. Rubai'e, Prime Minister Allawi was prepared to commit those forces.

LTC Yassir, Commander, 4th Battalion (later reflagged as 3rd Battalion), 1st IIF Brigade, was conducting presence patrols and search operations in Sadr City when he was told to move his battalion to Najaf. He relocated on 25 August, and his unit conducted checkpoint, escort duties, and search operations in support of the Coalition forces. He spoke of the difficulties working with the Coalition both in Sadr City and Najaf:

This time between Sadr City and Najaf was a very hard time for the Coalition forces because they started to learn about the New Iraqi Army

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Although Prime Minister Allawi "removed" Dr. Rubai'e, he went on to say that Dr. Rubai'e had a 5-year contract with the CPA as National Security Advisor. This may explain why the Coalition still calls him the National Security Advisor even though the Prime Minister named another Iraqi to that position.

and train them and put them to the test. Most of the New Iraqi Army is from the old army. There are different rules and different relations.¹⁰³

By the end of August the Mahdi Militia was cleared from Najaf and isolated in the Imam Ali Shrine. As noted earlier, the 36th Commandos were prepared to assault the Shrine when Grand Ayatollah Sistani returned from London and negotiated the return of the Shrine.

But the fight wasn't over. LTC Yassir's unit was responsible for negotiating with and clearing Muqtada al-Sadr's office area in the old city of Najaf once al-Sadr moved from the Shrine. Yassir described the environment:

We live in a bad situation at that time in Najaf because there were many militias ready to fight, especially from Iran. There are many Iranians still inside the office [al-Sadr's area of control] ready to fight. I started searching. We pushed two companies to search inside the office. The problem is that there are many rooms underground that are supposed to be searched also. We captured weapons, different kinds. They filled two 5-ton trucks.¹⁰⁴

When asked if stabilizing Najaf was an Allawi Government success or a Sistani success, GEN Casey said it was both:

Najaf gave Allawi and the government a success. It was back and forth, was it a Sistani success? Was it an Allawi success? But the government came together, they had crisis; they solved the crisis together with our help. And they came out of it a winner, so that's an important element going into Fallujah.¹⁰⁵

Although the ISF was "more face than capability," the conflict in Najaf provided a starting point for a developing ISF.¹⁰⁶

4. Fallujah Worsens

By late July, Fallujah was infested with insurgents and the Fallujah Brigade was characterized as a "failed experiment."¹⁰⁷ Strategically, Fallujah was a disaster. For many

¹⁰³ LTC Yassir Haziz Muqmad, interview with the author, Al Qaim, 19 January 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ GEN Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

¹⁰⁶ The final report tells a lot more of this story from the Coalition perspective, in particular the "growing pains" associated with developing this new Iraqi capability.

¹⁰⁷ LtGen James Conway, CNN report, October 2004.

Iraqis, Fallujah represented defeat for the Coalition and victory for the insurgents. According to Dr. Rubai'e, Fallujah had become an insurgent sanctuary and symbol:

The Marines got out of the city...pulled back because there was a deal there that the Fallujah Brigade would go ahead [and provide security]. [The Marines] gave them [the Fallujah Brigade] arms, but they [the Fallujah Brigade] didn't deliver. After that, the bad guys entrenched themselves in the city, and *the city was a symbol* [emphasis added] even among the Arab world, even when we went for the second time, in November.¹⁰⁸

The insurgents used the city to make IEDs, for caches, and for spiritual energy to fuel the insurgency nationwide. Fallujah also became the in-country nucleus for insurgent information operations with the studios, production equipment and distribution networks to support a regional, national, and international audience. On the other hand, the torture chambers, beheadings, and extremist activities were a double-edged sword—although intended to promote Jihadist ideas, they also disillusioned some of the moderates and nationalists. This created a rift within the insurgency.¹⁰⁹

D. PRO-ACTION: SETTING THE CONDITIONS: SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2004

The Coalition and Iraqi Government focused on setting the conditions for the January 2005 election. Eliminating insurgent sanctuaries was critical.

The MNF-I Campaign Plan directed the Coalition to control certain cities considered critical for country security. After Najaf, Samarra was next on the list of places to clean up, but the Iraqis had very little to say about Samarra. GEN Babikir noted, “We were planning that operation for a long time, and it [the operation] didn't take that long. A very successful operation.”¹¹⁰

LTG Qadir, as the Deputy for Operations for the Iraqi Forces before Fallujah II, also characterized the operation as successful:

Samarra was a small operation. It was a battalion operation, and it took 1 day; it was not as big [as Fallujah]. The insurgents in Samarra are a mixture of religious extremists, regime loyalists, and smugglers and

¹⁰⁸ Dr. Rubai'e, interview with the author, Baghdad, 29 January 2006.

¹⁰⁹ LtGen John Sattler, LtCol Daniel Wilson, “Al Fajr: Battle for Fallujah Part II,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2005.

¹¹⁰ GEN Babikir, interview with the author, Baghdad, 3 February 2006.

criminals. So the kind of terrorists in Samarra is totally different than the kind you find in Najaf and Fallujah.¹¹¹

Conditions in Samarra almost allowed MG Batiste, Commander, 1st Infantry Division, to progress from Phase 2 (Shaping Operations) to Phase 4 (Reconstruction or Stability Operations) and bypass combat operations.¹¹² But due to worsening conditions, MG Batiste executed Operation Baton Rouge from 1–4 October to regain control of the city from the insurgents. The political-military interaction, use of force, and reconstruction efforts from Samarra reinforced processes, actions, and relationships in preparation for Fallujah II.

1. Al Fajr: Decisions and Setting the Conditions

When GEN Casey arrived in Iraq, he was not convinced that the Coalition and Iraqis had to assault Fallujah. As the insurgent picture became clearer, however, he saw this insurgent sanctuary—an exporter of terror throughout Iraq—as a major obstacle to the January elections. He and Ambassador Negroponte worked to convince Prime Minister Allawi that a major assault on Fallujah was the right thing to do and that they then should work as a team to set the conditions for success.

Prime Minister Allawi recognized that Fallujah was, in fact, a major insurgent sanctuary and an obstacle to elections in January. It would be his challenge to get the Government on board and to sell it to the Iraqi people and other countries of the region.¹¹³ In addition, he was often asked, “Why now?” There were a number of people, Coalition and Iraqi, who felt an assault on Fallujah could be deferred or was unnecessary—that Fallujah could be cordoned and bypassed. Allawi explained that timing was everything:

We couldn’t later because by then things would have drifted too far; no matter what we tried the Iraqi forces still might not be as ready. And third, I was too frightened that if we didn’t hit the insurgency hard that things would flare up in the rest of Iraq again. al-Sadr would rise and they would see the government as weak. Fourthly, I believed...that the [reconstruction] working group was ready to take over, and [fifth] The negotiations have ended.

¹¹¹ LTG Qadir, interview with the author, Camp Victory, 25 January 2006.

¹¹² Having said that, the 1st Infantry Division worked very hard to set those conditions.

¹¹³ GEN Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

The following comments and actions are in response to lessons learned during 2003 and early 2004 that the Coalition/Iraqi Government incorporated into its preparations for Fallujah II. They are categorized as Political, Security, Information Operations, and Reconstruction. This overview primarily addresses the strategic and operational levels of war with some tactical aspects relevant to teaching, coaching, and building. The final report and transcripts will provide a more detailed strategic, operational, and tactical perspective.

a. Political

GEN Casey continued to emphasize the political-military dynamics:

This was political-military interaction and how the political side sets up military success. They [the Iraqi Interim Government] got the government on board...This was a joint coalition Iraqi operation, and...they [the Iraqi Interim Government] had the lead on selling it to the Iraqi people...[and] the lead on selling it to the countries of the region, because it was regional pressure that caused the 1st Fallujah to really come unglued.¹¹⁴

Prime Minister Allawi understood his responsibilities and the gravity of the decision. He listed his preliminary actions:

[For] the second Fallujah, I dismantled the Fallujah Brigade, beefed up the intelligence information on Fallujah and engaged the Iraqis. [I] appointed an Iraqi commander who was from Fallujah itself.¹¹⁵ We also embarked on a media campaign. Finally, I conduct[ed] meetings with people...linked with the insurgents.¹¹⁶

The media campaign Allawi spoke of was “throughout the Arab world, throughout the country so everyone would understand.”¹¹⁷

Solicit Regional Support. Allawi contacted President Mubarek in Egypt, King Abdullah in Jordan, and others in the region before the operation to solicit their support.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Prime Minister Allawi intended to appoint an Iraqi commander who was from Fallujah. However, one could not be found. and MG Qadir was appointed as the Iraqi Ground Force Commander for Fallujah II.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Informing the Iraqi Government and People. Allawi informed the Iraqi Government and Iraqi people of the impending assault on Fallujah against the terrorists and not against “the people of Fallujah.”

Gain Coalition Support. The MNF-I requested United Kingdom Ministry of Defense approval to move the UK “Black Watch” to the Fallujah area to support the operation.

Exhausting Political Options. Minister Allawi was adamant about conducting meetings with “people linked to the insurgents” and wanted to make sure he had done all he could to negotiate a settlement prior to committing to military action. In fact, he vowed to “maintain that dialogue with Fallujah leaders...even if a large-scale military action began.”¹¹⁸

Despite Prime Minister Allawi’s and GEN Casey’s conviction that the assault on Fallujah was necessary, there were some within the Coalition and the Iraqi Government who did not support military action at that time. Dr. Rubai’e, the National Security Advisor, felt that the assault could be deferred until after the elections and after the Iraqi Islamic Party, the major Sunni contingent, encouraged more negotiations.

Rules of Engagement. During Najaf General Casey asked, “How can we help this new Iraqi Government be successful? During Fallujah II, he asked, “How can the Iraqi Government support the impending military action?”¹¹⁹

We were looking at the situation in Fallujah. Just a hugely difficult urban fight. So we started asking ourselves, what can the government do for us that will make our job easier? ...the emergency decree they put out said 24 hour curfew, no one’s allowed to carry guns, the police force is disbanded, no driving...a range of measures that made target selection and engagement easier.¹²⁰

b. Security

Fallujah II would not be a crisis reaction as it had been for Fallujah I, operations to quell the Shi’a uprising in April-May, and the Najaf crisis in August. Conditions were being set, including having the right troop levels to secure critical areas of the country. Per LTG Metz, MNC-I Commander,

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ GEN Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

¹²⁰ Ibid. This is the emergency decree that Prime Minister Allawi announced on the eve of the assault.

I based almost everything off the lessons I learned in April...an attack into Fallujah could potentially create another uprising around the country, and so it was a total Corps operation...Corps...focused on resources and getting the plan for the whole country, everything from border closings to doubling stockages of class III and V.¹²¹

Of particular concern was development of the ISF. Were the ISF capable, sufficient, integrated, and sustainable? Was there a plan to hand over the security of Fallujah to a competent ISF after the combat operations? The Coalition and Iraqi Government discussed these issues, surfaced in previous operations, before the assault. However, they knew that it took time to teach, coach, build, organize, and equip competent ISF.

There was a difference in opinion concerning the readiness of the ISF. Prime Minister Allawi spoke to GEN Casey and said, "I prefer that the Iraqi Forces should lead. But GEN Casey said, 'Well, we don't think the Iraqi units are ready...'"¹²² Hence, the ISF were relegated to a supporting but necessary role in Al Fajr.

The ISF would field elements of the 1st IIF Brigade (headquarters and three battalions), the 3rd Brigade of the 5th Iraqi Division (headquarters and two battalions), the 36th Commando Battalion, and small platoons of Iraqi Specialized Special Forces (formerly known as the Shawanis) to support the Marine battalions. The task organization is shown in a 1st MARDIV slide (Figure III-1). Note that the number of Coalition and Iraqi forces involved in the main assault force was far more than what was available for Fallujah I.

But the Iraqi force structure, in particular on-hand strength, was less than one might expect. For example, LTC Yassir, authorized a force of 759 personnel, said that his battalion had 300 soldiers on hand for Fallujah II. Most Iraqi battalions were at 50% to 60% strength, an important factor when computing combat power.¹²³ He did say that their individual equipment, weapons, body armor, helmets, and night vision goggles were in good condition.

¹²¹ LTG Metz, telephone interview with the author, 19 December 2005.

¹²² Prime Minister Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

¹²³ A major weakness at the operational and strategic levels, and one mentioned during many interviews, was payday. There was no direct deposit. Every payday, the Iraqi Soldiers physically took the paychecks home. This meant that at least one-third of the Iraqis were always gone.

The MOD and Ministry of Interior were to provide additional forces, such as the 2nd IIF Brigade and Public Order Brigades, respectively, to secure the city following major combat operations.

Training the Iraqi forces took place at their home station and at the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp, erected by 1st MARDIV to billet, assess, and train the Iraqis. The Marines aptly demonstrated the principles of teach, coach, and build¹²⁴ as they prepared the Iraqis for the upcoming battle.

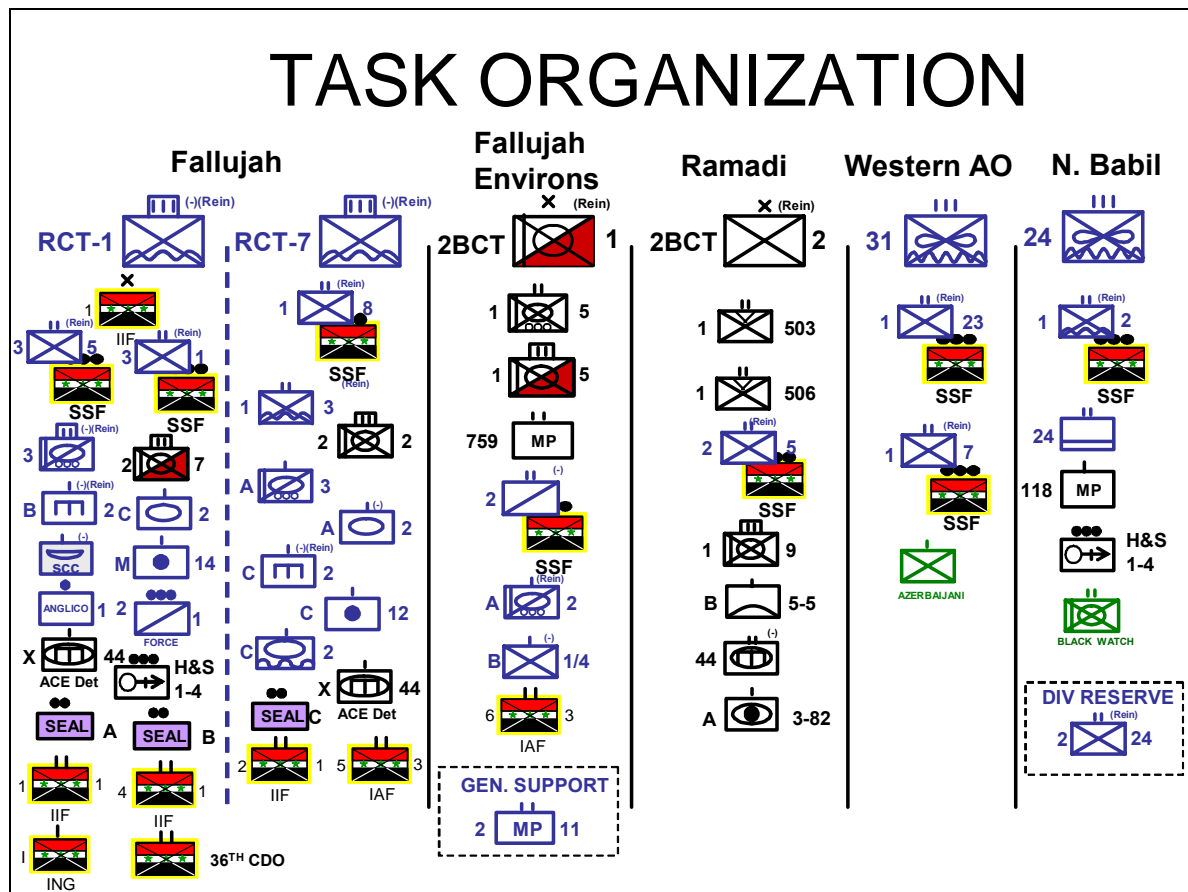


Figure III-1. Task Organization (Source: 1st MARDIV)

Col Shupp, Commander, RCT-1, explained how timely assessment of ISF capabilities guided training:

¹²⁴ Teach the Iraqis to plan and execute a military operation, coach them on information operations, and build their confidence.

The ISF...when we got them, we had to do an instant assessment, we had to find out what their capabilities were because all previous ISF were really questionable....We had to find their level of proficiency...at the squad and company level, I believe is where they fell out. But no fire support, no medical support per se, and then we had to train them. So we had a small cadre...They did ROE, the medical classes, the Law of Land Warfare, identification friend or foe, geometry of fires...[and] then we even put them through a live-fire tactic...where they went into the shooting houses and onto the range, so we could see how good they actually were or were not.¹²⁵

In addition to the assessment and training, Col Shupp stressed building relationships:

Dinners, personal get-togethers were where we got to talk to them, but then we also brought the Iraqi staffs in to rooms...24 hours prior we started giving them presentations on what we were actually going to do. No written orders. The training team liaison gave those [orders] to them, hours before the operation so that nothing would be compromised.¹²⁶

Mr. Mazin echoed Col Shupp's comments:

Col Shupp is very smart and also the general. They use the Iraqis like a partner. There is no more difference between the Iraqis and the Americans. They share everything—about intelligence information, about the planning, and moving together....We are working together, [it] is very good. It's more different from Najaf and Sadr City and also from Mosul. The best, we worked together.¹²⁷

Not only did Col Shupp treat the Iraqis as partners, so did the ASTs. Mr. Mazin commented that LTC De Oliveira, the Senior Advisor to the 1st IIF Brigade, and General Tarik, the 1st IIF Brigade Commander, had a great relationship. "There is no more difference between them—they eat together and they work together."

Col Tucker, Commander, RCT-7, which was responsible for the assault on the east side of Fallujah, also commented on the proficiency of the Iraqis: "At the beginning of Fallujah, I assessed the IIF as capable of doing company-level operations with a fairly capable advisory team..."¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Col Shupp, interview with the author, 1st MARDIV Headquarters, 9 December 2005.

¹²⁶ MajGen Natonski, interview with the author, 1st MARDIV Headquarters, 9 December 2005. MajGen Natonski emphasized the team-building aspects.

¹²⁷ Mr. Mazin Muhammad Rhada, interview with the author, Al Qaim, 20 January 2006.

¹²⁸ Col Craig Tucker, telephonic interview with the author, 19 October 2005.

c. Information Operations¹²⁹

As a result of experiences during Fallujah I, the Coalition and Iraqis needed to address several questions as they prepared for Fallujah II: How do we retain the information operations initiative? How do we ensure our freedom of information operations and control the enemy's use of information operations?

BrigGen Lessell, Director, Strategic Communications Directorate, responsible for both public affairs and information operations, had three large tasks: (1) effective strategic communication for MNF-I, (2) working strategic communications on an interagency level, and (3)

helping [the] Iraqi government do strategic communications. So even before we got there...those who preceded us had to help nurture a very nascent media capability in the Iraqi government and in the Iraqi media. The media didn't know how to do interviews, they weren't familiar with free press, they didn't know how to ask questions during interviews...we ended up...helping the Iraqi government establish a communications directorate.¹³⁰

As such, BrigGen Lessell worked closely with Prime Minister Allawi's spokesman, Mr. Thair Nakib, coordinating media events and releases. Figure III-2 shows LtGen Sattler, LTG Qadir, and Mr. Thair Nakib at a press conference at Camp Fallujah. As for information operations itself, Coalition units coordinated and requested expert input on psychological operations, but as noted, the Iraqis had no real information operations capability.

A great information operations example is the name adopted for the Fallujah II operation. Originally called Phantom Fury, BrigGen Lessell recognized—as did GEN Casey and Prime Minister Allawi—the negative implications of a U.S. moniker for the operation:

We went back to the [Iraqi Interim Government] and said, “What would you call this?...[they responded] Operation Al Fajr, New Dawn;¹³¹ lexicon was very important...cultural aspects we have to think through from an IO standpoint, it's what you say...who says it, when you say it, and to what audiences.

¹²⁹ Information operations in this capacity is somewhat a misnomer. The subject title is used because it is in the Task Order, but as you will see, their information operations was limited to media issues.

¹³⁰ BrigGen Lessell, interview with the author, Pentagon, 28 December 2005

¹³¹ The literal translation of Al Fajr is “Dawn.”



Figure III-2. Press Conference: LtGen Sattler, Commander, I-MEF; Mr. Nakib, Prime Minister Allawi's Spokesman; and LTG Qadir, Commander of Iraqi Ground Forces for Al Fajr (Source: MNF-I Public Affairs Office)

Fortunately, Prime Minister Allawi understood his media mission and, according to GEN Casey, LtGen Sattler, BrigGen Lessel, and others, was quite good at it. Prime Minister Allawi's concept was that,

One of the four components necessary in dealing with Fallujah was to keep the media coverage throughout the Arab world, throughout the country so everyone would understand...I went 2 days before the operation started on the media and spoke on Zargawi, and I said specifically that he had taken the honorable people of Fallujah as hostages. I felt...it was very important...that we...keep the people of Iraq informed that we are not after the people, we are after the terrorists.¹³²

d. Reconstruction

According to GEN Casey, several principles developed from the events in Najaf.

Once we go in and fight to take over a place, we are only going to relinquish control of it to capable ISF, and two, *we're going to work reconstruction efforts*, to work the other lines of counterinsurgency operations *to enhance success* [emphasis added].¹³³

¹³² Prime Minister Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

¹³³ GEN Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

As you may recall, Prime Minister Allawi's concern during Fallujah I was, "What should we do after we liberate Fallujah? [So for Fallujah II] we formed a team to take care of Fallujah administration and services."¹³⁴

Prime Minister Allawi appointed Dr. Hachem al-Hassani, Minister of Industry and Minerals, as head of the Iraqi Reconstruction Committee and was assured that the committee was prepared for post-combat reconstruction before Allawi allowed Al Fajr to proceed.

2. Al Fajr, Fallujah II

The Iraqi units developed from a "face" to a "capability" during Al Fajr. The following excerpts reflect the development of the Iraqi forces during the battle. The final report examines their contributions to the operation in more detail.

The 1st MARDIV's mission was to attack to destroy anti-Iraqi forces in Fallujah to establish legitimate local control. The intent was to eliminate Fallujah as an insurgent sanctuary, set conditions for local control of the city, and support the MNF-I effort to secure approaches to Baghdad. The operation consisted of five phases:¹³⁵

- I. Preparation and Shaping
- II. Enhanced Shaping
- III. A. Assault, B. Search and Attack
- IV. Transition
- V. Transfer of Control

Phase I, was discussed above.

a. Phase II: Enhanced Shaping, D-Day, 7 November 2004

Fallujah was isolated on D-Day via electronic attack, the Black Jack Brigade dynamic cordon to the southeast, securing the bridges on the west, the peninsula assault, joint fires, and the movement of forces to the north. Phase II also allowed for movement of forces into attack positions and the seizure of the Fallujah hospital, which began Al Fajr.

¹³⁴ Prime Minister Allawi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

¹³⁵ 1st MARDIV mission and phases provided by MajGen Natonski, interview with the author, 1st MARDIV Headquarters, 9 December 2005.

The hospital was an information operations objective. Much of the insurgents' success during Fallujah I was attributed to the insurgents' use of the hospital as a command-and-control node as well as a conduit for insurgent information operations messages. So seizing the hospital meant denying the insurgents a platform for disinformation on the status of civilians and collateral damage in Fallujah. In addition, the 36th Commandos, an element of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces, took the lead in the operation and provided the Iraqi Government and Coalition a great information operations opportunity to showcase Iraqi forces executing operations.



Figure III-3. Fallujah Hospital and North Bridge

The hospital area is located at the north end of the peninsula on the west side of Fallujah (Figure III-3). Note the North Bridge, the site of the Blackwater contractor mutilation, is within a hundred meters of the hospital.

By Al Fajr the 36th Commandos were expert in direct-action operations, seizing and clearing sensitive sites, targeting terrorists, etc. The only Iraqi unit that operated during Vigilant Resolve, they were prepared to seize the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf, and they did seize the Golden Mosque and hospital during Baton Rouge in Samarra in October. They also conducted weekly operations in and around Baghdad.



Figure III-4. 36th Commandos' Mission Rehearsal

(Photo provided by 5th SFG)

The 36th was expert because of the time and resources 5th SFG invested in the unit's development. The 5th SFG established, trained, mentored, and partnered with the unit since November 2003. Figure III-4 shows the assault teams conducting mission rehearsal with their advisors before the assault. The 36th Commandos were ready. At 2300 on 7 November, as the 3rd LAR secured the peninsula and set up blocking positions on the North and South Bridges leading from the peninsula to Fallujah, the 36th Commandos entered the hospital area with two assault forces. They secured the area by midnight. It took them until early the next morning to vet the residents and staff. Among them were insurgents and weapons. During the operation, team members, one combat cameraman, and one advisor videotaped the operation. They fed the information back to their team at the MEF to exploit for information operations purposes. In addition, three newsmen were embedded with the 36th Commandos. The raid was aired on ABC National News and on Al Jazeera regional news by the next day.

Elements of the 1st IIF relieved the 36th Commandos at the hospital the next morning.

Members of the 5th SFG rated the 36th Commandos as capable of conducting complex battalion operations in an intense environment (a detailed assessment is provided in the final report). This operation was a great example of teaching, coaching, and building: teaching the Iraqis to plan and execute a military operation, coaching them on information operations, and building their confidence. That said, the 36th Commandos still relied on the Coalition for operational, administrative, and logistical support.

b. Phase III-A: Assault, 8 November 2004

Fallujah was still a symbol of insurgent strength to the Iraqis. According to Mr. Mazin, Fallujah was a "new mission for the 1st Brigade...When they heard Fallujah, everybody was scared."¹³⁶

The assault phase was scheduled to begin on 8 November. MajGen Natonski described the array of Coalition forces as they moved into attack positions on that day:

On the 8th I was wandering all across the front, meeting with the units as they moved into the attack positions and it was awe inspiring. At that moment on the morning and afternoon and early evening of the 8th of November, this was the greatest concentration of combat power on the

¹³⁶ Mr. Mazin Muhammad Rhada, interview with the author, Al Qaim, 20 January 2006.

face of the earth...as you look at the attack forces that are ready to cross and around the city, it's a combination of Army and Marine forces...along with their Iraqi counterparts.¹³⁷

LtCol McCarthy, Chief, Effects Coordination Cell, was with MajGen Natonski at that time and spoke of the effect that sight had on the Iraqi forces:

You could see the Iraqis drive around in their trucks and it would be kind of quiet, until they got the sense of it. Look at all this stuff! Literally, they would cheer and wave and literally they knew, "We are on the right side." They didn't really know what was going on, but once they took a look around and saw tanks and Marines and soldiers, and guns and helicopters, you could see their calmness, "We are actually on the winning team this time."¹³⁸

This is a good example of building the Iraqi's confidence.¹³⁹

The ISF response to supporting Al Fajr was not all positive. Maj Zacchea, Senior Advisor for the 5th Iraqi Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 5th Division, talked about the number of AWOL soldiers in his unit:

We did have a lot of desertions right before the Battle of Fallujah. We had one entire company, about 120 Iraqis just up and left. I don't know how that could possibly have happened, because 120 guys walking through the desert—I don't know how anybody doesn't see them—but they were just gone. But the people who remained were solid.¹⁴⁰

The assault started at 1900 local on the 8th (see Figure III-5). In Phase IIIa, the 2-7 Cav led the main attack for RCT-1 in the west—its mission to penetrate in zone and secure the Jolan district—the heaviest defended and most difficult areas because of the Byzantine close-quarter structure of the area.

Col Shupp introduced the 4th Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade (red-circled Iraqi unit on left of Figure III-5) to the fight on 9 November. It was responsible for securing the line of communication, Phase line Henry, the north-south road (yellow line) that ran through the city, from "leakers" moving from the 7th Marine's area of operations from into the Jolan (i.e., from coming east to west). Col Shupp put one company of mechanized infantry

¹³⁷ MajGen Natonski, interview with the author, 1st MARDIV Headquarters, 9 December 2005.

¹³⁸ LtCol McCarthy, interview with the author, 1st MARDIV, Camp Pendleton, 9 December 2005.

¹³⁹ A research objective.

¹⁴⁰ NPR's *Morning Edition*, "Marines Discuss Training of Iraqi Troops," 21 June 2006, with Maj Michael Zacchea and 1st Lt Seth Moulton.

(Bradley Fighting Vehicles), to back them up. They had no heavy weapons and no fire support except as provided by the Coalition. Col Shupp spoke of his concerns:

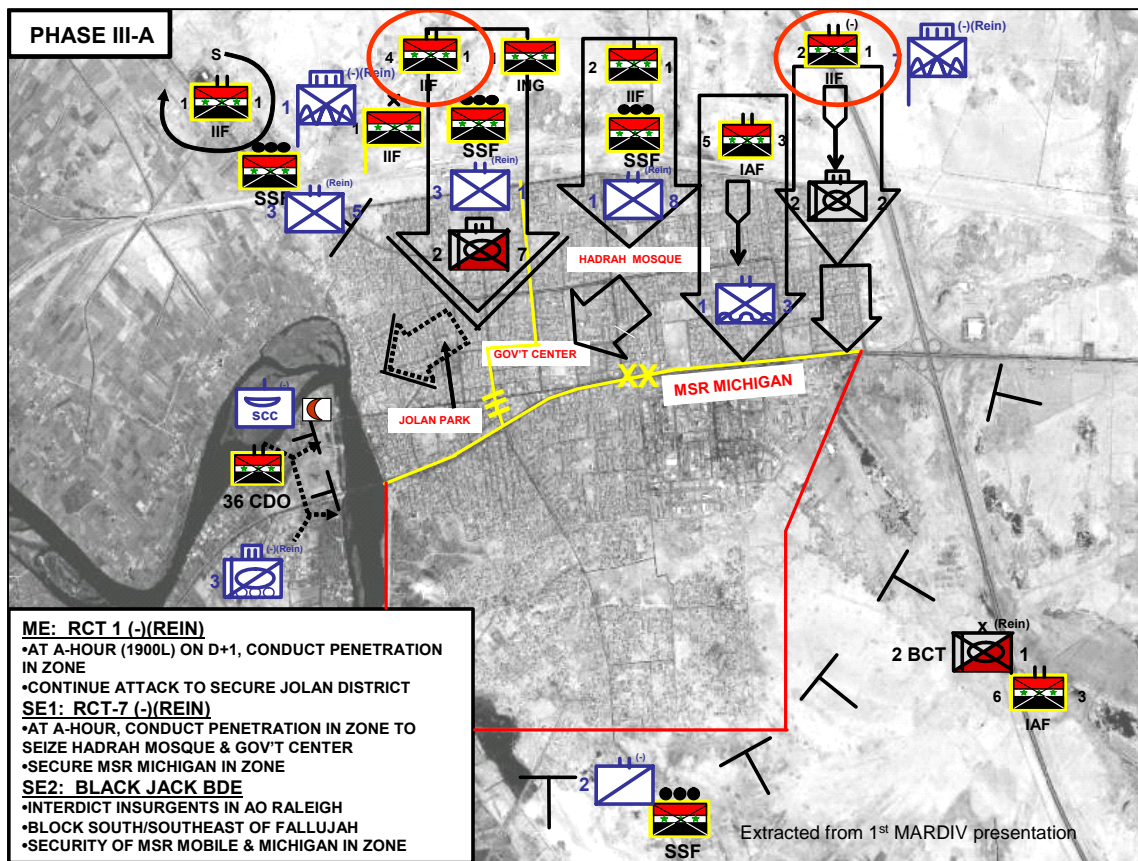


Figure III-5. Phase III-A: Assault, D+1, 8 November 2004 (1st MARDIV Slide)

I was desperately concerned about blue-on-blue casualties created by these forces.... So to make sure there was no confusion, my regimental staff walked them into their battle positions. As we walked them into town there were all sorts of negligent discharges and young [Iraqi] soldiers firing at ghosts in buildings; they were just scared to death. One of their [Iraqi] SGMs shot himself in the foot, an accidental discharge. So we walked them into position, and this battalion did a tremendous job under LTC Yassir.

RCT-7 conducted a supporting attack to the east, seizing the Hadrah Mosque and Government Center and securing MSR Michigan. Col Tucker used elements of the 2nd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade to back them up.

c. Phase III-B—Search and Attack in Zone, 13 November 2004

On 11 November, RCT-1 and RCT-7 continued their penetration past MSR Michigan into the south of the city, and on 13 November, they entered Phase III-B, Search and Attack in Zone. Also, on the 13th, Prime Minister Allawi announced that the city was secure. At that time, the Army units, specifically 2-7 Cav and 2-2 Mech, returned to their parent units. However, 2BCT—Black Jack Brigade—still maintained blocking positions to the southeast.

The ISF were used for a spectrum of missions, including platoon- to battalion-sized operations, maintaining traffic-control points, clearing operations, and direct action. Coalition commanders provided assessments of the various forces. During the interviews, probably the most important comments concerned the missions in which Iraqis performed much better than the Coalition: identifying foreign fighters, locating caches, and clearing culturally sensitive areas. The capability of the Iraqis forces to converse with detainees and identify country of origin was remarkable:

They [ISF] could go into a house after soldiers or Marines had gone through and because they knew the architecture and they knew the layout, they found caches that we missed. When it came to prisoners, you'd line up a row of detainees and they'd go down the line and tell you, "He's Saudi, he's Syrian, he's Tunisian, he's Egyptian." Just like you'd say, "He's from Boston, he's from the South, he's from New York," by their accent. They proved invaluable.¹⁴¹

LTC Yassir, Commander 4th Iraqi Battalion, elaborated on locating caches:

The Coalition forces were supposed to search this area, but when we searched the area [after the Americans], we found horrible things. Big caches. The [Americans] didn't enter the concrete. The insurgents placed the cache underground, and then they covered it with concrete and put on the air cooler. They hid all these caches. They dig in the garden, the house garden, inside house. We found big caches in this area.

LTC Yassir also provided an example of identifying a foreign fighter. "We also found intelligence Algeria officers—intelligence officers from Algeria—yes, they are very important guys."¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ MajGen Natonski, interview with the author, 1st MARDIV Headquarters, 9 December 2005.

¹⁴² LTC Yassir, interview with the author, Al Qaim, 19 January 2006.

He then discussed an operation in which his battalion identified, tracked, and attacked insurgents that successfully snuck into RCT-1's rear area in the Jolan district. He had located terrorists in several houses.

There are some bad guys who are behind us [in an area that the regimental assault force has already moved through]...we controlled our fire and watched them...as they moved into four houses. When [my] two platoons surround the enemy, the terrorists...they [my men] surprised them because the enemy moved to a different position and [my men] start to shoot them. We killed 11 of the enemy.¹⁴³

Col Shupp's confidence grew in the 4th Iraqi Battalion's capabilities, and eventually he assigned them their own battlespace to control and clear.

The Iraqi forces continued to develop and grow, but there were also weaknesses. MajGen Natonski noted that sustainment is expected to be a long-term operational issue; tactical issues will take time to fix:

Now for weaknesses. When they pulled the trigger, fire discipline left a little to be desired. When they pulled the trigger it was usually until the magazine was empty. They had the tendency to drift out of their sector when they saw a place to loot.¹⁴⁴ You know the ROE was important. We had ROE cards printed in Arabic to give them, however, most of them probably couldn't read it, so they also had the verbal reinforcement before they went into the battle. They emulated the soldiers and Marines that they were serving with, and they had American advisors who were key.¹⁴⁵

At the same time, the media campaign was a critical part of the operation. COL Powl Smith, the Information Operations Officer for the Strategic Communications Directorate of the MNF-I, explained the difficulties in working with the Iraqis when dealing with the media:

It took a while to find a guy who wasn't afraid to get in front of the camera. We had to give them PA [public affairs] training. "Don't be afraid of the camera, tell your story...of your units...country." We finally got

¹⁴³ Ibid. This "tactical patience" also reflects a maturity that normally comes with experience.

¹⁴⁴ During Saddam's era, the Army looted area residences—that was their shopping center. One of the most difficult things to teach or change will be the Iraqi Jundi's understanding of the Army's mission. In a dictatorship the mission of the Army is to protect the dictator; in a democracy, the mission is to protect the people.

¹⁴⁵ MajGen Natonski, interview with the author, 1st MARDIV Headquarters, 9 December 2005.

Qadir, as the Commander of the Iraqi forces, to stand up next to Gen Sattler and give their joint briefing. This gave it a lot more credibility.¹⁴⁶

d. Phase IV: Transition

During Phase IV, clearing operations continued; the CMOC was established; remains, rubble, and water were removed; unexploded ordnance and caches were cleared; and entry controls were established in preparation for resettling the population.

A major lesson from Najaf¹⁴⁷ was the ability to hand off security of the city to a capable Iraqi force. Although Fallujah still required (and would for some time) Coalition forces, the Iraqis provided Public Order Brigades, and the 2nd IIF Brigade relieved the 1st IIF Brigade.

On 3 December, then BG Mehdi arrived with his Public Order Brigade. BG Mehdi recalled the two hardest periods of his life. The first was when he arrived in Fallujah. Many of his soldiers did not want to enter the city and he had 14 of his officers mutiny. To maintain control of his unit he had to eat with them, sleep with them, and lead them into combat—to the point that he led small teams to clear buildings. He finally gained the confidence of his people.

The second hardest period was when the residents were to return to their homes and businesses in the city. The residents did not trust the Iraqi soldiers, and BG Mehdi personally led the residents back to their homes:

[My] duty was to convince families to go back to their houses...they had no idea what was waiting for them. There was no trust. I am going to be the first one walking and...afterwards [came]...the residents.¹⁴⁸

In addition to the POB, the 2nd Iraqi Brigade, 1st IIF Division, entered Fallujah to replace the 1st Iraqi Brigade. This unit, along with the 4th Brigade, partnered with the Marines to control the city. According to LTC Akrum, the Deputy Commander, the 2nd Brigade worked for Col Shupp, RCT-1, and cleared, stabilized, and helped repopulate areas north of Phase Line Fran (MSR Michigan in Figure III-6):¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ COL Powl Smith, interview with the author, IDA, 12 December 2005.

¹⁴⁷ GEN Casey, interview with the author, Baghdad, 6 February 2006.

¹⁴⁸ MG Mehdi, interview with the author, Baghdad, 31 January 2006.

¹⁴⁹ Col Shupp spoke highly of the 2nd Brigade. Just in the little time the IDA team spent with them, the team was impressed. The brigade leadership showed passion in what they do, a detailed understanding of what they and their units did, and there was depth to the contributions they made.

After the 1st Brigade was done with Fallujah and the insurgents, it was our mission to clean up caches and weapons. We found many weapons buried under the buildings, and we found a lot of buildings where they put bombs inside the buildings. There were so many bodies in the street.¹⁵⁰

Another critical follow-up lesson from Najaf was reconstruction. LTG Qadir was impressed that the Coalition was simultaneously conducting combat operations and reconstruction:

I have never experienced such things before, but even from the first phase of the battle, I saw something very unique. The U.S. Army was already building and fixing things, but they were still in the battle. They were working on the electricity and building things. This is something I have never seen in any other Army, and I am impressed.



Figure III-6. 2nd IIF Brigade Area of Operations

Initiated during the transition, Inter-ministerial Fallujah Working Group meetings were held twice a week. The first was in Fallujah, and the second was in Baghdad. The real workers were Deputy Minister Mohammed, who ran the council meetings in Baghdad with the other ministries, and engineer Basil Mahmoud, who ran the meetings in

¹⁵⁰ LTC Akrum, interview with the author, EFIC, 16 January 2006.

Fallujah and effectively became the city manager of Fallujah during that period.¹⁵¹ The Fallujah meetings continue today.

Deputy Minister Mohammed¹⁵² was probably most proud of the 150 teams assembled to assess damage on the 2,500 houses in Fallujah. Although he thought they did good work, he felt the reimbursement was late, and it still was not complete as of the interview (over a year later). They assessed total housing damage at \$492 million. The Iraqi Government provided \$175 million. For reconstruction projects, the Iraqi Government provided \$100 million, and the MNF-I provide \$92 million for reconstruction projects. Priorities for reconstruction projects were set at the Fallujah weekly meetings.

On 9 December, Prime Minister Allawi announced that Fallujah would be opened for resettlement on 23 December. Although 1st MARDIV would have liked more time to clean up debris and restore electricity and water, Col Shupp developed a resettlement plan, essentially by district. Residents would be resettled sequentially from west to east. Only those people who could prove where they lived were allowed in.

In addition to establishing entry-control points and a population resettlement plan, RCT-1 also organized and established Humanitarian Assistance Sites in several locations throughout the city. Those sites provided food, water, and clothing to the returning residents. MajGen Natonski said that every head of household was immediately paid \$200 for damages: “We have to show some commitment to these people.”¹⁵³

e. Phase V: Transfer of Control

In addition to reconstruction, another continuing effort is the transfer of control to the Iraqis—Phase V of the operation. A major challenge in the transfer of control, according to COL Raid, will be the development of a trusted police force in Fallujah:

Our sources of information tell us that there is much cooperation between Iraqi police and the insurgents. Maybe he works with them, or maybe he

¹⁵¹ Col John Ballard, Commander, 4th CAG, “C4ISR/C2 Architecture: A Case Study of Iraqi-MNF Interoperability in Iraq,” presented at 10th Annual Command and Control Research and Technology Symposium: The Future of C2 Multinational Force and Host-Nation Administration in Wartime Iraq, an Inter-ministerial Approach.

¹⁵² Deputy Minister Mohammed, interview with the author, Baghdad, Iraq, 2 February 2006.

¹⁵³ MajGen Natonski, interview with the author, 1st MARDIV Headquarters, 9 December 2005.

helps them. Maybe the insurgents have pressure on the Iraqi police, or maybe they are afraid of the insurgents because of their families.¹⁵⁴

3. Setting the Conditions for the Elections

There is a continuing story of pursuit and exploitation that was extremely important to killing and capturing insurgents and keeping them off balance during the period leading up to the elections. While important at the operational level, LTC Akrum noted its importance was also recognized at the tactical level:

The big lesson we learned from Fallujah battles—we are supposed to keep chasing the insurgents. We don't stop at the one step, we don't need to stop when we capture Fallujah, we need to keep going and looking for the insurgents.¹⁵⁵

Because of the insurgent threat that developed in Mosul, 1-5 Stryker Battalion was recalled to Mosul (they had come from Mosul to support Al Fajr). GEN Casey said that developments in Mosul were cause for real concern. In particular, if the conflict in Mosul prevented the people from voting, that could affect the validity of the elections. Fortunately, Mosul recovered, and its people were able to participate in the January elections.

Again, the objective was to conduct valid elections in January. There were five polling centers in Fallujah, and the ISF provided security. Approximately 8,000 people—the majority of voters in Al Anbar Province—showed up to vote in Fallujah for the January 2005 elections.

Despite what most would call a low turnout, the opportunity to vote was important to support a valid election, and the effects were much greater than could be judged at that moment. Kael Weston, State Department representative in Fallujah, emphasized that, given the opportunity, Fallujan participation in follow-on elections increased dramatically:

You went from the biggest kinetic fight of the whole campaign to an opportunity for these Sunni Arabs...to turn out to vote, and they did....If you fast forward to October 15th following a fatwa issued by the Imams of

¹⁵⁴ COL Raid, interview with the author, EFIC, 16 January 2006.

¹⁵⁵ LTC Akrum, interview with the author, EFIC, 16 January 2006.

Fallujah...you had over 180,000 voters in Fallujah...Then in December, of course, the word was out that everyone needed to vote.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Kael Weston, State Department Representative to Fallujah, telephone interview with the author, 26 May 2006.

ACRONYMS

1SG	First Sergeant
AAR	after action review (report)
AGR	active guard and reserve
AK	(AK-47) small arms rifle, 7.62mm
ANGLICO	air and naval gunfire liaison company (U.S. Marine Corps)
AO	area of operation
AST	Advisory Support Team
AWOL	absent without leave
Bde	brigade
BrigGen	Brigadier General – USAF, USMC
BG	Brigadier General – USA
BIAP	Baghdad International Airport
C2	command and control
C-2	Intelligence Staff at Combined Headquarters
C-3	Operations Staff at Combined Headquarters
CAG	Commander’s Advisory Group
CAG	civil affairs group
Capt	Captain, USMC or USAF
CAPT	Captain, USN
CAV	cavalry
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CIF	central issue facility
CJTF-7	Combined Joint Task Force 7
CMATT	Coalition Military Assistance Training Teams

CMOC	Civil Military Operations Center
COL	Colonel, USA
Col	Colonel, USMC or USAF
COSCOM	Corps Support Command (U.S. Army)
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CPATT-I	Civilian Police Assistance Training Teams – Iraq
CPT	Captain, USA
CTT	common task training
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
ECP	entry control point
EFIC	East Fallujah Iraqi Camp
EGAG	Extra Governmental Armed Group
FIST	fire support team
FOB	Forward operating base
G-3	Operations Staff at Division Headquarters
GEN	General
GPS	Global Positioning System
HMMWV	high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle
ICDC	Iraqi Civil Defense Corp
ICTF	Iraqi Counter Terrorist Force
ID	identification
ID	Infantry Division
IDA	Institute for Defense Analyses
IDP	internally displaced person
IED	improvised explosive device
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IIF	Iraqi Intervention Forces
IIG	Iraqi Interim Government

ING	Iraqi National Guard
INIS	Iraqi National Intelligence Service
IO	information operations
IRGC	Iraqi Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JAWP	Joint Advance Warfighting Program
JCOA	Joint Center for Operational Analysis
JFCOM	United States Joint Forces Command
JTF	Joint Task Force
KDP	Kurdish Democratic Party
LAR	light armored reconnaissance
LtGen	Lieutenant General, USMC
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel, USA
LtCol	Lieutenant Colonel, USMC or USAF
LTG	Lieutenant General, USA
MAJ	Major, USA
Maj	Major, USMC or USAF
MajGen	Major General, USMC
MARDIV	Marine Division
MCNS	Ministerial Committee on National Security
MEDEVAC	medical evacuation
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MG	Major General, USA
MiTT	Military Transition Team
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps – Iraq
MNF-I	Multi-National Forces – Iraq
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq
MOI	Ministry of Interior

MOS	military occupational specialty
MOUT	military operations on urban terrain
MSR	main supply route
MSS	Minister for State Security
MTOE	modified table of organization and equipment
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	noncommissioned officer
NIPRNET	Non-classified Internet Protocol Router Network
NJOC	National Joint Operations Center
NTC	National Training Center
OGA	other government agency
OPCON	operational control
OPORD	operational order
OPSEC	operational security
PA	public affairs
PAO	public affairs officer
PDS	predeployment survey
PERSTAT	personnel status report
PM	Prime Minister
POB	Public Order Battalion
POC	point of contact
PSD	Personal Security Detachment
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
QRF	quick reaction force
RADM	Rear Admiral
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
ROE	rules of engagement
RPG	rocket propelled grenade
S1	personnel/administrative staff officer below division

	level
S2	intelligence staff officer below division level
S3	operations staff officer below division level
S4	logistics staff officer below division level
SEAL	Sea, Air, and Land (U.S. Navy military Special Forces team member)
SecDef	Secretary of Defense
SF	Special Forces
SFC	Sergeant First Class
SFG	Special Forces Group
SIPRNET	Secret Internet Protocol Routing Network
SORTS	Status of Resources and Training System
SWEAT	sewage, water, electricity, academics, trash
TAL	Transitional Administrative Law
TF	task force
TOC	tactical operations center
TRA	training readiness assessment
TV	television
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USMC	United States Marine Corp
USN	United States Navy
VBIED	vehicle-borne improvise explosive device
XO	Executive Officer

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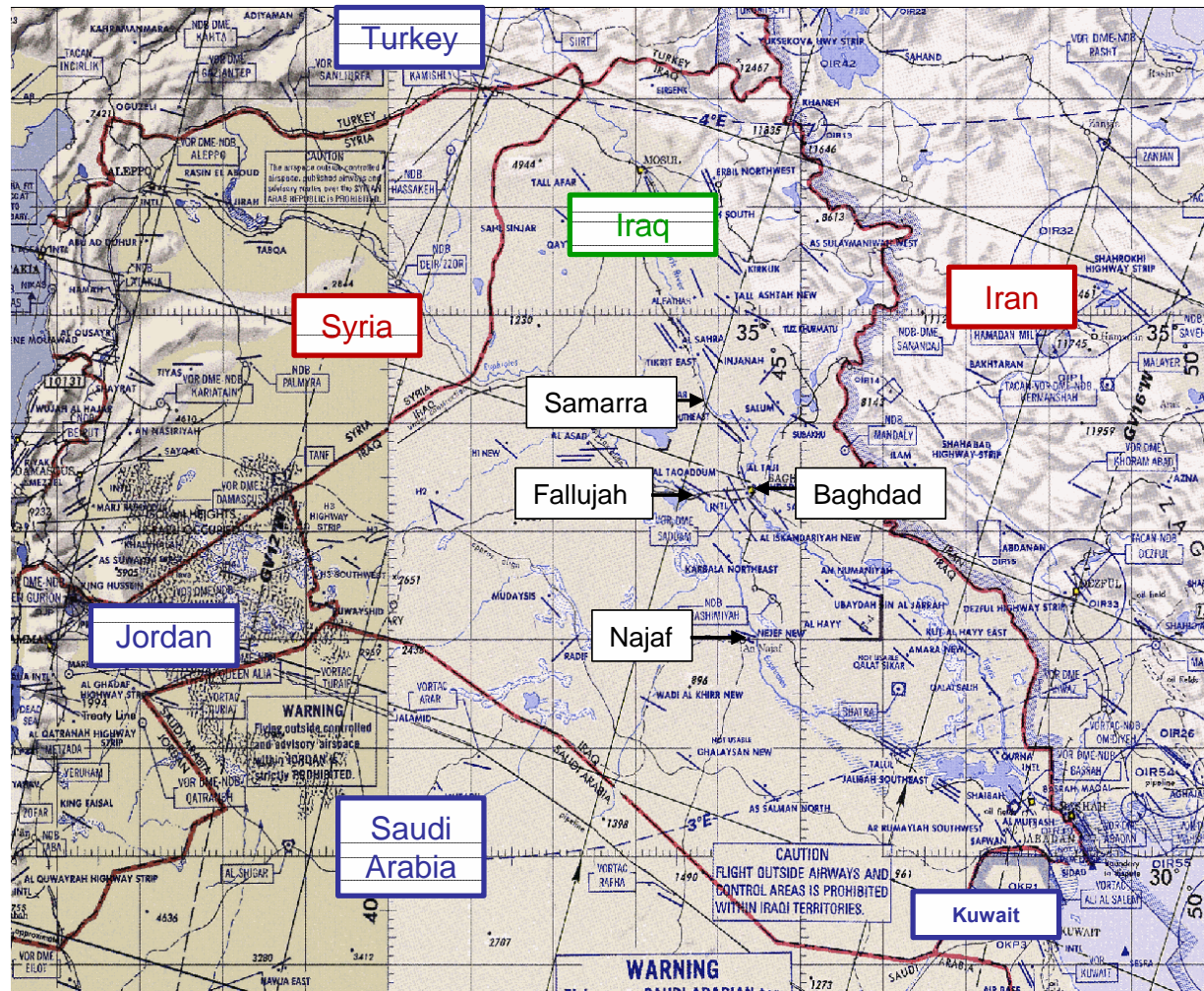
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APPENDIX A—MAPS

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MAP: Iraq & Neighbors



Operations

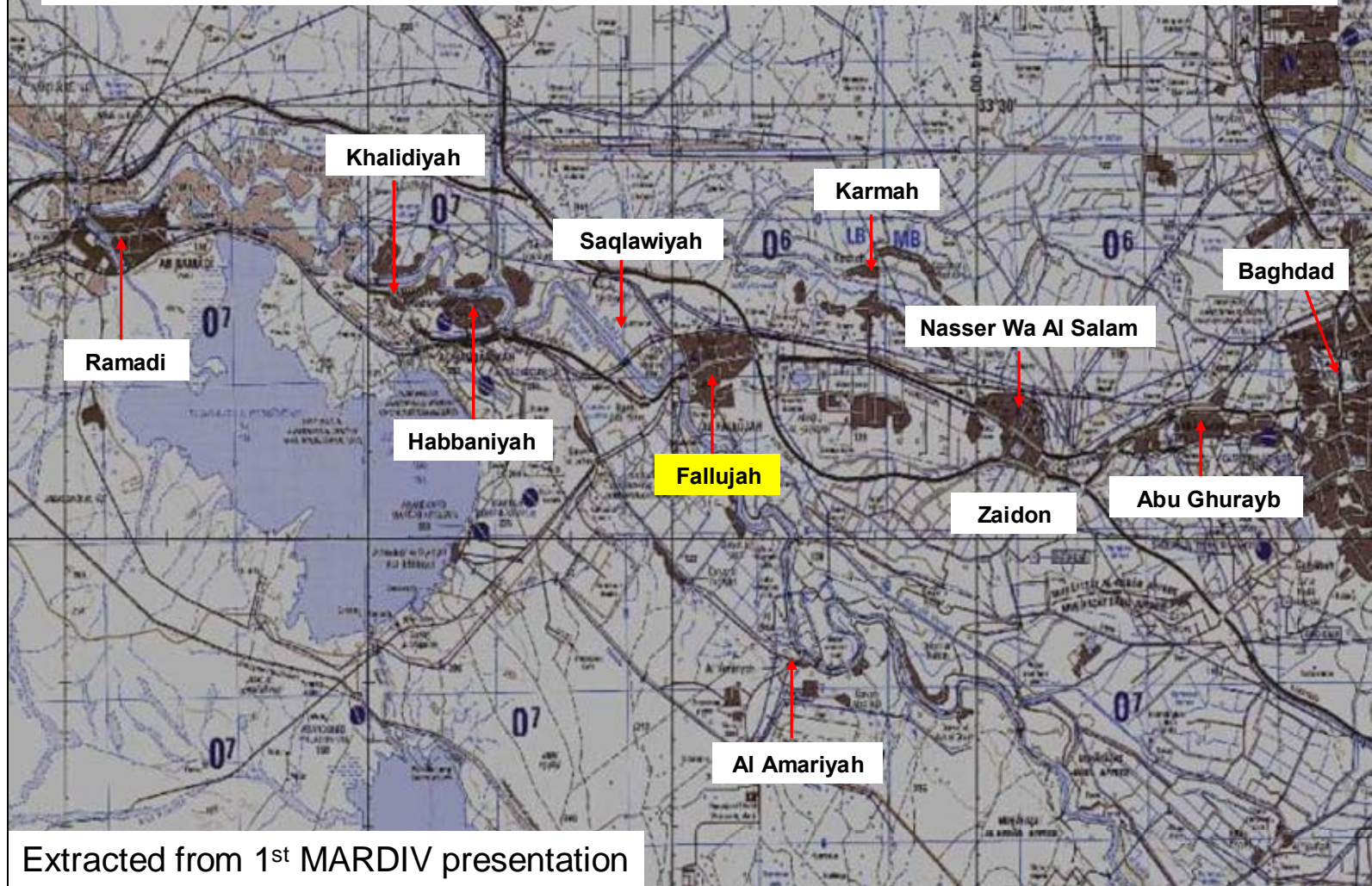
The map displays Iraq with major cities and rivers. Four specific operations are highlighted with callout boxes:

- Baton Rouge**
1-4 Oct 04
- Vigilant Resolve**
4 April – 1 May 04
- Al Fajr**
8 Nov – 23 Dec 04
- An Najaf**
5-27 Aug 04

The map also shows the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the Persian Gulf, and the borders of Iraq with Iran and Kuwait. Various military units and locations are marked, including Baghdad, Samarra, and Karbala.

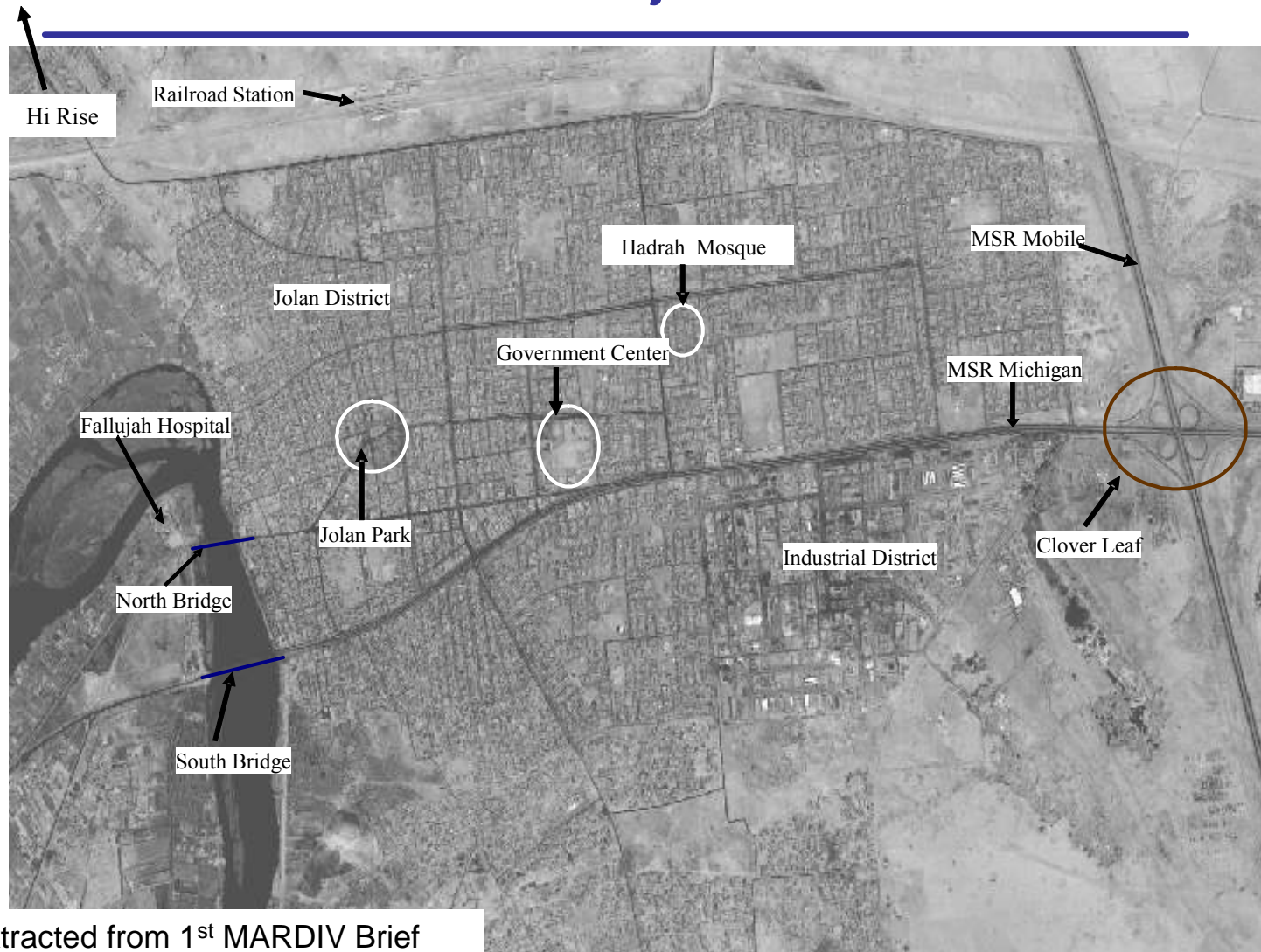
A-4

FALLUJAH AND SURROUNDING CITIES



Extracted from 1st MARDIV presentation

Fallujah



Extracted from 1st MARDIV Brief

APPENDIX B—CHRONOLOGY: 2004 EVENTS

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Chronology – 2004 Events

- Jan – Mar, OIF II Major Force Rotations
 - 2 Mar, Ashoura massacre, 271 killed
 - 8 Mar, Interim Iraqi constitution signed
 - 11 Mar, Madrid Bombing
 - 28 Mar, CPA closes Sadr's Baghdad newspaper
 - 31 Mar, Blackwater contractors killed in Fallujah (Janes First Front -- Fallujah)
- April – “April Uprising” – Fears of a Sunni/Shia collusion
 - 2 Apr, Sadr Lt arrested
 - 4 Apr – 1 May, Fallujah I, “Vigilant Resolve”
 - 5 Apr, CPA announces Iraqi arrest warrant for MAS in connection w/murder of Shia cleric the previous year (Janes Second Front) [GEN Babikir]
 - Late Apr, photos released of Abu-Gurayb
 - 25 Apr, Bremer warns of situation in Najaf
 - Spain begins withdrawal from Iraq (Najaf)
 - 30 Apr – Siege of Fallujah ends at urging of Iraqi politicians. Fallujah Brigade formed
- May
 - 4 – 22 May, 1/1AD(-) fights Mahdi Militia (MM) for Karbala
 - 15 May, CJTF-7 deactivates and Multi-National Forces- Iraq activates
 - 17 May, IGC President Izz al-Din Salim killed by car bomb in Baghdad
- June
 - 8 Jun, UNSCR 1546 adopted.
 - 20 Jun, Iraqi Intervention Forces (IIF) established.
 - 28 Jun, CPA turned over sovereignty to the IIG
- July
 - ICDC redesignated the ING
 - Sadr tensions in Sadr City as well as An Najaf (Building since April)
- August
 - 4 Aug, Campaign Plan published
 - 2-14 Aug, Coalition & ISF defeat MM in Al Kut
 - 5-27 Aug, An Najaf, Operation Pacific Guardian
 - 19 Aug Iraqi National Assembly elected and seated
- October
 - 1-4 Oct, Samarra, “Baton Rouge”
 - 23 Oct, Massacre of Army recruits; PM Allawi blames Coalition for the massacre
- November
 - 8 Nov – 23 Dec, Fallujah II, “Al Fajr”
 - 28 Nov – Militants storm police station in Samarra.
- December -- Setting conditions for the elections
 - Operations conducted in Sunni Triangle and Triangle of Death (South of Baghdad) & Mosul
 - 29 Dec – ING to be incorporated into Iraqi Army on Jan 6

 Operations during 2004 of interest to the study

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APPENDIX C—TRANSCRIPTS/SUMMARIES

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APPENDIX C—TRANSCRIPTS/SUMMARIES

This appendix has 16 transcripts of interviews conducted in January and February 2006 in Iraq. Most of the interviews are with Iraqi students, residents, storekeepers, and hospital staff in Fallujah; Iraqi soldiers from company commanders to the chief of staff of the Iraqi Armed Forces; and Iraqis that held positions in the Iraqi Government during 2004, such as former Prime Minister Allawi.

Table C-1 is an index of the transcripts. It provides the interviewee's name, position, and the location and date of the interview. Iraqi interviewees were told that the interviews were for the US Government to better understand the Battle for Fallujah and the lessons from their (the Iraqi) perspective, and would be organized and archived for further research.

Table C-1. Volume IV Interviews

#	Interviewee	Position in Iraq	Interview location	Date of Interview
1	Dr. Ayad Allawi	Former Prime Minister	Red Zone office	6-Feb-06
2	Dr. Rubai'e	National Security Advisor	Green Zone Home	29-Jan-06
3	GEN Shawani	Director, INIS	INIS Headquarters	5-Feb-06
4	GEN Babikir	CoS, Armed Forces	MOD office	3-Feb-06
5	LTG Abadi	Deputy CoS	MOD office	3-Feb-06
6	Mr. Mohammed	Deputy, MIM	MIM Office, Red Zone	2-Feb-06
7	MG Adnon	Member, MOI, CDR POU	POU Headquarters	30-Jan-06
8	MG Mehdi	CDR, POD	POD HQs Camp Justice	31-Jan-06
9	Mr. Saif Rahman	Prev CoS MIM	Convention Ctr, GZ	5-Feb-06
10	LTG Qadir	CDR, Iraqi Ground Forces	Office, Camp Victory	25-Jan-06
11	COL Razak	Cdr, 1st IIF	Office, Al Qaim	19-Jan-06
12	LTC Yassir	Cdr, 3rd Bn, 1st IIF Bde	Office, Al Qaim	20-Jan-06
13	Mr. Mazin	Translator, 1st IIF Bde	Conference Rm, Al Qaim	20-Jan-06
14	LTC Simpson, CDR	MiTT & Team members	Office, Al Qaim	20-Jan-06
15	LTC Wisam & MAJ Abed	Bde G-2 & Company Cdr, 2nd Br	Hqs, Husaybah	20-Jan-06
16	2nd Bde, 1st IIF Officers	Bde XO and Bn Cdrs	EFIC, Fallujah	16-Jan-06

The transcripts are, in most cases, literal. When not, they are titled as a summary. Time marks for the audio (just the time marking), for the video files (time marking prefaced by "V"), or for both are noted on the transcripts to be able to locate quotes, audio clips, and video clips for future publication, re-creations, and documentaries.

For brevity, first name and last initial are used for the interviewer. As an example, BILL K. refers to William Knarr and GEORGE M. refers to George Mauldin.

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Transcript 1. Dr. Ayad Allawi, Prime Minister, Interim Iraqi Government



Figure C-1-1. Dr. Allawi

1. Dr. Ayad Allawi, born in 1945, a moderate and secular Shi'a, was the Prime Minister of Iraq for the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) starting on 28 June 2004. His term ended on 7 April 2005 after the selection of the Islamic Dawa Party leader Ibrahim al-Jaafari by the newly elected Iraqi National Assembly. He also served in 2003/2004 on the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), the predecessor to the IIG, established by Mr. Bremer, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Administrator. He rotated in as the president of the IGC in October 2003 and reportedly resigned as head of the IGC security committee in April 2004 over concerns about the U.S. bombing of Fallujah.

2. A former Ba'athist, Allawi established the Iraqi National Accord, which opposed Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and is today an active political party. Allawi has lived about half of his life in the UK and retains British citizenship. He survived an attempted assassination in 1978 and again in 2005.¹

3. Dr. Allawi was interviewed at his office in Baghdad on 6 February 2005. Dr. Allawi spoke English; no interpreter was used. The major points of that interview are provided below.

BILL K. Introduction: 2004 was a very transitional year. Please talk about the conditions in Iraq as you entered the first part of 2004.

DR. ALLAWI. Neither the political nor security conditions in Iraq were suitable to face the challenges of that period. The political situation was marked by uncertainty of how the transition was going to be made, what is the role of the Governing Council—changing from IGC to IIG, [which] came at a very quick pace. As you know, the Governing Council was not encompassing all the forces necessary to be assembled to face the political landscape in a positive way.

¹ John Lee Anderson, "A Man of the Shadows," *The New Yorker*, 24 January 2005.

Security cast a strong shadow on the entire situation. We had a very difficult situation, both from a political and security point of view. This kept turbulence in the political scene, and the turbulence and inadequacy of the security opened the doors widely to regional intervention and local insurgency prevailing in various places in the country.

BILL K. One of the key events in March and April 2004 was Fallujah. Can you talk about the discussions between the CPA and Governing Council as the Blackwater incident occurred?

DR. ALLAWI. [3:30] As Fallujah started, at the same time there were a lot of incidents happening throughout the country in Samarra, Mosul, Najaf, and Nasiriyah. And we started the Governing Council. I was elected as the head of the National Security Committee of the Governing Council.

Discussions between the CPA, Governing Council, and Security Committee of the Governing Council focused on ways and means to deal with the situation. It was unfortunate that some groups within the CPA and within the Multi-National Forces (although they were not called Multi-National Forces then) were advocating the establishment of yet another kind of militia in Fallujah, [one] made up of the old Army, later called the Fallujah Brigade. I was adamantly against this concept. I said to the CPA [that] what we are doing is creating another militia. We need to dismantle militias.

I also recall clearly that my position—I advocated force and wanted force to be used, but at the same time I thought it was important to engage in dialogue with some forces which are connected to the insurgency [V:6:00]. The CPA [focus] was that the main force that should be engaged was the clerics. I never thought that they had the upper say in the insurgency. I always thought the ex-military and ex-Ba'athists had the main role. This created a minor conflict between me and the CPA. And there were connections with the clerics in Fallujah and in Samarra. I saw things in a different light.

I tried to explain things to Bremer and Sanchez. Sanchez was a good person, but it didn't seem to me that the chemistry between Sanchez and Bremer was that good, so this led to more confusion. It was unfortunate after March there were attacks in Fallujah, but what I would call attacks that were reluctantly done. I say "reluctantly" because I always thought we have to finish this. You can't just attack once or twice

and stop and only use air. I also wanted the Iraqi forces to be involved, not just the Multi-National Forces. In order to minimize the division in the Iraqi society, I wanted the attack to take place in various places [in the country] so we didn't single out the Sunnis. But the Multi-National Forces thought the way was to use aerial bombardment and covert attacks inside Fallujah.

My argument then was either we go fully on a covert basis and work within Fallujah or better to finish the whole thing....

BILL K. [09:12; V: 9:45] The Marines went in on 4 April and then stopped. Do you think they should have just gone in and finished it?

DR. ALLAWI. Yes.

BILL K. Who decided not to?

DR. ALLAWI. That is why I said there was reluctance in the CPA, and people were seeing things with different views. I'm Iraqi, from this part of the world. You cannot have unfinished business—go halfway and leave things. You must finish it. There should not be continued discussions with the groups and the people. [V:10:51] One of the reasons there was a stoppage of the offensive [was that] as the creation of the Fallujah Brigade turned sour, and some elements within the Fallujah Brigade were connected to the insurgency, the Fallujah Brigade was not cooperating with the CPA. This was one of the failures of the concept of arming the Fallujah Brigade.

BILL K. [11:27] When was that realized?

DR. ALLAWI. As far as we were concerned, the IGC was [a] consultative rather than [a] decision-making body. In the Security Committee of the Governing Council meetings I used to tell them better not to attack—or to attack and finish than attack and stop—but I told them there should be no reliance on the Fallujah Brigade [V:12:21]. I said, “Now it is too difficult unless the Fallujah Brigade is dismantled.” And it ended where it started. As you know, I am a doctor, and when you administer a drug, and you don't finish the whole course, then you get a resistance to the drug. So what happened was more power to the brigade...and linkages between the Fallujah guys, insurgents, Sadr, Northern Babylon, linkages with al Qaeda.

BILL K. [13:40] That leads me to my next question. Demonstrations and violence were erupting in Sadr City, Najaf, Karbala, North Babil, Baghdad...things were happening all over. Why at the same time?

DR. ALLAWI. [V: 13:46]: Because there was a lack of policy to finish. Even on Sadr there was a lack of policy to arrest him. To me, you need to use force and dialogue and reduce unemployment and get people engaged and work so at least they don't go and make problems and become involved in the insurgency. And [you] need [to] find the reasons why people are joining the insurgency and sort out these reasons. There was a flare-up, and people linking themselves to Fallujah...creating links to the insurgency from Fallujah to Samarra and Mosul to Baghdad. And there were meetings between Muqtada al Sadr and the...outfit in Fallujah and Sunni. [15:15]

As we go to June [V: 15:34], everything was boiling throughout the country; there were linkages between all of these. So this was the scene as sovereignty was transferred. I think the reason was a lack of vision and a lack of real consultation with the Governing Council and Security Committee. I think half-hearted and half-cooked measures were taken on the operations. On the political front, the landscape was very confused with no attempt to link the political landscape with the insurgency. They were treated as two different animals, and as I see it, they were both linked—the political landscape influenced the insurgency.

BILL K. [16:54] When the Marines went in on 4 April and stopped on 8 April, why did the Marines stop?

DR. ALLAWI. Because they couldn't achieve the results they wanted. The plans were half-cooked politically. There was division on what to do. I always warned of a very important topic: OK, we go into Fallujah, but what next? How do we organize? How do we manage the people? We need to discuss these issues and develop the contingencies. It's not enough just to engage in fighting and leave. Additionally, by then in Fallujah we had two problems, both operational. One was the presence of Fallujah Brigade, and the second was the widely open borders of Fallujah. The influx of people both in and out—couldn't seal the borders—and terrorists coming from across the borders and elsewhere. And there, as you know, it's all farm and palm trees and rivers. Additionally, intelligence was weak.

BILL K. What caused the flare-up with Sadr?

DR. ALLAWI. [19:05] Multiple things. The first, he had an arrest warrant. But there was no clear decision [whether] to arrest him or to just threaten him with the arrest possibility. And there were different views between the administrators' office and the Multi-National Forces on this issue. This confusion...backfired; he wanted to protect

himself not knowing what was going to happen. This was one factor. The second factor: by then a linkage was created between Fallujah, Babylon, and everybody thought that they can [resist]...by doing the same thing. The third factor was hundreds of thousands of unemployed people: ex-military, ex-officers, ex-security, ex-police. They found a haven in joining these groups and also a way to express their anger and shelter money for themselves and their families. So it was a combination of things to include a lack of policy on how to approach these issues and the interference from the outside...such as Iran and Syria [V: 21:27].

BILL K. [21:49] Let's move ahead in time to 28 June. The IIG has been established and you are the Prime Minister. Najaf is about to happen. Sadr becomes more difficult. The Marines are in Najaf, and you go down to do the negotiations. Can you talk about that?

DR. ALLAWI. As Najaf was brewing, I was to do several things. One was to influence the territory of al-Sadr to get rid of the insurgency in Baghdad and elsewhere to isolate Najaf. The second was to arrest key members of Sadr who are uncompromising and who are assets to the Iranians. Third thing was to cut out the linkage between al-Sadr, Najaf, Fallujah, and northern Babylon.

I went to Sadr City and the stadium and met with the clerics and said we will pay you for guns, machine guns, bombs. We spent about \$10 [million] to \$12 million to compensate them for their weapons. Second, immediately I appointed a minister to look at the construction and inject money into Sadr City. So we used these approaches; we arrested some of the people; and we worked with the MNF to block the way and linkage between Fallujah, Mahmudiyah [V: 24:26], down to Najaf. Keep them isolated, not linked.

Then I went to Najaf. First I went to develop the Iraqi morale because it was low. We didn't even have enough weapons. The second is to get the environment right by enlisting the help of the tribes and third, to keep the pressure on al-Sadr through negotiations. I went twice to Najaf. Once to speak to the people and tribes and lay down the rules in these three areas. Also with MOI and MOD, [I said that] these are the lines that we should follow. I convened a working committee that included the government of Najaf and MOD and commander of forces [BGen Hejlik] with the help of the MNF.

The second thing was to go and tell the Iraqi army unit that was small that I already obtained weapons for them donated from Jordan, Egypt, and UAE. I spoke to King Abdullah from Jordan and President Mubarak on the telephone, and I spoke to the chief of staff of the UAE Army, the son of a very good friend of mine. I said we don't have anything. King Abdullah immediately sent me 150 armored vehicles. We didn't use them there, but we ultimately used them later, but not in Najaf. Egypt sent a lot of machine guns and Kalashnikovs. So when I told them this, it was big news for them, and it was encouraging, and we distributed some of these to the tribes. So Sadr gradually became more and more isolated. We had almost daily meetings with the American ambassador Negroponte, General Casey, his deputy, and myself, always in my garden. We conducted operations from there. I also had the MOI or the MOD stationed in Najaf to conduct these three parallel actions.

[V:29:09] We decided on the objectives: surrender their arms, leave the shrine, leave the city, and never come back to the city. The final point, that criminal charges against Sadr—he has to deal with them through the judicial system or through the tribal system here in Iraq; we would give him time. So we agreed with these conditions with the MNF; we should not back away from these principles. We had then the national assembly. I called them and formed a committee; you have to support these demands and make a public statement to put pressure on Sadr so that he knows that it is not only the government but it is the National Assembly, the people of Iraq. [30:25] And they did that. And pressure was created on Sadr. We were on the verge of going in. I OK'd the going in to the Imam Ali Mosque.

[31:26] It was important to have the objectives—and I told General Casey we needed to finish the job—have final objectives and boost the morale and engage the people of Najaf and especially the tribes. And to put pressure on Sadr himself and weaken his resolve. I was managing this on a daily basis, meeting with people down there and here to make sure the policies are working.

I recall once there was a national security advisor that was trying to play the game of balancing things. He went there and instead of telling them these are the demands of the government, he went there to negotiate. He made it public in the media that the government was negotiating. The essential part was—I even told General Casey—that there were no negotiations; they are demands. We don't call it negotiations. This guy called it negotiations, and I removed him. This guy had an agreement with Bremer and the CPA for 5 years. I said, "Fine, I fired you, you go and be an

American advisor to the American ambassador, but you will have nothing to do with the Iraqi government because you used the word ‘negotiations’ and made it public in the media,” and he tried to negotiate.

[33:27] So Sadr then knew there was no way for him but to surrender. And as he was barricading himself in the Imam Ali Shrine, he lost a lot of credibility in the eyes of the Shiites and [in] the eyes of Iraqis and the Muslims. Because they saw it as a cowardly act that he would hide in the shrine itself. So he was very weak.

BILL K. [For the sake of discussion, let’s assume] [i]t’s now the end of August and the beginning of September 2004, and you are preparing to go back into Fallujah for Al Fajr. What were some of the lessons you learned from the first Fallujah and Najaf as you prepared to go back into Fallujah?

DR. ALLAWI. [34:36] I dismantled the Fallujah Brigade. I called them and said you have to close down. I will compensate you with money. They said, “I need this much,” and I said, “OK.” The second was beefing up the intelligence on Fallujah, and the third thing was engaging the Iraqis—Iraqi military units—and appointing an Iraqi commander that was from Fallujah itself, not for a Fallujah Brigade but for Iraqi forces. We then—within our means, of course, because we didn’t have much at that time as an Iraqi government—we also embarked on a media campaign.

Finally and very importantly, I started conducting meetings in my house for people who have influence with the so-called insurgency and who are directly linked with the insurgents. Now, some of these guys are part of the political system. And I spoke to them very clearly and openly. Convince me what you are doing; if it is right, I will leave my post and join you. If you want to bring Saddam back, shame on you. He is gone; he ran away; he was in a hole. If you want to bring Bin Laden I’ll fight you room to room. If you want to ask the MNF to leave, then join the political process, win the elections, and go to the Security Council and tell them we don’t need the MNF, and they should leave. This is very simple. You convince me what you want to do, and I will join you. This dialogue continued as we were moving closer on Fallujah. The dialogue continued even when we bombarded Fallujah.

I went and visited the troops there. I said to them this is something, that you should be honored to face the terrorists and to support the Fallujan people.

My concept was—and I discussed with General Casey and the rest—what should we do after we liberate Fallujah? I brought in some people to get discussions going, and

we formed a team to be able to take care of Fallujah administration and services and so on. I appointed a guy who was in the Iraqi Islamic Party who used to negotiate in Fallujah when I was with the Governing Council—Hachem al-Hassani, who is now the speaker. I appointed him as the coordinator of the administration of Fallujah and said to him to prepare a program for how to deal with and control Fallujah after we have taken it from the terrorists and insurgents.

I spoke to General Casey when we had a meeting of the National Security Council. I said, “I prefer that the Iraqi Forces should lead.” [40:01] I think General Petraeus was here, and I think he was involved in training. General Casey said he didn’t think the Iraqi units are ready to engage themselves, and we are in the background.... The same story as Najaf; because in Najaf I said they can’t go into the shrines. I won’t allow foreign forces to go into the shrines. You can stay in the periphery, back 100 meters away, and the Iraq forces will go. And they used to say the Iraqis are not ready to go, they are not equipped; that’s why I called King Abdullah, Hamid Karzai, and President Mubarak. The same thing goes for Fallujah. They said by then we can’t let the situation just drift. So they asked me when to start. I said let’s talk later this week. So I went to Jordan with Ron Newman. I said to Ron that I made the decision, and once we land[ed] in Baghdad I met with General Casey. I then decided that within the next 24 to 48 hours maximum we should move on Fallujah.

BILL K. Why then? Why not later?

DR. ALLAWI. [42:57] We couldn’t later because by then things would have drifted too far. By then, no matter what we tried, the Iraqi forces still might not be as ready from what General Casey was telling me. And we would have to use whatever forces were available to spearhead, and of course Multi National Forces with them. And third, I was too frightened that if we didn’t hit the insurgency hard that things would flare up in the rest of Iraq again. Sadr would rise and they would see the government as weak. Fourth, I believed what Hassani was telling me that the working group was ready to take over. By then Hassani was Minister of Industry and Minerals. And the negotiations have ended.

[V:44:13] As we landed at the airport, I sat down with Casey. I said, “I just need final negotiations with the Fallujah people to explain things to them,” and we decided on the move. I wanted to visit the troops and see their morale and judge for myself. And jokingly I said, “Because you tell me the Iraqi Army is ready and when it comes to action you say they are not ready.”

I called these guys and said you have 24 hours. Either you surrender Zarqawi and his people to us, or you help us getting in, or we kick the door in and we kill them. Those are the solutions. I then set down to make a statement, to say that Zarqawi and his people are in Fallujah and you have to deliver one way or another; negotiations will stop and you have 24 hours to do this; now go. I went on the media and said I have warned the Fallujah people and some of the guys who are linked to the insurgents—this was in the press conference—and they have to surrender Zarqawi.

The organization...of Islam...issued a statement against me. They said there is no Zarqawi in Fallujah and this is a prelude and pretext to attack Fallujah. I went and saw the Iraqi troops and saw their morale was very high and told them they had to be very careful and bear in mind the sensitivities of the area and the women and tribes. We decided on the name, “Al Fajr.” I came up with the name; they had a different name.

BILL K. [47:05] You mentioned the media. During Fallujah I we were behind the power curve. During Fallujah II you worked with the media to get your message out. How did you do that?

DR. ALLAWI. This was one of the four components necessary in dealing with Fallujah—to keep the media coverage throughout the Arab world, throughout the country, so everyone would understand. That’s why I went on the media two to three days before the operation started and spoke on Zarqawi, and I said specifically that he had taken the people of Fallujah as hostages. I felt it was very important that in addition to the operations and the political conflict, that we need to keep the people of Iraq informed that we are not after the people; we are after the terrorists. It worked [48:24]. It was continuous. [Dr. Allawi points to his advisor, Mr. Thair H. Al-Nakib.]

MR. THAIR AL-NAKIB (Dr. Allawi’s advisor). I used to fly down every day with General Lessel to Fallujah and do press conferences at the Rotunda with General Lessel. We used to do it with the Bectabonn and with the American media.

DR. ALLAWI. We used to do it with the Iraqi and American commander[s].

DR. ALLAWI. Prior to the attack on Fallujah we used to provide a lot of aid to the families of Fallujah. I told the guys talking to us from Fallujah and advised them to get the families and children out of Fallujah because we are going to attack. First they wouldn’t believe it. I assured them that they had to take them out.

MR. THAIR AL-NAKIB. Almost 90 to 95 percent of the people left, and the doctor sent some people to take care of tents and food and medicine and supplies to take care of them.

DR. ALLAWI. It was an elaborate operation.

BILL K. [50:19] When you look back on Al Fajr, what are some of the lessons that the Coalition should take away?

DR. ALLAWI. One of the lessons is to build Iraqi capabilities, and the media was one of the successes of the confrontation, and the dialogue with the resident people paid great dividends. Now we have them fully on board with the political process...to talk to the people that were linked to the insurgency.

These are some of the lessons I think are applicable to any similar situation in the world, the Islamic world, Africa. I think one of the very good lessons—I located immediate funds for Fallujah and promised them that we would inject these funds for reconstruction. And this happened.

MR. THAIR H. AL-NAKIB....and the damages that happened to the houses, you paid for.

DR. ALLAWI. This again is something that could be used as a lesson.

BILL K. [52:16] What do you think is important about 2004 that I didn't ask?

DR. ALLAWI. I have a lot of respect for what the United States has done for Iraq. And I fought fiercely against Saddam Hussein for decades. But I was disappointed when the military was dismantled. In 2004, my struggle, part of it, as the Prime Minister of Iraq, was to expedite the development of the Iraqi armed forces. I engaged on a weekly basis two very good friends—one is Mr. Bush, President of the United States, and the other is Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom—on the necessity to have a military capability to expedite the training and equipping of the Iraqi Army. This was something that was not done; we are paying the price now. This is a topic I would like to talk to you further about in the future, in detail, because this was one of the very agonizing problems that we faced in Iraq. I was seeing [that] the American and Multi-National Forces would be put under severe pressure, and domestically there would be a lot of pressures on Bush and Blair and other leaders, and the answer to all of this is to prepare the Iraqi assets—the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police and other security—to meet these challenges. This is what went wrong.

I think what happened in that period was not satisfactory involving the Iraqi capabilities. Until now we don't have such capabilities. [V:55:00] As we build the institutions—loyalty to the state and to the country and to democracy—and I, talking to Bush and Rumsfeld, about the issue of linkage to NATO and the issue of getting key personnel and leadership and the chain of command in the Army integrated and [having] structure was a very important task that I tried to nurse very closely. I spoke to Bush and Blair for a long time, and this is a key thing in building our military. [56:00]

I said the other alternative is that gradually, the police and security and military will have the militia infiltrate these national institutions. These were some of the failures, yet I made this very obvious in writing and in secure telephones, and everyone is paying the price now. [Ends at 57:34.]

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Transcript 2. Dr. Rubai'e, National Security Advisor, Interim Iraqi Government



Figure C-2-1. Dr. Rubai'e

1. On 29 January 2006 Dr. Mowaffak Al Rubai'e was interviewed at his home in the Baghdad, Iraq. Dr. Rubai'e has been the National Security Advisor for Iraq since early 2004. Dr. Rubai'e is Shi'a and a critical link to Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani in Najaf, the holiest city in Iraq. Dr. Al-Rubai'e, 55, was once the international spokesman for the Iraqi Dawa Party, one of the most feared terrorist organizations in the Middle East during the 1980s. He's a British-educated physician and practiced medicine in London for almost three decades. Dr. Rubaie has always supported the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.²

2. The transcript of the interview follows. Dr. Rubai'e spoke English; an interpreter was not used.

BILL K. The purpose of this project is to capture the lessons of 2004 for the U.S. military and government leadership, in particular lessons from Fallujah. Two thousand four was quite a year of transition for Iraq. A lot of things happened, and you were a big part of it. That's what we'd like to talk to you about.

DR. RUBAI'E. Is it all of 2004 in general, or Fallujah?

BILL K. Two thousand four, but culminating in Fallujah. What were the results and implications of Fallujah in setting the conditions for the 2005 elections? And if you could, please tell us a little bit about yourself and your background as you entered 2004.

DR. RUBAI'E. Would it be easier if I provided you a résumé by e-mail, or would you like it here?

BILL K. If you could, please send it, but also provide a short summary here.

² Christian Caryl and Christopher Dickey, "Iraq's Mr. Cellophane," *Newsweek World News*, 29 December/5 January (2003/2004) issue. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3770220/>.

DR. RUBAI'E. Well, I'm a doctor, a medical doctor by profession. I graduated in Baghdad in 1972. I went to prison three times for treason—horrible—in 1973, 1976, and 1978. I left Iraq in 1979. I was born in Mosul up north from a Sunni mother and Shi'a father. I generally avoid the south, but I lived in Baghdad and worked in Baghdad. In 1979, I went to do my post-graduate studies in London. I did my membership of the Royal College of Physicians in general medicine, and then I did some further studies in neurology.

I was involved in the political struggles since 1966. I stayed with the Dawa between '66 and '96. I was in the...and then in the leadership, [I was the] spokesman for the Dawa, and then I resigned my job in 1996. In 1996 I got to work in what I call community rights for the Shi'a, for the Kurds, community rights and democracy. This is during the Bill Clinton years, [when there was] horrible genocide; they were not terribly fruitful. Although the Congress passed the Iraqi Liberation Act, Clinton made every effort to go around it and not to implement it.

I was involved in the community rights campaign until 2003, and I came literally with the troops. I took part in every conference of the Iraqi position abroad, whether in Kurdistan or Iran or Syria or in London, or whatever, and in Washington for that matter.

I call myself a Muslim Democrat, not an Islamic Democrat; a Muslim Democrat, like a Christian Democrat. I practice Muslim, but don't mix politics with religion. I think religion should play a pivotal part in the normal daily activities; it has to. It is complementary to the politics. It gives it moral values, ethical standards; that's what religion gives. Religion is an important part of our life, especially in this part of the world, because it forms a background, the social, ideological institutional part of cultures, and the background of this society. The history of this country is all about religion. What else? [05:02]

BILL K. Yes, sir. In fact, I read an interview in the paper with you in 2005 when you talked about religion and politics and how they complemented each other.

DR. RUBAI'E. [06:20] I came before Garner. Literally, I was one of the major organizers for the Nasariyah conference when the troops were still around here. As soon as the troops liberated Baghdad, we held the Baghdad conference. Zal was here; my friend Zal was here. But there was no vision, or at least there was a vision that was that the Iraqis at the Nasariyah Conference would form a government. But even then there

was a view that expatriates, they are good for nothing. All of sudden...was at the center of the political landscape of Iraq.... Jerry Bremer³ has a vision, a clear vision, and his seven-point plan—you must have read. I agree with his seven-point plan, and the timetable for it as well was not bad. It was not bad at all. Three years, I think, three years or so, three years of mandate to allow everything to grow naturally. But these trials—do you call it resistance, or do you call it insurgency, or do you call it terrorism? What do you call it? [08:27]

BILL K. I call it insurgents, but I know other people differ, and they call it terrorism and resistance. [08:30]

DR. RUBAI'E. Let's call it insurgency for the purpose of this. Outside of that purpose, it's terrorism. That was a fact that was not anticipated, and I think we have done a lot of that. See, there were two options in front of them. Either this huge machine called the Iraqi state, which is rotten, which is corrupt—right at the core corrupt. They [can] start mending and repairing, or break it up; break it apart and build it. Did he have that choice? I don't think so. I don't think Jerry Bremer had a choice of leaving the state of Iraq intact. I think the state was built in a way by Saddam that as soon as he went, everything collapsed; the whole state collapsed. I know, and I am pretty sure—I am sure you have seen these, the planners in the Pentagon. One of the British Generals told me this. He was an observer with a planner of the Pentagon. They were planning after the war, and they were hoping to get rid of 20,000 to 30,000 top echelon, get rid of them, and keep the state intact. Now that did not happen. When they were removed, everything collapsed. Jerry Bremer did not disband. I am not defending him. I hate his book, I can tell you that, because I think it is factually untrue. There are a lot of untruths in it, and they are not factual, a factual error if you like. He did not disband the army; the Army dissolved itself.

I went—I was working with Garner—and we went to Sadr City. We were looking at the state of the people. A lot of people get around us in the town hall meeting, and they said, "Where in the world are the police, why don't you call the police?" And I said, "OK, let's call the police. Call them now." And there are so many police in that meeting who said, "No, no, sir. We are not interested to go back. Police? We stayed in police for years, and we didn't like it, and we don't like to go back to police. We

³ Nickname of L. Paul Bremer, top civilian administrator of the CPA.

are free now. I am not a policeman any more. With Saddam gone, I don't have to be a police." "But your profession is police." "No, no, I don't want to be a police." [12:50]

We managed to get a few police and bring them to Sadr City. I think probably a hundred or so. Where is the police station? The police station has been burned and burglar[iz]ed.

What happened to the town traffic controller? They turned in the uniforms and they went home. Why do you have to go home? Well, come back to work. "I don't want to be a traffic controller." He waited for this moment for years because he was forced to be a traffic holder.

I didn't want to be a doctor. I did not want to be—I am not cut out to be a doctor—but I was forced to go for a doctor; you know why? What do you have, in Britain, the education system in Britain is called O level and A level, before you go to your university you go for National Baccalaureate. I was [one of] the top 200 performers, and they had to go to medical school. The top 300 next ones, they had to go to engineering; the next...so you don't have a choice. I wanted to go as an engineer.

People were programmed to go, and once that program was taken out, they were free. They wanted to be free. They were everywhere; there were jobs everywhere. The whole state collapsed—not the cream of the leadership—and that applied to the Army. I tell people, children riding on tanks, on cannon, and they are playing with it like a toy, that sort of thing. The whole society has never considered this, that the property of the government is theirs, because the government is our enemy. The government is our enemy; it is not there to protect me. They put down my uprising, they put me in prison, they did that, they did this, they did all sorts of things, this government. The state, not the government. So people have this anti-state [feeling]. So that's why the looting, that's why the burning, and the arsons and all, because they hate the state. The state did a lot of bad to them—persecution and discrimination and all this, forcing them to go to war and all, or to prison, or killed them, or massacred them, or gas poisoned them, gassed them. So that's why everybody was happy for this state to collapse.

The first hundred days, the country—this is between the 9th of April 2003 and the formation of the governing council—I was a member of the governing council. The governing council was formed on the 13th of July, Saddam was gone by the 9th of April, you see. So that's 3 months, 100 days; that 100 days was crucial. The country

was without any government. You can't have a country with just fewer than 30 million people without a government; you can't have it. Saddam would have been better to stay there; and remove him on the 13th of July, than the 9th of April. That 100 days, or whatever, that was a blank void, you know? Who was in charge? Nobody. Who is providing service? Nobody. People are all at a loss, there was a big vacuum and sovereignty and political and security responsibility and everything. And there was no direction. Who's in charge? Nobody knows. Hence the changeover.

I think Jerry came, and I was here before Jerry arrived, even before Bremer arrived. He has this seven-point plan, but probably he doesn't have the right size of it, though—I don't know that's what he says in his book—to govern the country. He formed the governing council, but he didn't give it any authority, and he referred to it in the book in a very rude way. He said the council can't organize a parade, let alone lead a country. He was looking at us in a derogatory way. I understand his language. Nine out [of] ten of my colleagues of the 25 [in the council] they don't understand; a lot of them, they don't understand English, the way he was talking, very patronizing. [19:30]

So the first thing was, any law you pass, any regulation you pass, the ultimate responsibility lies with me [Bremer]. You don't have the authority to do anything. Now even if you do [have the ultimate responsibility], you don't say it as bluntly.

I think then in these months after July, August, September 2003, the insurgency started to build. It's a shame; honestly, it's a shame. It's a shame because it came to haunt. It's a shame because Iraq should be the jewel or the crown of George W., and he should be proud in his campaign, "Look, I did this; this is my vision. I liberated 27 million people," and this should be a big plus in his campaign. It has started to haunt him in the campaign, in his election, which is really the reverse because of this insurgency. And the people of Iraq did not yet have the taste of this victory. They have that now. They have the freedom, absolutely; they have the sense of respect, and they also have the sense of belonging to Iraq. They used to hate this country. When our football team goes out to play even the most hated Iranian, we wish the Iranians win because the credit if we win, the credit will go to Uday Hussein. Now, even if our team goes to wherever and they lose, they come back and they receive them, thousands, spontaneously, without them [being told] to go in BIAP [Baghdad International Airport], in the airport.

So it's the sense of belonging. The cricket test—they call it the “cricket test.” I heard this from someone called Norman Tebbit....⁴ They are saying that cricket test, to test the sense of belonging of the Pakistanis of proper English, Pakistan plays in England, cricket test. You ask him who do you support, Pakistan or England? That's exactly like our cricket test; it's a well-known test in Britain. We didn't use to have the sense of belonging to Iraq, and [as a result] the insurgency [crept] in.

The 15th of November, that is the turning point, the 15th of November Agreement 2003. What exactly happened? Jerry Bremer; it was a reverse of his seven-point plan, and that was, I believe, to cover his mistakes of the last few months. We are talking about November, because he went back to Washington, and this is hearsay—Pachachi⁵ and Chalabi went to Washington in the beginning of October 2003. Chalabi and Pachachi, they were heavily campaigning to hand over sovereignty to the Iraqis. Hand over sovereignty for different reasons, by the way. Chalabi for completely different reason than Pachachi. Pachachi being motivated by the Arab world, and the Arabs are pressuring him that there is occupation here. After this pressure campaigning from Chalabi and Pachachi for a different reason, Jerry went to Washington, and once he came back, he opened the dialogue up for the 15th of November agreement. So it's a total reversal on his seven-point plan. Of course, there is the Sistani element, because Sistani was insisting on the elections first and then the constitution. But the 15th of November agreement, it put the concept of the caucuses and that is an alien principal. What is caucuses? Where are we, in Ohio?

BILL K. That's a political concept of the United States.

DR. RUBAI'E. That's exactly right, thank you very much. What is a caucus? Even I couldn't understand it. I honestly could not understand it. What is a caucus? There isn't even a translation in Arabic so that you can sell it to people. I was lucky that I did not attend the vote for the 15th of November. I was in London visiting my family, so I came back on the 15th late in the day. So Jerry called me and said, “Well, come

⁴ The term “cricket test” was coined by former Member of Parliament Norman Tebbit as a means of determining the loyalty of immigrants. That is, in a cricket match, for whom do they root—England or another country? See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cricket_test.

⁵ “Adnan Pachachi, the former foreign minister of Iraq and ambassador to the United Nations before the 1968 BaathistBa'athist coup, is now president of the Iraqi Independent Democrats and an influential member of the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council in Baghdad” (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/beyond/interviews/pachachi.html>).

over for a luncheon.” I went and saw him on the 16th, and I told him—in his book he mentioned this—I told him it was a fatal mistake. I said what are caucuses? What is this, how are you going to do this, who is going to run this? I am sure Sistani would not look at it. He said, “No, no, don’t worry, I got his agreement.”

I am telling you, what, how? He took the 15th of November agreement and showed it to Sistani and Sistani approved it. I said, “What? I couldn’t believe this,” and then he questioned me on that. I said, “I am sure it’s not going to work, these caucuses,” and went back to Najaf. I used to go back to Najaf every week—I still go and see Sistani—and Sistani said, “I didn’t give any approval for this. I don’t want this, what is this caucus? What is this caucus?” We have to find a face-saving formula for Jerry Bremer to proceed with the political process, and then we said let’s try to start doing the TAL, the transitional administrative law.

We wrote the law in the middle of February. And Jerry Bremer, after that, could not wait to go back home. He couldn’t wait, you can see, and then he appointed me as National Security Advisor. He appointed Ali Allawi as MOD after that, then appointed an MOI. He started to calm down; he couldn’t wait, the countdown to June. But you can see it, he is handing over quickly, and he couldn’t wait to go back. [29:29]

BILL K. We are in February, and now all of a sudden things start happening in Al Anbar province, in Fallujah. The Blackwater incident occurred on 31 March.

DR. RUBAI’E. And in Najaf.

BILL K. And in Najaf, that’s right. Sadr City, Karbala, Najaf, everything starts coming apart. Sir, can you talk to Fallujah and what happened there, and then we can walk down through Karbala and Najaf. Can you talk that, sir?

DR. RUBAI’E. What part of it?

BILL K. Well, you talked about the insurgency being developed, but we also had al-Sadr in Karbala. [30:19]

DR. RUBAI’E. Right at the beginning I was telling Jerry—and I was telling everybody, and also I used to write e-mails to Paul Wolfowitz down there, basically telling everybody, whoever I can see, not only Jerry Bremer, because there used to be a lot of people in the city. I used to share the same political protocol; I used to share the same protocol with Jerry Bremer, the same exact trailer. I used to nag him day and

night: “Look, al-Sadr’s uprising is completely different from Fallujah’s,” the Fallujans’, if you like. Al-Sadr recognized the new order, recognizes the new order; these people, they don’t recognize the new order. Al-Sadr wanted to find a place for him[self] in this new order because he feels he has every right to be on the top of this new order, so that’s why he is resorting to that [uprising]. His motive is completely different. So we can bring him into the process easily; once you alienate him, then you have a problem.

Jerry Bremer, he sent me even abroad in a special thing, with Hume Horan. You know the Hume Horan?⁶ You remember the Hume Horan, the very old man from the State Department?

GEORGE M. Yes, yes, I know him from Saudi Arabia.

DR. RUBAI’E. What a guy; he was really a top-class guy. He is dead now, he died a couple of years ago. He sent me to Hume Horan because of some top religious guys outside the country. We went in a special... and got a clearance from them. They wanted to—well, you don’t fight so many enemies at one time. This is the real enemy here; these people don’t recognize the new order and for the Fallujans. These people, we should take them on. Not only militarily, but politically; what are you doing politically for that? Even religiously. I have written a strategy of combating insurgency. The second of March I put it on what we used to call the restricted ministerial committee for national security. That restricted meeting used to call me, MOD, MOI himself, and I think Drisdock, Sir Jerry Drisdock, the British guy, and I put that 5506 policy. I said, “Well, we have to immediately revisit the Deba’athification.” We need to get these top general[s]—give them some [of] what I call ID, to give them some advantages.

BILL K. Recognition.

DR. RUBAI’E. Recognition. You know: a general in the Iraqi Army, not a general in the American Army. The general, the two-stars, is the boss of the boss, basically; he is just under God in the Iraq Army. Twelve thousand of them—you send them to the street to close them down and whatever in the corner shop. You don’t do this. I said

⁶ Ambassador Hume Alexander Horan passed away on 22 July 2004, in Fairfax, Virginia, at age 69. A statesman and a scholar, Horan was claimed to be the most accomplished Arabic linguist to serve in the U.S. Foreign Service (“Remembering Hume Horan (1934–2004),” *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2003.)

bring them back, give them status and recognition, registration, and give them an ID. An ID will give them some moral status... [N]ow, if you ask any of them, "Well, what do you do?" he cannot tell you that he is a general in the army, because he is not. He cannot tell you that he is a retired general, because he is not, literally, he is not retired. Basically, you kicked his backside. Well, then what do you have to do? Where does he turn? "Bring him back," I said. And they said, "What does it cost?" and I said, "Give them an ID card. When they go to any ministry they will be recognized: 'I am a retired general in the army, I want to see the DG [Deputy General] of this.'" Give them that privilege.

BILL K. Give them some self-respect.

DR. RUBAI'E. Self-respect, that is right. With this badge, he can meet the DG anywhere in any ministry, for example, in one day, within one day. He can meet the deputy minister within one week, and he can see the minister within a month. Give him some respect; they don't need to queue in the line. They can go straight and get their car filled with this card. A lot of things with this would not cost money. I put this plan economy, security, and even religious.

We have so many problems. Where is the problem in the town? The problem is religious, a religious root. So I suggested, let's bring [Sunni clergy] from Al Iza in Cairo. These people are moderate, and they are very good teaching—they teach Koran. There are so many mosques in the triangle; we fill these with clergy Egyptians to teach Koran. It's the same Koran, and the same Sunni jurisprudence. They are not changing, you are not imposing any Shi'a on them, you bring Sunni clergy over.

I thought he [Bremer] had a regular telephone call at 1600 everyday with the lady doctor [Condoleeza Rice]. When I believe things moved from the Pentagon to the Embassy. This is all analysis; this is not information. This is my observation, my perspective. Because I used to go to Jerry's office regularly two or three times every day. [39:45]

DR. RUBAI'E. I think we made a lot of mistakes. But again if I go back, I said, it's always to look with hindsight, and this is exactly what you are doing. If we go back and we say, "What have we done wrong?" Number one. I think we should have formed an immediate transitional government to be in charge. Number two, we should have made the Deba'athification a judicial process, not a political process. It's a law, it has to be. Who applies the law? Politicians? You don't give it to politicians

because then it becomes a political settlement. I am not opposing the disbanding of the army; I don't oppose that. Even if I go back, I will say I will absorb it with some measures taken. Measures, like I just mentioned for the generals.

BILL K. That's right, give them self-respect. [41:25]

DR. RUBAI'E. Jerry Bremer could not have called the Army to come back because the camps, the army barracks, they are not there. They've been looted, there is nothing—they were looted, burned, destroyed. Even the hospital, Rashid Hospital, one of the most advanced hospitals because it belongs to the Army, it's been taken apart, and people immediately erected partitions in the wards, in the patients' wards, and actually lived in these partitions. So he couldn't have [called the Army back], but I think there are things that we missed. He did not give the governing council any authority; that was a big, big mistake.

He was in two...direct mandate, American military mandate on Iraq, or give part of the authority to the transitional government. He didn't do either, he was in the middle; appointing 25 people who are sitting there discussing and arguing all this. But we have no power; we pass laws and we write and we do a lot of good work; we did a lot of good work, but he didn't sign it.

BILL K. Let me ask you then, in Fallujah, in March, when the coalition forces went in and then they stopped, and they were brought back out again, what happened? There were negotiations with the Fallujans. What happened? [43:32]

DR. RUBAI'E. I hate this, I honestly hate this. We were in a restricted meeting, and it was quite clear Sanchez—is it Sanchez?

BILL K. Yes, Sanchez, CJTF-7.

DR. RUBAI'E. It was quite obvious that they are done. I think it was the only option, because really there was a lot of evidence that this is a bad news. What they did not recognize [was] that Fallujah, similar to Najaf, as a small city with 80 or 90 mosques in it?

BILL K. Yes, that's right, the city of mosques.

DR. RUBAI'E. What do they do with these mosques, for goodness' sake? I did not understand this, but we discussed this in the restricted meeting. And it was quite obvious they were going in after they exhausted everything. And I have the habit of writing the minutes of this one. I have got it; I've got all my minutes. In that meeting

I remember distinctly, I ask with a guy that is the director of the Iraqi special envoy...and Jerry and MOD and MOI and the INIS [Iraqi National Intelligence Service].

BILL K. General Babil?

DR. RUBAI'E. No, GEN Shawani. And basically we know that we exhausted everything, and they go and get the Marines. I think they called for another restricted meeting after a couple of days, and before that, I have this habit of going to my e-mail early in the morning. So I went to my e-mail, and I saw I think *Washington Post* saying that a Fallujah Brigade has been agreed. What? Fallujah Brigade? I called Jerry Bremer. I said, "What's going on?" He said, "Well, let's have a meeting." We went for a restricted meeting. He didn't mention it to me before, but that meeting was—I don't know how to describe it.

Sanchez claimed that we had already mentioned this in the last meeting. Well, I looked in my book, and I said, "Probably I didn't understand with my pidgin English; I didn't understand your language," but it was not there, either in the agenda or not even being mentioned in passing. There was someone taking minutes—I think from the OGA [other government agency], somebody from the OGA—a man called Ted. I can't remember the name, but if I see him I recognize him, and I go back to my book, and well there is his name there. He said, "Well, no it's actually in there; it was mentioned in the last meeting." He showed me his notebook, the minutes. This is the page, and it's interesting, he was writing like this, as an add-on, so I am sure that it was added later, as well as it was mentioned.

Jerry Bremer wanted to pass this, but Sanchez got angry. Sanchez really was angry, and he said, "This is not acceptable, Ambassador." They were not arguing—they were fighting with us about. I said as far as we are concerned, that was not mentioned in the last meeting, and we were not notified. "Well, it's not a big deal. It's the local commander who has agreed to that" [Bremer said]. I said, "Well, then what is our role here? Did we give that local commander the authority to have a local deal to make a Fallujah Brigade?"

From there, it started. I expressed myself, I said, "I am sorry. This is exactly like supporting the Mujahadin in Afghanistan. They will turn around against us; these are not part of the Iraqi Army. We are building a new Iraqi Army on a completely different scale, in a completely different way. Because in that Fallujah Brigade, he

puts his rank on, and 2,000 people around him with his beret, the Republican Guard beret, and everyone is saying, 'Yes, sir.' This is the Iraqi Army back in action; this is the Iraqi Army back in action!" Jerry did not like what I said. He really didn't like it, and he was upset with me for a few days. I said, "I am sorry. You are doing the exact same mistake you did in Afghanistan. You are supporting the Mujahadin to turn around and then become a Bin Laden after all. This is the same thing."

Ali Allawi, who is now the minister of finance⁷ (he was the minister of defense then), he spoke very strongly. There was an MOI who is our ambassador in the UN now—he is our ambassador, but he was MOI—he spoke softly, but Shawani was there. I turned around and said, "General, were you aware of this?" He kept quiet. I said, "I am sorry, General, you have to answer me. Were you aware of this before it happened?" And I wouldn't leave without an answer, and he said, "Yes," and he kept quiet after that. So it was obvious that the local guys were collaborating with Shawani. And that is I think a huge setback. Had we gone in there, we would have finished that. That job is easy for us to do that.

BILL K. Why do you think they did that? Why do you think they negotiated and stopped it? A lot of people can't understand why. Were they getting pressure, political pressure, from elsewhere to stop the Marines in Fallujah?

DR. RUBAI'E. No, no. I think the political leadership was quite clear. Even Shawani is a Sunni, he was...I don't know. I honestly don't know. The only thing I can think of now—I am just trying to visualize that meeting in that office, what happened? There was definite argument between Jerry and Rick [Sanchez]; it was definitely a strong argument, almost a fight if you like. And he said, I can't remember what he said. General Sanchez said, "You can't do this; it's not right," and Jerry wanted to get beyond this point.

BILL K. He wanted to put it behind him.

DR. RUBAI'E. Yes. And while Rick wanted to explain it, he couldn't explain it. He kept on saying there was a political decision behind it: "I am a soldier; I wouldn't act on my own. My local guys had the authority to do this." That sort of thing. I have the exact wording of these two guys, but that is the start, and that was considered a turning point.

⁷ Ali Allawi was the Minister of Finance in the Iraqi Transitional Government.

Why a turning point, Bill? Because the old Army has gone a year ago. Saddam's Republican Guard is gone a year ago by then. The Beret, the Republican Guard, the hundred with the uniform and the same rank came back; yes, sir, and they are parading. We forced them to do this; we twisted their arms to do this. So these people, they don't understand anything but force. We made them agree to our terms, and that was one of the, I think fatal, mistakes because it gave the rest of the population the impression that these people understand force.

BILL K. It gave them legitimacy with this force. [54:51]

DR. RUBAI'E. Exactly. And the visibility of the old army; we are building a new army, and we tell the people this is completely different from the old one. Now the new army is visible on television, and it was a nightmare. I can tell you that honestly. Even the effect of it up to now, when I see the record. The Prime Minister in the last meeting, a week ago, in the last Ministerial Meeting for National Security Meeting, Zal was there, and Casey was there; the Prime Minister went to Ramadi [he is speaking of the ambassador and General Casey's trip to Fallujah and Ramadi in January 2006].

BILL K. Yes, that's right. In fact, we were in Fallujah 2 days after he went to Fallujah and then to Ramadi.

DR. RUBAI'E. He went to Ramadi, and he was handed a letter from the governor and the head of the [new security] committee asking him to form a division for Ramadi.⁸ It is still there, and I've got the letter; he passed it to me in front of Zal, and he said, "Can you answer more properly for me please?" So that was a really fatal mistake. I don't understand. I personally left that meeting—these people; I am sure the local guy will never have done this without a political decision; there is no doubt about it—I left that meeting with this impression. Now, if you want to correct me and tell me the President has not passed any agreement or decision, I will believe you, but I left that meeting with this impression that there was a political decision, and we were not aware of it. We, the Iraqis, are kept on the side. We left that meeting, not bitter, but very disappointed, let down, feeling like the end of the world had come. Are we pawns or partners?

⁸ What he is saying is there was a written agreement on the Fallujah Brigade, and the Governor of Al Anbar was citing that agreement as support for forming a division of Al Anbarians or Ramadians for Ramadi.

BILL K. We really appreciate your candor on this, and by the way I can't answer your question. I think it probably was a political decision, too, somewhere, and I believe that you weren't aware. That is what this is about, to talk to people and ask them. I hope I'm going to get a chance to meet Jerry Bremer. I've got to read his book first though.

GEORGE M. ...I knew Mr. Hume Horan when he was the Deputy Chief of Mission in Saudi Arabia in 1974 or 1975.

DR. RUBAI'E. What a man, what a man.

GEORGE M. And then later, you may remember this, and you may not, he was nominated to be the ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and they rejected him, I believe because his mother is Iranian.

DR. RUBAI'E. His mother was Iranian, yes.

GEORGE M. And I am sorry to hear that he passed on.

DR. RUBAI'E. He passed away. He remarried to, I think, the U.S. ambassador or the U.S. consulate to Japan, a Japanese, a young woman. How did Jerry Bremer convince him to come back to service, because he was probably in his eighties?

BILL K. Sir, after the Fallujah Brigade was then formed—and of course a lot of people didn't think it would last, they thought we would have to go back into Fallujah. [1:00:23]

DR. RUBAI'E. We have in that decision, in that meeting or the meeting after that—we decided that these are written in the minutes—whatever happens, this is not going to be a part of the new Iraqi Army. This is agreed; Jerry Bremer agreed on this. Whatever is going to happen, this is a Marine initiative, and it is your problem, you deal with it. After you finish with it, you deal with it; it's your problem. So we distanced ourselves from it.

We went to the media and personally attacked the whole idea. [We said] that this is wrong, this should not have happened, all this. We said, "Well, this particular guy, who is heading the Fallujah Brigade, he was the third rank in the Ba'ath party, Major

General Jassim Mohammed Saleh,⁹ and he was in the Republican Guard.” They say, “Well, let’s think of changing him.”

I wrote him [a Sunni general], an excellent guy who [was] separate from Saddam, a Sunni general, who was from Adaniyah; he’s really good, a top guy. I brought his CV to the meeting. Jerry Bremer said, “That name is familiar, do you know him?” I said, “Yes, I know him.” He went to his desk and pulled up a piece of paper, and he said, “This is the man?” It was a picture of that guy, Hamid Saldi. He is a good friend of mine. I said, “Yes, he is a good man.” Allawi, the MOD said, “No, we are not going to have this at all.” I said, “Calm down, he’s a good guy I know him personally...he can go there and gradually dissolve that.” But I told him that in Arabic; I didn’t use the word “dissolve,” or “disband,” the Fallujah Brigade. I said, “Just calm down. I know this man very well. He’s the man to do this.” I gave him the reference.

He accepted it, so then I said, “He’s going to cooperate and disband this organization.” I believe—and this was being discussed as well in the MCNS [Ministerial Council for National Security], not in the big MCNS, the restricted MCNS—that the Marines got out of the city, retreated; no, not retreated, withdrew, pulled back because that says there was a deal there that the Fallujah Brigade would go ahead, and they gave them arms, and whatever, but they [the Fallujah Brigade] didn’t deliver. After that, the bad guys entrenched themselves in the city, and the city was a symbol, even among the Arab world, even when we went for the second time, in November.

BILL K. The second time was in November, 7 November. [1:04:50]

DR. RUBAI’E. When we wanted to go back there we had to convince King Abdullah, we have to speak to..., what it is a symbol now? Allawi, the Prime Minister then, has to convince King Abdullah II of Jordan; he has to speak to the Saudis before he went into Fallujah. I know this for a fact because I served in three administrations, and he had to speak to the Saudis to convince them. He probably even spoke to the emirates—because the emirates are friends—that this has to be done. It’s gone too much, because it became a symbol over the months. Even the Iraqi army, and even the intelligence we were trying to penetrate, we couldn’t on a number of times.

⁹ Their initial choice, General Mohamed Jasim Saleh, who outraged victims of the BaathistBa’athist regime because of past service in Saddam’s feared Republican Guard, said he was stepping aside, leaving command of the new Fallujah Brigade to a former intelligence officer, Mohammed Latif (Joseph Logan, “New General Appointed to Fallujah,” *The Scotsman*, 4 May 2004).

Because it was so, and there were prisons they used in there, slaughtering of people, decapitation, and all sort[s] of things; they are everywhere, and basically al Qaeda has control of this city.

I believe that in 2004, we noticed that—this is admittedly hindsight—that this merged or overlapped between Ba’athism and Islamism, Ba’atho-Islamism. Because these are two different ideologies, and that is what happened then, that the Ba’athist had also in that year started to adopt more Islamic practices, if you like. I believe that the Arab Ba’ath Social Party has gone through three phases. The first phase was in the ’50s and ’60s, it was Marxism, Leninism, leftist party; next, the ’70s [to] ’90s is the Arab nationalism, Pan Arabism, Arab unity and all; now, this is the Islamic version of the Ba’ath party where they grow their beard and they go and meet in the mosques.

BILL K. The fundamentalists? [1:08:20]

DR. RUBAI’E. Fundamentalists, yes. This is where the Ba’athism overlaps, because this is a very amorphous, if you like, organization here. It has the ability to modify itself according to the requirement, and the only tunnel vision is their link of one thing and one thing only, and that is power, grabbing the power, whatever it is. Grow a beard, limp around, eat wherever, drink alcohol, or don’t drink alcohol, it doesn’t make any sense. Their goal is one thing, and here they came closer to each other. I think one of the reasons is not strategic thinking. They have to come together; the reality on the ground makes them meet, because this is a safe haven. Fallujah and Hadithah, these are safe havens, and when you have safe havens and you are fighting the same enemy, you get interest and you get joint sort of work.

BILL K. So this is the merge between the al Qaeda and the Ba’athists?

DR. RUBAI’E. Exactly.

BILL K. When you look—in June of 2004 a lot of things happened with the government. Sovereignty, the IGC was dissolved, the IIG was organized. A lot of things happened during that period. Can you describe that? [1:10:11]

DR. RUBAI’E. We insisted to Jerry Bremer, do not dissolve the IGC, for a very simple reason. Make it like a sovereignty council, like a supervising council, an advisor role, not a supervisory role on the government. You hand over what is that, this was that you throw a baby in a bathroom?

BILL K. Throw the baby out with the bathwater.

DR. RUBAI'E. They are just immature. We have just been from 35 years of tyranny, and then you just hand over the whole country, and you just turn around and you go home. That's not the way. And I can tell you one thing—on the third day of this government, I was with Jerry Bremer. In the meeting for a month, every day he comes to the office with Ayad Allawi to hand over the government, and I can tell you honestly. I wouldn't say 9 out of 10, but probably more than 50% of what Jerry Bremer was talking, Allawi did not understand. Jerry Bremer is a high-powered and frighteningly intelligent guy. He was talking about the government enterprise, privatization of the government enterprise, the insurance law, introducing insurance law in Iraq, and how is that going to happen. Every day, and the Army, and the police, every day for 2 or 3 hours. He brings specialists in and hands that file over. Allawi doesn't write, he doesn't write anything. I write minutes for this meeting, and Jerry Bremer hands over files of that particular subject to Allawi. I was there, and as soon as he leaves, Allawi hands over the file to me. He said on a number of times, I remember, he said, "What is this donkey"—I'm sorry to use that—he said, "What is this donkey talking about?" Donkey in Arabic is a very bad word; donkey means empty head.

What was he talking about he didn't understand the whole meeting, because that is a high-powered, sophisticated [discussion]. It's different world, and this man wanted to see what's going on, and I remember, we saw him [Bremer] off on the last day. It was [brought forward], for the security reasons [Dr. Rubai'e is saying that sovereignty was passed to Iraq 2 days early (from 30 June to 28 June)]. For 2 or 3 days, I was with him, and he [Allawi] said, "Awali"—that's my nickname, father of Ali, I have a son named Ali—he said, "Awali, what is this? The desk goes under me? I have never worked in an office. I have never worked in the government. I don't know how to do this. How do you start?" I said, "Don't worry, we will gradually fill it." I brought a computer, set it up, put some software in it, and I was there the whole day in there, and it turned out he has never used a computer in his life, but that is not a problem, but can you see?

BILL K. A different world.

DR. RUBAI'E. A different world. A completely different world, and this is a man who is a very centralist guy, a very military guy, in his mind, and we used to have—I think by then Casey hasn't come—we still have Sanchez.

BILL K. That's right, because Casey doesn't come until July.

DR. RUBAI'E. We still have Sanchez, but by that time Sanchez was bruised. We didn't know why; we didn't know why he was bruised. I didn't know whether it was Abu Graib or Fallujah, but it was quite clear that he was bruised. But he stayed a month or two after that, until July, when I think Paul Wolfowitz came in with Casey, George Casey, before the Congress approved his nomination.

But I can tell you then, Ayad Allawi was at a loss; he doesn't know what's going on in the country. He was usually overworked; that's the only word I can [use]. His vision of his control go[ing] outside his office [wasn't being realized]. He used to get so frustrated, so frustrated; he used to shout and yell, and use a lot of colorful language...It was totally out of control, and then started [the] problem in Amara. He wanted to control Basrah, and they said, "Go to hell, you have this and that." Jerry Bremer put everything in the format of a law.

BILL K. Following CPA orders and directives?

DR. RUBAI'E. That's right. It's all in form of orders and directives, everything. You don't need to do anything...for example, order I think 71, of the decentralization of the government; the government can do anything they like. They don't care about the Prime Minister. Allawi was shouting his head off, "I don't know what to do, this government doesn't take orders from me."

BILL K. Decentralization, that's right. [1:18:23]

DR. RUBAI'E. And he's a centralist by nature.

So it is all frustration. I remember one day, we have the 1st—well, the 2nd Brigade, the 1st Brigade was there with 500—at the handing over of sovereignty in June. After that, a couple months later, we have the 2nd there, and we say, "Let's go and do a military parade." The Prime Minister is there, and I remember, Georges¹⁰..., he is a former General in the Army, but he works in the Prime Minister's office. He went in and he said, "Doctor, I want to tell you how to make a parade." I said, "This is a very good idea, a very good idea," and [it would help] to show people that we are building Army, and new government, and all this. We went to Allawi, and George explained. He's an Iraqi General, he's a man with a book now out called *Saddam's Secret*, a Christian Iraqi. He told us about this, about the smuggling of the chemical weapons to

¹⁰ Georges Sada, *Saddam's Secrets: How an Iraqi General Defied and Survived Saddam* (Integrity, 2006).

Syria. So Georges went in and said, “This is the parade,” and he [Allawi] said this is all lies, this is fabrication ... but he was basically saying a lot of bad words ... very, very, really French language. Then I wanted to calm him down. [PM Allawi was frustrated.]

That sort of environment, and there was nothing there, nothing in place; the government was not functioning; in the center, just empty. This is just one of the biggest mistakes; there was no gradual handing over. I don’t know a lot about the other ministries. We are the pacemaker of the ministry; the Prime Minister was not functioning. So I don’t know, every day, in May, Jerry Bremer used to go to the Ministries and make the ceremony of handing over the responsibility to the ministers. But I don’t know if the ministers knew what was going on; probably they have the same problem as the prime minister.

BILL K. You’ve already talked about the lead-up to Fallujah in November. You talked about having to go to Saudi Arabia and Jordan and other places to be able to talk to them about going back into Fallujah. What else happened? What other negotiations had to take place? Did everyone agree to go back into Fallujah? Did they think it was a good idea?

DR. RUBAI’E. I think they had exhausted, apparently, superficially, they had exhausted the effort. But I honestly believed then—and I can look back in my notes and recommendations and advice to the Prime Minister—by then I was saying, “There are two groups there. We call them insurgents—former regime Iraqis and the al Qaeda.” I don’t think we could have done a very good job within these people, and we could have given—here is what, [let] give me an example of the way I have used to do. The whole Fallujah—we are talking about a religious city, so we need to talk in religious terms, in a religious jargon. When you sent for—I say, let’s send four delegations; let’s bring tens of them, hundreds of them—to bring them and meet them and talk to them.

One delegation, a very good delegation; I think it was high from Fallujah. There was a few clergy, quite a few Cairo sheiks there, and also the [greeters] from the city, probably 30 to 35. They came to see Allawi, and I was there. He started saying, “See, remember, the whole scene, and the Fallujah is Jihad, Jihadene, Islam.” Ayad started by saying, “I am one of you. I was a Ba’athist, and I remember I used to come to Fallujah and we used to sit on the rug, and we used to drink a really lovely beer there.” You don’t do this. The language; these people are expecting you to say, “Well,

we can't wait for these Americans to leave, we can't wait for them, we are working toward them to leave. We are as upset like you," and bring some verse from Koran, and this is the selling point—Koran and religion—this is the selling point, not drinking beer 20 years ago. Can you see the point? It's completely different

BILL K. He turned them off?

DR. RUBAI'E. He turned them off, absolutely! They were turned off; that is one example, so the language is not there. On top of that, the Marines were there and they are the same language. They do not understand the local language or culture. When they come, these people, to the Prime Minister, they expect a different language, and this happened even in Samarra, before we went to Samarra. Samarra was exactly the same, exactly the same. One of these clergy replied to him, told him, "Well, we didn't come here to hear you are a friend of that, you are a friend of this: This is from Samarra. We came here, and we have a problem." It's a different language. [1:28:47]

BILL K. Let me ask you then, you also had negotiations in Najaf when Sistani went back to London for his heart, when the Prime Minister went down to negotiate with al-Sadr. How did the negotiations go? Was it Sistani that finally resolved the issues? I am jumping around on you; sorry.

DR. RUBAI'E. No, you are not jumping around; you are bringing up a very good point. We are talking now, when, in August 2004?

BILL K. Sistani went to London for a heart surgery in August.

DR. RUBAI'E. We organized this for him to travel from Najaf to Baghdad. He stayed overnight here. I went and saw him in that place, with one of the guys from the... with Harold Kofi and all those guys, and we transferred him to BIAP to leave. We were starting to do Najaf. Harold said, "I am going to tell you something I did not understand then. I heard George Casey say, 'We need to reduce the size.'" I honestly did not understand. I wrote it down: We need to reduce the size of this one. The size of it politically, but I didn't understand the military implications of that, but the...

The MOD went to Najaf; fighting started; he went to the Shrine, the Imam Ali. Then Allawi called me one day and said, "Is there any way we can get this man [Sadr] to leave?" I said this: "This is all in writing, doctor. I told you, he recognizes the order, and he wants to have his place in this." He said, "Well, OK, what does it take to disarm, to finish this peacefully?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Well, why don't you open a negotiation? You are an Islamist, you are close to this family, why don't

you start negotiation?" I said, "What are the terms?" He said, "Go and think about the terms, and come back to me." I went and thought about a few points, and I had to tell Allawi—and we now have Negroponte, so I used to cc George Casey and John Negroponte and give the original copy to Allawi on this proposed agreement. "We sent that," I said, "Are you happy with that?" He corrected it; he rectified it. He said, "I don't like this, I don't like that." I said, "Will you accept that?" He said, "I will accept this."

We sent it to al-Sadr. Al-Sadr made some comments, hundreds of comments, his own hundred—I've got the original, "I don't like this, this has to be changed, the wording of this." I brought it to Allawi. He said reproduce it. I reproduced it, and I corrected it. John knows it, George Casey knows it, they are all in the picture. And, a very interesting guy you need to go and talk to, Ambassador Ross. What's his first name?

GEORGE M. Is he the special ambassador who's been sent to Palestine and Israel a couple of times?

DR. RUBAI'E. Thank you, yes, he was the U.S. ambassador for 10 years, and he was extended in Syria. Ambassador Ross. I'll tell you exactly. His dad was ill; that is why he had to go back home, because he lost his mother. He's a top Arabist. Christopher W. S. Ross. He was all cc'd with that. And then Allawi sent his second corrections, and I sent it to al-Sadr and the Iranian agent who was hovering around in the country. He was floating around, to see how the Americans work.

I said, "Who are you?" Well, I am using this guy; I know he is an IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] guy. I had kept quiet, but this is all in writing. I said [that I have been] using the IRGC for years as a postman [to deliver messages]. And he said, "I can't wait for this forever; go and come back with it. Why don't you go yourself?" I said, "I don't want to go." We have an MCNS meeting. Negroponte was there, George Casey was there, the MOD and MOI were there, and I was there, and the Prime Minister was there. In that meeting, I remember George Casey said, "He needed to be reduced," which I didn't understand that, but everybody agreed that we have to go and negotiate on these terms with this man. So I was given the task in that meeting to go to Najaf. I was hesitant, uncomfortable. George Casey asked in the meeting, "When do you want to go?" That was in the morning, "Do you want to go in the afternoon?" I said, "Let me have a breath first, let me." He said, "No, no, when do you want to go?" So the Prime Minister said, "He [Dr. Rubai'e] will go this

afternoon.” I said, “No, I will go tomorrow.” I wanted to give myself time to think. Najaf has been excluded now, cordoned now.

BILL K. They put a cordon around the Imam Ali Mosque.

DR. RUBAI’E. Around the city, you can’t go in; nobody can go in. I need this guy, this IRGC guy there in Najaf because nobody can go and see al-Sadr inside the Shrine but this man. So I told the Prime Minister I need this guy because to go in between [to be a go-between]. I am going to be based in the government, and al-Sadr is in the Shrine, so we are talking about 2 miles away. I went, I said, “Let him go and see,” and I said, “He tried to go, but the city was cordoned, the Americans won’t let him in. He tried but he came back to me. By the way, that guy is now a member of the Council of Deputies.

I took him on a helicopter to Najaf, and he was in a humvee with me and General Hejlik; he is a top guy. I stayed with the Marines for 3 days there, and I stayed with him, so I set everything to meet al-Sadr at 6 o’clock in a place, in a special—in an agreed upon—address. He went to that address, but he was clever enough not to be in the same address. He gave them the impression that he was there, but he was three or four doors away. And the Marines swooped in on that address, killed a few. Special Forces, Marines, I don’t know, because I was not there. I was delayed by General Hejlik. The meeting was meant to be 6 o’clock; I was delayed until 7 o’clock. And then General Hejlik said, “I don’t advise you to go there because it isn’t safe,” because it was canceled by the raid. There was no way on earth anyone can convince me that it was not a setup. I was infuriated, I could have been told, “Look, let’s set him up.” I got a clearance from the highest religious authority to do this one. But to set me and make me part of a plan without me knowing...

BILL K. You were the bait? 1:41:47

DR. RUBAI’E. Exactly, I am the bait. I was really infuriated, and I told the general, General Hejlik. Al-Sadr saw this happen in front of his eyes, and he [al Sadr] said I [Dr Rubai’e] am part of this.

BILL K. You lost his trust.

DR. RUBAI’E. Absolutely, I lost his trust. He never left the Shrine after that, never left the Shrine, because he came from his father’s house then... to this place in agreement, in a mutually agreed location, killed the..., the local hospital because they thought he went to the local hospital, all sorts of mess.

They say, "It wasn't planned. We were shut out from that place, and we had to go and neutralize that place." Well, you don't do it; you don't go. This is not the route for the patrolling, and you don't go to this place. You call them and see.

It was obvious that was a setup. Whether George Casey was a part of it? I ask him, "Did you know about this?" He said, "No." I said, "Was there any Special Forces did this?" He said, "No." I asked, "What happened then?" General Casey said, "I don't know." Was I set up? Was I part of it? I need explanation, and today I don't have one. I formally asked for one. I stayed there, and to regain his trust, I said, "Let's give him 48-hour cease-fire, get the injured from the Shrine, get some food and medicine and drinks to the Shrine." We gained his trust, and sent my chief of staff to meet his chief of staff.

They started to do this, do that to the agreement, to the original agreement, do this, do that. [I] came back with my chief of staff. I phoned Dr. Allawi, John Negroponte, and George Casey on the secure line of the Marines. He wanted this to be dropped, and also Neuman, the Ambassador, he was fully informed on that, what's his name, N-e-u [spelled], I think, Neuman.

So I was on the phone from Najaf to Baghdad, telling them al-Sadr wanted to do this, he wanted to do that. They said, "Well, OK, this is yes, this is yes," and we got the final agreement on that day. A couple of days later, Hejlik said, "We can't wait anymore." I said, "We've got an agreement now, and the agreement is a 10-point plan." I read it in Arabic. Neuman is a good Arabist. I read it to John and translated it. I was saying to John Negroponte, "I have to call George Casey." [Ambassador Negroponte said,] "He [GEN Casey] heard exactly what you are saying." I said, "OK, and I'll tell the Prime Minister."

I phoned the Prime Minister and he said, "Well, this is the agreement." I told him this is it. I said, "Do you want to read it?" I read it to him and he said, "OK." Neuman has one reservation. He said, "You have to go out on Al Arabiyah [television network], you and him, and he will read the text, the agreement, on television." Al-Sadr will read it, and I will be with him. Just imagine, the 2 kilometers between me and him; I'm in the government, and there are zillions of snipers on the way, and RPGs of Jaish al-Mahdi, and the Marines everywhere, and I have to walk, not drive, walk, of course; it is a no-drive zone. No humvees can go there, because they will shoot. So I organized this IRGC guy who went in there. He said [that] al Sadr agreed for you and him to announce it. I was sitting in there in the governor office, and the governor was

sitting next to me, and my chief of staff, and everything was ready. I was trying to put on this body armor to walk there, and a lot of verses from Koran to protect me. What is it—you know, you are going to al-Sadr, you might go and not come back at all.

BILL K. Everyone had to know what you were doing, if someone didn't know, they could have shot you.

DR. RUBAI'E. Yes. And on the way, and I said, "Let me sign." This IRGC guy went, too; got his signature. With the verse from..., well, I need to sign it from the government side. The telephone rang, and the governor picked up the phone and said, "Oh, yes, doctor, yes." The Prime Minister said, "I need to speak to Dr. Rubai'e." I said, "I am pleased to say for Iraq, he has signed the agreement." God help me, I did not put my moniker on that, it's only his signature. I haven't because if I had, I would have created havoc, because I have to honor my signature.

Allawi said, "You come back now." I said, "What? I'm going to sign." He said, "Don't sign, there's no agreement, no negotiation, nothing, absolutely. You come now. You drive to the airport; your helicopter is waiting for you." I didn't order for my helicopter. Allawi, "No, it's waiting for you now, thank you very much." The press is like a demonstration picket in front of the governor's office. When I went out, they were like bees around me. Where did they come from? I basically told them a lie. Al-Sadr, I blamed it on him, but I didn't attack him. I blamed it on him that his negotiator was difficult. When I got back, I went straight to Allawi's office. I said, "What is going on?" Allawi responded, "We don't want to negotiate with this man." Up to this moment in time, I don't understand what happened.

I can understand he was not reduced enough; this is why.¹¹

BILL K. Back to General Casey's words?

DR. RUBAI'E. Back to Casey's words. Second, he was pressured, and then he sent his MOD to Najaf, and the cordon around the Shrine started.

I said to Allawi, "Don't storm the shrine. Don't storm it; it's not your government, it's George Bush's government [that] will do it; not your government. The whole world will be upset about it; don't do this."

¹¹ The interviewer understood this to mean that Sadr's influence had not been eroded or diminished enough.

It was really pressurized. It's 2 o'clock in the morning, yelling and shouting, "I am advising you do not storm the shrine, because you will not be in this office long after you storm the shrine, there must be something else!" I picked up the phone to Sistani and I spoke to him, and I said, "My advice is to come down as soon as possible." They didn't answer. Sistani didn't say yay or nay.

The second day they phoned me from Heathrow Airport. They said, "Tomorrow we will be there." I didn't know it was Sistani because the number was Lebanese number. "Tomorrow we will be in Basrah." I know Kuwaiti Airlines leave Heathrow Airport at 10 PM and gets there very early in the morning in Kuwait so he can drive to Basrah in 2 hours' time.

I told the Prime Minister that. He said, "Go back to Sistani and tell him not to come to Iraq. Give me just 48 hours, only 48 hours, and I'll solve that." I couldn't get Sistani on the phone; he was already gone. He's in Iraq, and then Allawi was paralyzed. And he didn't do anything. Sistani basically went to the city with his son. His son went to al Sadr. Al-Sadr was looking for a way out to save some face, and he left the shrine.

BILL K. That's incredible. [End File 1, 1:55:28 File 2, start 00:00:00]

DR. RUBAI'E. I think that after that, the Allawi government was going downhill because of the credit for sorting out Najaf is going to Sistani. He is the peace man, he is the peacemaker, all the credibility went his way, and he didn't do anything.

BILL K. Well, but he did.

DR. RUBAI'E. Well, yes, by coming back

BILL K. We talked about the buildup into Fallujah, and you talked about negotiation, and I took you back into Najaf. Now we're back into Fallujah with the negotiations. You talked about the Prime Minister and discussions with the negotiating team in Fallujah. You questioned his approach. You thought he could have had a better approach. When they [the Coalition] finally went into Fallujah, do you think they should have gone in, or do you think they should have negotiated more?

DR. RUBAI'E. The second time I think they couldn't. It was very difficult to do anything but military; it's difficult the second time. It was left so late, from March or April 2004 until November. The whole thing has changed—the scene had changed—so I don't think they had a lot of options except to go.

BILL K. When the battle took place, when they did the reconstruction, what were some of the lessons, after Fallujah was over? A lot of people think that Fallujah then set the conditions for the elections in January. Do you have any comments on that?

DR. RUBAI'E. I don't think it has, honestly, looking back now with hindsight.

BILL K. Let me add to that. Some people say that they could not have had the elections without having done Fallujah. [05:08]

DR. RUBAI'E. I think it was the contrary, I believe, because we left it so long, so late. I think it could have passed the elections, and it would have better implications on the election. People after we went to Fallujah—it has created a lot of animosity and a lot of negativity, if you like. How many of the Sunnis, what percentage of the Sunnis that took part? I believe, with hindsight, had we not gone to Fallujah then, because it was near the election, people were talking about election and electioneering and containing and all this, and we go and do this huge operation. That backfired on anyone who wanted to take part in the elections. OK, Fallujah, let's not; they do not want to take part. That's 250,000 or 230,000 people; that is not the end of the world. The rest of the area could have taken part in the elections. I think it was a mistake. I believe we could have been better off without it. In the ideal world we should have finished that the first time. Had it been delayed and delayed and delayed, when we reached November, I think we should have said, "Hold on; we will do this after the election."

BILL K. It's funny that happened right after the U.S. elections, because the U.S. elections happened on 2 or 3 November and then we did Fallujah

DR. RUBAI'E. No, that was obvious, because it would have had repercussions. It was delayed. We have discussed this as well with George Casey, even John Negroponte. We said several times that you are not going to do Fallujah until after your election, so it was timed to fall after the election because it will influence badly. We didn't mind helping the guy who liberated us, but let's have our timing right for our election.

BILL K. When you look back on Fallujah, what were some of the good things and the lessons that we learned from Fallujah, and what were some of the bad things?

DR. RUBAI'E. I think one of the lessons we learned is that we did not see this mentality of the triangle. These are completely different from mentality and psychology of the southern region. We saw two different brands of people. The psychology of the south

is persecution: we hated the government, and we are persecuted; we are poor, miserable, downtrodden people. This is in the south, the Shi'a.

The triangle, this is a Bedouin mentality; this is a culture of force and violence. After this Bedouin mentality, the religious fervor and the religious fanaticism, you get a combination, a very strange combination. That combination will not understand anything or will not respect anything but force. When you showed some reluctance in the first Fallujah, everything went wrong. Because the mentality of the Bedouin mentality combined with the Wahabism or Salifism, whatever you call it; they will not respect anything but this force—and sometimes excessive force—because then they can relate to you.

See, down south, the more you use force—because this is the mentality of persecution, the more you use, we are used to this; we are used to this force. Saddam persecuted us, killed us, and these Americans, too. After all, we go to paradise. Like Imam Hussein, like Imam Ali, they were killed; we go to the same. These are our Imams; these are our people. A different mentality. These people, they don't respect force down south; they fear force. There is a difference, and I think this is really different, even the reaction to the American presence here.

While they are here in Fallujah, I think this is one lesson. One lesson is that once we go there, we will not stop. Number two is this Fallujah Brigade is an unmitigated disaster, probably disaster of Chernobyl magnitude. This was really a bad, bad mistake. I think also a lesson, we should have tried to make a wedge, drive a wedge between the Ba'athists and the Salafists very early on.

I am not a military guy, but I believe this is an intelligence-led war. This is not tanks for tanks and airplane for airplane and soldier for soldier; this is an intelligence-led war, and we were really lacking any intelligence within that city. We could have used the tribal sheiks versus the clergy sheiks. We haven't cleared that cut. This is also with hindsight: we isolated the city, and then the services run down, and [we] let the [Fallujan] people turn around to these people [Salafists] and say this is all because of you. We could have done that.

BILL K. And that's in driving that wedge between the insurgents and the people?

DR. RUBAI'E. Exactly. We could have cordoned the city, secluded the city from the rest of the world. They used it really cleverly, this Al Jazeera. I remember one of the

reporters in Fallujah, he was really emotional. He was one of the Muslim brotherhood.

BILL K. An Al Jazeera reporter?

DR. RUBAI'E. An Al Jazeera reporter. This was a man with a very thin beard. He came to Iraq for a few weeks, and he was in Fallujah, reporting. I remember this. "The Mujahadin is killing the infidels." What? Then, "We are all Mujahadin, and the infidels are coming to us, then we go and kill them." He was really emotional, and [he said,] "The infidels are running away from the Mujahadin," and this is to the Arab world. That's why Fallujah became a real symbol.

BILL K. Now was that during Fallujah I?

DR. RUBAI'E. Yes, Fallujah I. [16:41]

BILL K. That's interesting. We talk about information operations [IO], and in Fallujah I, IO was a failure for the Coalition because of IO. Talk a little bit about Fallujah II and IO. What was the perception?

DR. RUBAI'E. I think they did not allow a lot of people, only embedded [media].

BILL K. They controlled the press then?

DR. RUBAI'E. Al Jazeera we threw out from the country. But I think they [Coalition] controlled it in the second one.

MAJOR CASTRO. Do you think by controlling the media the rest of the Arab world thought that the U.S. was controlling what was being released by the foreign media? As you go from Fallujah I where Al Jazeera is reporting that the infidels are dying, and Fallujah II it is all U.S. reports, basically all American and all Western media reporting and no Al Jazeera reporting. Do you think that the Arab world thought they were misled?

DR. RUBAI'E. Definitely the Arab world had been misled; there is no doubt about it. And these Arab reporters, Al Jazeera and others, they are emotional. You can see it: Because of the terminology and the jargon he is using, the emotional transpires through his reporting; this is all you can see. And it's all through the Arab world. The information operation, we don't mind the reporting by Western reporters. The Western reporters tend to be much more objective, and they investigate. They do some research, and if they report to the *Washington Post*, and it comes through

translated after a day or two after that, you get ameliorated, without emotion as well. So that is not a problem.

MAJOR CASTRO. I just thought maybe the Arab world had a little bit more trust in the Al Jazeera reporting? [19:52]

DR. RUBAI'E. No. I am talking probably. I think the information operation, as you call it, or the media campaign or the perception of the people to Operation Iraqi Freedom, I think it is not up to standard. I think there are a lot of—especially in the Arab world, you invested so much blood and treasure in this country, and you get this back from the Arab world. There must be something seriously wrong. I know now—the democracy in the Arab world, people started talking about it now, seriously talking about it. I mean, the election in Egypt people are laughing at it, because it is all fake. The election in Lebanon, what's happening in Syria, what's happening inside Saudi Arabia? These people are thinking of changing their national curriculum, national character in the education system, so it is catching. But I think it could have been much better led as a media campaign than what it is now.

I don't know what Al Jazeera is up to. It is a bunch of Palestinians—disgruntled, disenchanted, Palestinians—[focused on the] settlement they need to do with the Americans. The rest of the Arab world now, democracy is especially [important to] people watching here. I can tell you one of the very good observations I think should be made. On the 30th of January 2004 people thought, "Come on," especially in the triangle, [where] the Americans brought a lot. They handed over the sovereignty to them. They handed over the keys for Iraq, and he is going to be reelected. He is going to stay here forever. As soon as he [Allawi] lost, [people thought] there must be something wrong there. What happened?

This is serious democracy. These people, they believe in democracy, and it became somebody, a completely different person [Allawi wasn't elected and a new government was installed], and I think this is one of the golden rules. I heard it from George W., before the first election and before the next election, before I heard it from him through media, but the second time I heard it one to one, telling President Talabani at lunch. We are not picking sides; we are supporting the political process, whatever that will bring. It's a huge risk, but I think that is the beauty of democracy. It will pay off in the long term. Probably in the short term, Iran influence, turbulence, unstable, but in the long term, [for] people watching outside the Arab world, there is a real democracy here. Nine million people went to vote, divided into five lists. All

sectarian, on ethnic ground this time, but next time it might not be that. So I believe that the message is getting through; the Palestinian election as well [is having an affect]. [24:51]

How can these Americans allow Hamas to win the elections? Well, no, it is not the Americans allow or not allow, it's this paper [Rubai'e was waving a ballot from the constitutional referendum], and this magic paper goes to the ballot box. It's the process. I think people are getting this in their mind, and I believe [they are] supporting the process. And I was so encouraged by a brilliant speech by the lady doctor [Condoleezza Rice] in Cairo, the American University in Cairo a few months ago. I think she was just appointed Secretary of State. That was a really powerful speech on democracy, and I was hoping this will influence the way the leaders will conduct the elections, but it hasn't; it's all fixed. And we'll have to wait for another 7 years. [26:10]

BILL K. I think you have answered all my questions. Let me ask you this: What do you wish to say that I have not asked you?

DR. RUBAI'E. Everything already, you took all my memoirs.

BILL K. I've got your memoirs?! I really thank you for your time. This has been great.

DR. RUBAI'E. I am sorry I feel some passion about all this, not only have I lived it, but I worked for it through all my life, and I believe we are there. We are going through a very bad time, [but] we are going to have a great country, and I honestly believe that in the next few years people will remember Americans here, and we will thank them forever; I honestly do. There is a paradigm shift in this country now, huge shift. These two magic things, the Internet and the satellite, everywhere now, and they are changing the light, the culture, the understanding, the education. They are changing everything. Even in villages you have laptops. We haven't seen the computer in this country; now there are a lot of them in villages.

BILL K. We were in Fallujah 2 weeks ago and working with the civil affairs people there, we took computers to an Internet café near the Hydra Mosque. These Internet cafes are sprouting up in the villages and towns; and it's really incredible.

DR. RUBAI'E. Uncensored!

BILL K. That's right, uncensored.

DR. RUBAI'E. Let them see the whole world and believe it, and remove this conspiracy theory. You know this Middle Eastern conspiracy theory—everything is a conspiracy. When you see the light, there is a really lovely thing. I was talking to a villager, a peasant, we were driving to the convoy, and I stopped and talked to him, and he said, “Doctor, when you came in we were blindfolded for 35 years, and when you came in you removed this blindfold, and we can’t see properly. We go everywhere, all direction, we can’t see properly.” This is a simple peasant, and it’s true. You give them freedom and all of a sudden they wander around and don’t know what to do.

BILL K. It’s been an incredible trip for your country. But I like your passion. That’s what this is all about, passion.

DR. RUBAI'E. True.

BILL K. So what is next?

DR. RUBAI'E. Make this a culture, [an election] every 4 years. The best punisher for the politician is the ballot box. Because then the politician will stray and do all sorts of thing, but he will be penalized at the ballot box.

BILL K. That’s right; he will be held accountable. [30:23]

DR. RUBAI'E. I think if we make this as a culture, this change of government every 4 years; we don’t want heroes... Democracy on its own in this country will not work because we are a diversified country, very diversified, very heterogeneous country, also by ethnic background and religion and nationality. [A] decentralized, federal system [is needed], because if you leave democracy on its own without federalism, it would be a major ... dictatorship, and everyone will go...you keep the checks and balances with this system, a federal system, and this is the way to flourish.

In Kurdistan, for example, in the universities, why don’t they accept Kurds from Kurdistan of Iran to teach them the culture of the Kurdish people and the history of the Kurds in the region, and all the Kurds even from Turkey? Our cultural center is there. The same thing if we have a factory at Basrah, and we want to sell the product of that factory, why do you have to sell in Samarra, or in Mosul? The roads are not good. I will sell it in the Gulf and get better hard currency for it. This country has to, needs to be...in a way that [the] federal democratic system—federal in every sense of the word: budget, money, people, parties, and let the local people grow their culture. If there is a region in Najaf, or the governor of Najaf, or the people who are in Najaf want to say we do not want serve alcohol in our government, it’s up to them. There is

free alcohol in Babil; you can have these different cultural differences, if that is what it is, and I honestly believe that this country has great potential, oil, water, history.

DR. RUBAI'E. I keep on saying this a number of times to my Arab colleagues and officials when I meet with them: we imported a very expensive product called democracy, and we have no intention to export it. But I can tell you, it is a catching disease, democracy, human rights [and] all that, because it won't be a Western product after that, not to be exported. It will be a local product. This is an Arab Muslim country in the middle of the region and has a proper democracy. The Saudi people, the Saudis are not going to import from Americans; they are going to take from Iraq. And the Iranians...the Iranians are a nation of treacherous [people], but I can tell you they are frightened of us. I went to Iran and met Ahmadinejad; I met this... several times I met the MOD and the MOI and the foreign minister. I met everyone there, even the Minister of Intelligence. They are afraid of us; you know what they are obsessed about, two or three things. There was a program in one of the satellite channel on Kurdistan, that program showed the Kurds, it was referring to the Kurds of Iran, why did they do that? [36:01]

BILL K. They were frightened?

DR. RUBAI'E. That satellite channel; you should not allow this satellite channel because it is damaging to Iran. This is one obsession; the second obsession is ...3,000 people, disarmed, they are not doing anything, and they are surrounded by the Americans. They are obsessed by that. They can not tolerate a position, even a peaceful position. Just imagine, hundreds of thousands of them coming to Najaf, Karbala, Samarra, and see this real true freedom—television, satellite, and Internet—proper democracy. They will not like it. They would not like [it] when they got back home, and they would carry this with them.

BILL K. They would bring it in. [37:23]

DR. RUBAI'E. Exactly! So I honestly believe when I went there that we should be afraid of them, but when I went there, I think they are afraid of us because of what we have.

BILL K. I really appreciate your hospitality.

DR. RUBAI'E. Thank you; we should have served you some dinner.

BILL K. That would be a great honor. I tell you, sir, your courage, your country—you talked about your passion; it made my eyes water a couple of times. I am really honored to have been here.

DR. RUBAI'E'S AMERICAN AIDE. Sir, I found two of these. Now George is here for a while so I will track him down at the embassy and give him one, but these two gentlemen here...

DR. RUBAI'E. Do you know what this is?

BILL K. No, sir.

DR. RUBAI'E. This is the referendum for the constitution. This is the actual original one, and it says—the referendum one, the draft constitution, the permanent draft constitution—it says basically, this in Arabic, and this is in Kurdish, do you agree on the constitution; also in Kurdish, it says very simple, yes or no, this is in Arabic, and this is in Kurdish. Nine million, nine thousand of these people have voted. Well, 7 million voted. No [it was] 10 [million]—8 million voted yes, 2 million voted no, and they have a choice.

BILL K. That's right; they have a choice. Thank you very much.

DR. RUBAI'E'S AMERICAN AIDE. I will make sure George gets one. Tell me where his office is, and I will deliver it myself. [End 00:42:09]

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Transcript 3. General Shawani, Director, Iraqi National Intelligence Service



Figure C-3-1. GEN Shawani

1. On 5 February 2006, General Mohammed Abdullah Shawani, a former commander of Iraqi Special Forces and a Turkman from Mosul, was interviewed at the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) Headquarters in Baghdad. General Shawani is currently the director of INIS. General Shawani lost two sons in a failed coup attempt in June 1996. In the run-up to war, Shawani played an important role in the coalition's effort to encourage Iraqi officers to surrender or defect.

2. The transcript of the interview follows. General Shawani spoke English; an interpreter was not used.

GEN SHAWANI. The first time after the war, when the Americans first went inside Iraq, they came to Fallujah, of course, and they had been welcomed by the people of Fallujah. So this is a sign of these people. They are not against Americans, although we look to Fallujah as a city, as a scale for Iraqi, real Iraqi Sunni. They call it the "City of the Mosques" because we have more mosques in Fallujah than any other city in the country.

So there was no real problem between them and the Coalition forces until some of the Iranians came inside Fallujah and started making problems for them. Some of the former Iraqis would be affected from being in Iran, recruited by the Iranians. Some of the [Coalition] military intelligence, they want to know some information so they listened to these guys. They've been telling them information about some of the guys from Fallujah, and they [Coalition] start raiding these people, these houses in Fallujah. So for the first raid—this area is a tribal area; they don't know the culture—they go to the houses and blow the house. They take the man, they put him on the ground, cuff his hands in front of his family, and they find out he is not guilty after a few days, and they say they are sorry.

This does not work in this country. They feel like they have to retaliate for their dignity. This is part of the problem; let's start it from there. So actually the problem is made from somebody else, not between the Fallujah people and the Coalition. And of course the [U.S.] Army, they want to control. Shooting started here and there, some soldiers get killed, and then the problem started. Then it extends to Ramadi and other Sunni areas. Until March 2004, when there was real insurgency in the city, it was fighting with the Marines on a daily basis. We are at INIS actually. We know the problem, but nobody asked us. We've been writing some reports on it. General Conway from the Marines, we had a meeting with him and talked about the problem, and he asked me whether we could help in solving the problem. I said, "Well, we will try."

So we came to Baghdad—and being in Iraq most of my life and serving 30 years in the Army and all of the generals and people—so I know some generals in Fallujah, some religion people in Fallujah, and I sent them a message, we want to meet, and they came. I met about 10 or 15 guys, and most of them, they were insurgents. So we told them, listen, we are going to fix the problem. So they started to talk about the problem with the U.S. Army, raiding and this and that, you know, arresting their women. So we advised them. They cannot fight U.S. Army because they came to help us. The U.S. Army is not our enemy, we have some other enemies, all the Iraqis; we know that our main enemy is Iran, from the history actually, especially the Sunni.

So we told them, "Why do you try? All your guys get killed, and you lose all your ammunition and your power, and you are fighting friends. Why not keep it to fight the enemy in the future?" And they told me, "How we can deal with the Coalition forces to not go after us?" I said, "Well, we can make an agreement." I said, "If you don't shoot them, they will never shoot you." And we try to make another agreement. Some of the guys are very sentimental; they didn't accept. Most of them accepted. And the next meeting we took a risk actually, at the time which nobody can go even to Abu Graib. I sent my people to the Headquarters of Intelligence inside Fallujah to meet everybody, and they were all there working. We went there without weapons, and we talked.

BILL K. Where was that? You said in Fallujah? [06:02]

GEN SHAWANI. I think that was in April 2004.

BILL K. Where was the headquarters?

GEN SHAWANI. One of the mosques over there, Janabi, this Abdullah Janabi. We are intelligent, also, but we send some guys to the meeting, and some guys they went for recon, and they got caught by al Qaeda. We sent one general—and he got killed later—to see the Jolan area. [Al Qaeda] asked them, “Who are you? What are you doing here?” They [the general] said, “Well, we came with the delegation.” “OK, come with us to the delegation. If you are not with them we will kill you right now.” So he came; they said, “He is with us.”

BILL K. That was close.

GEN SHAWANI. They have some points. Actually, they have some requests, some of them accepted by the Marines, so we made another. They wanted American withdrawal from Fallujah, outside Fallujah, but they could come any time if they tell them that they are coming, so nobody shoots at them. If they want to pass through the city to go somewhere, that is OK. But they did not accept to put tanks on the roads near the houses; it looks something to them like occupation. So we made another meeting with the Marines at their headquarters and put all the conditions. For example, the first thing they request [is] that we make a brigade from Fallujah people to secure the city and not let the foreigners and others come through the city and march into the city.

BILL K. Whose idea was that?

GEN SHAWANI. Our idea. I mean, their idea, because you cannot bring people from outside to control this space.

BILL K. It was the people from Fallujah’s idea?

GEN SHAWANI. From Fallujah. In Fallujah, they have—most of them are military officers or military police or military intelligence—so we end up with Fallujah Brigade, 500 of them, most of them brigadiers, or colonels.

BILL K. 500 officers? When you have 500 officers, who does the work?

GEN SHAWANI. We manage. The Marines and we equip them with the uniforms. They armed them and made a base for training and barracks. We followed this for a while, and they secured the city for 5 months, not a single bullet. No one gets killed in Fallujah, and...nobody fired at an American—even a bullet. But this is, actually was, against the government agenda. From parties, religion parties, and they look to this [and believe that] another Sunni brigade [has] formed. Maybe they are going to form

another Sunni force against them, so they fight this hard. We've been fighting against the government, the Prime Minister, the political party, everybody; even Bremer was against us, Ambassador Bremer.

BILL K. So the governing council was against it?

GEN SHAWANI. [10:09] Yes. So what happened actually—so also the money; the Army and Marines spending the money from their budget. They are 2,000 [men], and they have to pay them every month. I mean this is big money, so they don't have that much budget. So they told us if we can arrange it, to tie them to the Minister of Defense, belong to the MOD. These guys don't believe in the MOD; they say we cannot be attached to those guys, and the MOD doesn't recognize them. He says they are Saddam's people. So the Marines cannot finance them anymore.

BILL K. Who is the MOD at the time?

GEN SHAWANI. Ali Allawi—now he is the Finance Minister—then Hazam Shalah. Nobody can even visit them in Fallujah. There is no member of the government who can even go to Fallujah because they are against them. The Americans are our friends; we don't need a government. So it's temporary, we fix it, we try to make another brigade in Ramadi, but Bremer didn't approve it. If he approved it, we could have now forces from the same area and could be very good allies to the coalition forces, and we wouldn't have all these problems.

BILL K. Of course, later on, something happened where the insurgents started taking over in Fallujah. What happened?

GEN SHAWANI. They cut their salary, no more money, and nobody wanted them anymore. Al Qaeda came to them saying, "How much do you get paid from these guys, \$300 or \$400?" They started giving them between \$500 and \$1,000, so most of them quit, and they became insurgents. If you don't have the headquarters to accept them—I mean others will come, and they will pay them, and they will go there. That's what happened, actually.

BILL K. In April, you know the Marines went in about the 4th of April and then they stopped. Why did the Marines stop, and why were they not allowed to go back in? Do you recall that?

GEN SHAWANI. No, it was an agreement. Marines, they can start Fallujah. They come, they will not fire in, any time they want to come. They should tell that the Marines

are coming. Two times they came, they secure them, they invite them for lunch. People were very friendly, and nobody gets hurt for 5 months. Fallujah was the most peaceful area in Iraq until the government was against it, everybody was against it, and the guys quit, and they went to become insurgents again. [13:35]

BILL K. Before I go into Al Fajr, can you talk about the development of the Shawaniis?

GEN SHAWANI. Well, the Shawanis, everybody thinks I have a militia in the Shawani Brigade. I will tell you the story of Shawanis. Also, General Conway, he told me we need some Iraqi Special Forces. They can work with us because they know the area, they speak the language. I say, "Maybe," and he asked, "Can you form a company for me?" So in that time I was commander of a Special Forces school for 5 years. Most of the people, they are my students, and they came to me seeking a job. I don't have military jobs open to them, but I know where they are. I sent them a message saying, "Do you want to work with the Marines?" They said, "Yes," so I form a company and send it to the Marines.

It's not my company, not financed by INIS and not financed by me. It had nothing to do with me. I made a favor to General Conway. So they saw the company, and they were impressed, you know, the training and capability. They give them ID card, and we find out—actually, one of the soldiers was carded by police, and on his ID card there is SSF, and underneath it says Shawani Special Forces. So they came to me and said, "Did you form militia?" I said, "No, what's this? I don't know." I called the Marines. "General, what is this?" He said, "We didn't know what to name them. Because you wrote to them, Shawani, we call them Shawani Special Forces." So everybody thinks I formed that forces, and they have nothing to do with me.

He asked for another battalion. Actually, I formed for him a brigade. We had been sitting sometimes in the ministers' meeting; even GEN Casey was sitting there. One time they have an operation in Mosul, and then they are talking about how many forces they have. They say we have so and so brigade from National Guard, we have two brigades of Marines, and we have the Shawani Brigade. I was sitting, and people they look to me, they think that they are mine. But actually I have nothing to do with them anymore. Until now, some of the government members here, they think that I have the Shawani forces. When the Marines forces finish with them, they released them and they went home. It has nothing to do with me.

BILL K. That's good. I hear they did very well. [16:41]

GEN SHAWANI. They did very well, I think. The Marine were impressed with them also. We had losses also. We had about 25 get killed, and I think 30 or 40 get wounded. They worked very hard.

BILL K. In fact, I think it was the Shawanis who raised the Iraqi flag at the government center on the 10th of November when they went into Al Fajr. They did very well.

GEN SHAWANI. Unknown soldiers, but you know, I mean we feel sorry they didn't need them because they didn't have budget to pay them anymore, the Marines. Also, they tried with the MOD to pay them to let them stay, but the MOD they didn't accept them.

BILL K. I want to go to preparation for Al Fajr. Were you involved in the preparation for Al Fajr when the Coalition and the Iraqi forces went into Fallujah in November of 2004?

GEN SHAWANI. Fallujah II, we were out of there. We had nothing to do with it. But yes, Fallujah II, the Shawanis were there.

BILL K. They were?

GEN SHAWANI. Yes, they were. I have one of the brigadiers, General [BG] Carlos. He was the brigade commander. I didn't know their operation, but I found out he was with the Marines, and he went inside Fallujah.

BILL K. When I asked if you were involved in the preparation for Al Fajr, I meant in your capacity as the director of INIS. I just felt that in your position in INIS that you were involved in preparation for Fallujah II.

GEN SHAWANI. Fallujah II we only recruited and organized the soldiers to go in with the Marines. We didn't pay them; we did nothing, actually. We made a little bit of coordination, because on the way they get shot in an ambush on the road, so they bring them to Al Rasheed. When they come from vacation they go to Al Rasheed, and from Rasheed they go by car, and the guards they go to Fallujah. We helped them on this, just helped them. They have very little cars, very little everything.

BILL K. I thought maybe in your capacity as working in INIS that you had something to do with Al Fajr.

GEN SHAWANI. We had nothing to do with them in INIS; they are not a part of INIS.

BILL K. No, I know that. I just thought that maybe you, regardless of Shawani Brigade, I thought that *you*, in the preparation for Al Fajr, that maybe you had something to do with Al Fajr.

GEN SHAWANI. No, I had nothing to do with it. I was surprised when I saw my guys over there, because I know they are working with the Marines and the Marines are using them.

BILL K. [I can't shake GEN Shawani's line of thought from the Shawani forces. The meat of the interview is not about the Shawani forces; it's the role of INIS in Al Fajr.] Could you talk a little bit about your background and the context that led up to the first problems in Fallujah?

GEN SHAWANI. You know, I am the INIS Director, which is quite different from my specialty or my career. I served in the Iraqi Army for 30 years. I started with Airborne unit and Special Forces. I went to United States, and I went to Rangers and Pathfinder, and I came back with experiences. We formed the first Iraqi Pathfinder Company, and then I became the Special Forces school commander before Iran-Iraq war. Most of the Special Forces, I know them; they were my students or my officers. When we came back with the coalition and war, all my guys came by and said hello. They think that I became [an] MOD or high position in the Army. In fact, I have nothing to do with those.

What I did, I used to be a head of the Aero Club before I left Iraq. That air club still exists. They elect me again to the head of the club. They call it the Flying and Parachuting Club, actually. So we have club and anybody who comes from these guys to say hello, seeking job, we took some of them as a guard. We need guards, but small numbers, you know; the rest we just save their names in case somebody will form a unit of Special Forces, [then] they are ready. So that is why it was very easy for us [to say] when somebody asked us if we have a company: "Tell the guy we bring a company; tell the guy I bring a battalion." Even General Conway was impressed how fast we bring him a battalion. [End tape 1, 00:22:45; File 2 started 00:00:00]

GEN SHAWANI. So we have some people. Later, when I work for Army Aviation, they are doing Iran-Iraq war; I was actually Operations Commander of the Army Aviation. We fight during the Iraq-Iran War. For 4 or 5 years we work hard, and we did some special operations, and we made some successful special operations because we know

the Special Forces, and I have also the Army Aviation. So when we take the forces, they trust us because we were their commander before. We made a good—one of the famous—helicopter assault on the Iranian division, in 1984. So the Iranians, they know us very well. And the pilots, they know us very well in Iraq. And the Special Forces, they know us well because we are doing different things.

BILL K. Do you guys have any questions, Bob?

GEORGE M. Just for clarification, please. Sir, when you recruited these men, the initial ones, how many men made up a company or a battalion or a brigade?

GEN SHAWANI. The Shawanis?

GEORGE M. Yes, sir. You said, “I recruited men and sent them to the Marines.” One company, how many are we talking about, 400 or 500 or less?

GEN SHAWANI. We sent the 1st Company, which was 120. The Marines, they were very happy with them, and then they asked us can we form us a battalion, so we form 500.

GEORGE M. Five hundred in a battalion.

GEN SHAWANI. Maybe 37 officers with them. Then we form another battalion, so they then became a brigade. The company was separate, working with some other group, but the brigade was working with the headquarters, actually.

GEORGE M. So you had two battalions in the brigade, or three?

GEN SHAWANI. Two battalions.

MAJOR CASTRO. You had one group of soldiers working with 1/23?

GEN SHAWANI. I think, yes, with the—I am sorry—they followed these guys, you know. The company commander got assassinated 2 months ago, and the brigade commander was assassinated about 2-1/2 months ago.

BILL K. That’s bad.

GEN SHAWANI. Following them, a guy who helped the Americans. They have one of them killed by al Qaeda, the other one killed by Badi. We lost most of them, actually. We lost General Nasaf, we lost General Samil, we lost Col Mofa, and we lost about maybe 20 NCOs. All of them, they get assassinated here and there because we helped the Marines.

GEORGE M. If Iraqis—and they wouldn't necessarily have to come from any Special Forces background—but if Iraqis [had] been with the Marines when they first went into Fallujah and had been able to interact directly with the local population, do you think that would have made a big difference in the outcome?

GEN SHAWANI. Of course.

GEORGE M. Did anybody ever consult, as far as you know?

GEN SHAWANI. Of course. The first mistake, we find out that Ambassador Bremer, he disbanded the Army; this is the biggest mistake. Not only did he disband the Army, but he disbanded the Army, and he let the religion parties loot the Iraqi equipment to their locations. I mean, it is sad now, actually, to me being a former general in the Iraqi Army to see there is 200 times more equipment with the PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan]. The PUK guy, he is a President of Iraq, and he has 200 times more Iraqi equipment, and Iraqi Army doesn't even have a tank. Very unusual. How can the President of Iraq hold the tanks for himself?

BILL K. That's a good question.

GEN SHAWANI. Not only tanks, there is helicopters, there is heavy equipment, heavy artillery, this is in the north. In the south, they looted all the heavy equipment to Iran. I don't know how this equipment goes to Iran and why. They left us without anything, and now Iraq Army, although in the media we became 100,000 or 120,000, I don't think that they are more than two brigades because they don't have weapons. They have only AKs and machine guns. They don't have support with them; they don't even have hand grenades.

How can you want them to resist the al Qaeda with all these RPGs and all these things they are attacking them with, and you want them to stand their position? How are they going to stand their position? In Mosul in one day all the positions were taken by al Qaeda because this guy only has six magazines. He fired the magazines, and he looked—there is no other ammunition. The Army, they are well behind. I mean, the organization is wrong; there is no support. You send the Army to war, you have to have ammunition, line of support, and this and that; support weapons. We are not only facing normal guys, we are facing guys who have everything: car bombs, machine guns, heavy machine guns, RPGs, all kinds of weapons. How can we defend against that? You put a checkpoint for an Army at one place; they come at night, and they take the whole checkpoint because they cannot resist them. [V:29:45]

The insurgents, they have more equipment and more men. We didn't see any professional in all the units they formed, and they formed it that way—2 weeks' course, like somebody painting something. Maybe they saw a soldier he is doing PT [physical training]. They said, "You be a commander"; they made him a commander. And maybe there is a former Iraqi major within those guys, and he became a soldier. How does this work out? Where is the chain of command? They form them on religion and ethnic basis. One company of Kurds, one company from this party, one company from this party, so they put one of these guys as commander from one party. If he dies, which party is going to lead the unit? I mean, only God knows. This is all problems, I mean. To us, all this war credit and money spent, they just throw it away, useless. If we can not reorganize the Army and the MOI, even if we have a problem, we cannot fix our own problem. [End file 2, 00:09:14; File 3 started 00:00:00]

GEN SHAWANI. This ministry is the tool of the government to fix things in Iraq. If you don't have tools, how are you going to fix problems? So no matter who will come now, if we don't clean the ministries from the militia, we cannot work it. It's very hard to work under militia. As you can see, there is killing here and kidnapping here, and we are, in INIS, we are holding this service, but, I mean make it not political. But all other, whenever we look at the government, it's politics. We cannot exist forever like this; we have to change this together.

We have election, we have democracy, but look who came to become part of the government. All of the militia, every party that wins, he has 1,000 militia, and he imposes things. The MOD, I ask him one question. I said, "Do you have control of all your units?" He said, "No." [I asked,] "Can you order or fire a guy, a brigade commander in Basrah?" He said, "No, they will not obey my orders." So what is this? Is this leadership or what? Everybody is on their own, parties on their own; you name them, there are too many we can't even count them.

So Army has to be neutral: no politics in the Army, no militia in the Army; they should be from all Iraqis, Sunni, Shi'a, Kurd, Christian, Jew, everybody. All the Iraqis have the right to be a soldier to secure their country. Then, if you have a good Army like this and good police, then you can say that we can secure the country. We need more soldiers for the Army, and every day Iraq becomes more of a war zone. When we first came to Iraq, I could go to Mosul and see my family. I went to Najaf alone. I go to restaurant, stay until 2300. I came without guard. Now if I go I will get killed.

BILL K. So it's worse now? [3:02]

GEN SHAWANI. Of course. Every other day it became worse. It was better in Dr. Allawi's time; it was even better before Allawi. Every day is worse than the other day, and we don't know now what is going to happen. Until now we have election, and until now they couldn't form a government because of this militia thing.

BILL K. Some of the things that you have mentioned: number one, we need to get rid of the militias; number two, they should not have dissolved the Army when they did it. I guess things are too sectarian now; you have too many parties.

GEN SHAWANI. Too many parties, and also they come out with some of the new offices, organizations. We have two offices now, which are illegally working. They formed it by the government council, the de-Ba'athification. They don't have any law; they don't have any responsibility. It's a political office, I mean, like the Ba'ath party when they made the Special ISS and this and that, some higher thing. They can reject anything they don't want. Anybody, they don't like you, they say de-Ba'athification. They don't accept this guy because he was Ba'athist in that year, and now they have this, Najahad. It means they put a judge looking for the people who have corruption.

BILL K. Kind of like an IG, Inspector General? [05:20]

GEN SHAWANI. So this is also not legal. There is this office in the Ministry of Finance, and they can go inspect any Ministry to see how their financing goes. But those guys, they can go to anyone they don't like and say, "How much you have in Iraq?" They asked me questions. They said, "Tell us your properties. How much do you own in Iraq?" I answered them in the newspaper today; it was a very big article. I have 32 houses and a farm; so Saddam took it by military command with my death penalty. Still, I can't get it, and I am INIS Director. After 2 years, I cannot get my houses; I can't get my retirement. And they are asking me what I own, this government.

BILL K. What should I take away as far as lessons learned? You've already mentioned a couple of things. You mentioned the dissolution of the services, you mentioned the sectarian strife, and you mentioned the various parties. What other lessons learned should I walk away with?

GEN SHAWANI. Well, actually they have to forget that all the Iraqis in the former regime, the employees, not necessarily all of them are bad. The ones closest to Saddam may be bad; they are involved in killing people. But the majority of the

medium level of the Ba'ath party, they are part of Iraq. Why do you make them the enemy? You are pushing them to be insurgents and join terrorist organizations because there is no way of living. They don't have their salary; they didn't get their retirement. You cannot take retirement from a family. Not only himself, [but] here with big families, one man, he is helping maybe five or six persons. All of them then become enemy of the government. If you don't give them their [retirement], especially the officers of the Iraqi Army, there is a contract between them and the MOD—they cannot fire them until they finish 15 years in the service. Even if they are not good, they will move them to civil job, but they will still take their same salary that they get in the Army, until 15 years. President Bremer came, and he cancel this. He has not the right to cancel a contract between the Iraqis on their salary and their life.

I have seen some generals. They are sitting on the ground, they are selling cigarettes, and they don't have anything to eat. And he wanted to say hello to the government, to liberation, to democracy. This is a democracy; who is going to win this for us? Democracy means that we will have the rights, the money. Not only dealing with these militias. They bring militias, they took all the possessions, they looted everything, they took all the houses, they took some of the guys, even they took the houses. The MSS [Minister for State Security]. They took one of my friend's houses. They kick him out and took his house, and they said this is my house. He said what about my furniture? They said you can't take anything.

AIDE. The Minister for State Security, Al-Ance.

BILL K. His house was taken?

GEN SHAWANI. No, he took a house.

GEORGE M. I've also heard about some other Iraqis losing apartments to militias.

GEN SHAWANI. My house now belongs to the Ministry of Financing. There is nobody in the house. They looted my furniture. Everything is broken, the windows, and even though every other month they will come at night, they shoot the house, they shoot the beds in the house, break all the windows, and then they go. What is this? Militia at night, you go to Rasafa, you will see people wearing black, heavily armed. They say we are Mujahadin. They want fee because they are security in the neighborhood. Is this a country, I mean? And there is a police checkpoint maybe 100 meters away from there. We don't have anything. We don't have security; we don't have anything.

Yesterday they took about 24 guys, kill them, and throw them somewhere else. It was in the newspaper.

BILL K. I saw that. [11:35]

GEN SHAWANI. So it is still going on, and it seems that nobody can stop that. Unless they go after them. I am telling you what the Iraqi thinks. The Iraqi thinks that security [responsibility] is still in the hand of the U.S. Army, the United States. The United States are occupying this country, and they are responsible for the security of the people, of the civilians. What they are saying—we have an election, we have a government, this is not right, this is not correct, because when they want to capture somebody, they will go for a raid and capture any Iraqi and put them in jail. That means they still are having the security file, so they have to fix it; they have to fix this. It is not accepted to let this militia take these people and kill them and throw them in the street. I know the Army. They don't know about this, but they should take action on this.

GEORGE M. Which army doesn't know about this?

GEN SHAWANI. The U.S. Army. I am sure it is not their orders that this guy's militia at night are free to roam.

BILL K. Is it mostly the Mahdi militia?

GEN SHAWANI. Mahdi militia, maybe. We don't know. This neighborhood, it's Sunni militia, Zarqawi; I don't know, hundreds. Even the police, they are scared of them. The police, when they saw five or six cars with the people inside heavily armed, what are they going to tell them?

BILL K. They will get shot.

GEN SHAWANI. They say OK, OK. We have one of our guys, Shawanis, some of them, they live in Diada. That Brigadiers Halas, we used to go to his house in Diada, and he had a pickup truck. Another pickup with civilians, they had AKs, and so they stop us. We are still in the checkpoint. "Who are you? Why did you stop?" We say, "We are insurgents." They say, "OK, good luck." They are scared, the police are scared, and there is no law in this country. [14:52]

The situation here is actually very sad. We hope it will be fixed, but it will not be fixed without your help. I mean, if we leave it to the insurgents, they cannot fix it because they will fight with themselves. We call it the looters' fight when the looters,

they loot something and they go to share it, and then they will fight each other and kill each other, so that's what is going to happen. And finally, they will fight between themselves; we call them the looters' fight, in Arabic. [15:37]

GEORGE M. I am just wondering if you have any idea now what would be a relative short-term fix for these renegade militias? That's what I am hearing from you, that they are out of control.

GEN SHAWANI. In Baghdad you don't see too much of it, but if you go outside, you can see militia very clearly. Go to Diyala. Go to other side. You can see them.

AIDE. There is a new acronym for them; they are called EGAGs, extra-governmental armed groups. That'll be the new acronym.

GEN SHAWANI. They have to stop them. The Coalition have to stop the new government. They all have militia. Some of the other Sunni, they come out to the election, also they have insurgents, so everybody now has their militia or insurgents. One day even they will not agree; they will fight, unfortunately, and it will be difficult to fix.

GEORGE M. If the U.S. military were to withdraw in a relatively short amount of time—not that I am suggesting that—could Iraq solve their own problems? In other words, what I heard from you earlier is that the Iraqi military...the Iraqi Army doesn't have the strength, in terms of weapons and even men.

GEN SHAWANI. They don't have, and even the numbers are fake. They say we have 100,000; I don't think they have 40,000. And all these fake names; somebody else [is] taking their salary. It's corruption everywhere. Because what they do actually, they pay the brigade commander. They say, "Here is your budget." Well, [he says,] "I have maybe 1,500 guys." Maybe he has 500 guys, but who can check him? He is the boss; he is everything.

This is because the Army is not organized on the basis that we know in Iraq. I don't know; I don't think it's that the U.S. Army is not experienced enough to build them an Army, but the guys who built this Army, we serve in the U.S. Army; it was different. They form them like a militia. We know always when you build up an Army, you start with headquarters down, but we started from the bottom up. They started building the regiment before they had a headquarters, and they try to find leadership. And the leadership was also on the ethnic and religion basis. So you go to

MOD, you see the Kurds put in one part, the Shi'a in one part, the Sunni Arab in one part. They are working against each other, and there is no leadership.

The Prime Minister, he is the Armed Forces Commander. And he has been sending letters, orders to the MOD. The order says, "I want you to begin with this. Here is a list." As an example, "This guy wants to be a soldier, and they are from the Dawa party." He signs it, Jafari, the "Armed Forces Commander," and sends it to MOD. What does the MOD do? Every day MOD comes in here, and there is a bunch of letters from the Armed Forces Commander, and we don't know, "Who is the commander?" [V:52:07]

GEORGE M. In our system, of course, the President is the Commander in Chief.

GEN SHAWANI. This is different.

GEORGE M. I am saying maybe this is coming from there; I don't really know where it is coming from.

GEN SHAWANI. In the United States there is no Prime Minister; there is a President. He is the Prime Minister and he is the Commander in Chief, right? This is good. They should do it here, also. It works better. Now we have the President; he doesn't have any power, but sometimes he is threatening others with his militia. The Prime Minister here has all the power. The MOD has no power; he can do nothing. The Chief of Staff, he has good power because he is from Kurdish party with all the militia underneath him, a strength situation, actually, but it cannot work like that. [21:44]

I think the American model is the best for us if they follow it from the beginning.

GEORGE M. Civilians control the military?

GEN SHAWANI. Yes, the civilians control the military, but politically, they have nothing to do with the organization or training or changing the Chief of Staff; this is [based on] proficiency. If any Prime Minister comes and changes all this leaders, we would never have an Army.

GEORGE M. There won't be any continuity to it.

BILL K. Sir, we thank you for your time. You've filled in some gaps, and you've given perspective that we needed to hear.

GEN SHAWANI. Well, actually we tried very hard, and we made a lot of surveys to help them, give them what was needed, and it seems to me nobody was ever interested in it. We tried very hard, and we will keep working at INIS, keep trying to stay, keep this service neutral, the military for all Iraqis until the other ministries reorganize themselves. [End File 3, 00:24:18]

Transcript 4. General Babikir Baderkhan Zibari, Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Joint Forces

1. On 3 February 2006, GEN Babikir Baderkhan Zibari, Chief of Staff and Commanding General of the Iraqi Joint Forces, was interviewed at his office at the Ministry of Defense. POC for GEN Babikir was Major Mark Weber (MCI 914-822-0386; webermm@mnstci.iraq.centcom.mil).

2. GEN Babikir was the commander of all Peshmerga forces in Dahuk and Mosul districts until 2003, when he fought alongside the Coalition forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom. In January 2004 he went through a series of interviews at the CPA. In January-February he attended school in the United States, and by March 2004, he was in Iraq assigned as an advisor to Paul Bremer.¹² He was then assigned as the Chief of Staff, Joint Iraqi Forces, in July 2004. The following is a transcript of that interview. General Babikir provided the interpreter.



Figure C-4-1. GEN Babikir

BILL K. Can you talk about the negotiations that took place during April 2004 during Vigilant Resolve, after the Blackwater incident?

GEN BABIKIR. At the beginning we had the National Guard. Altogether we had seven battalions in al Anbar Province, but they were biased because they were from that area and took sides with the people of the area.

[03:54] The terrorists saw a wide area in front of them, a lot of opportunities to do what they wanted to do. There were no government forces to fight them. They saw the opportunity, took advantage of it, and committed lots of crimes. That's when we decided to remove those forces, because they should not be from that area. There were 8,000 of the forces, and they were required to come to the training centers to be trained. They would be distributed all over the country, but only 1,000 decided to

¹² GEN Babikir said that, at the time, without a Minister of Defense appointed, Paul Bremer was the de facto MOD.

come and join the military. That became an experience for us and we decided not to recruit people from the same area and have them perform their service in their own villages and towns. So we had recruitment centers all over the country at the various governates, and they would be recruited for the Army and distributed all over. As an example, we might have recruits from Basrah in the 3rd Division doing duty in Kirkuk. And we have people from the Kurdish regions serving in the Anbar area. This is how you should have established the military. And that made a lot of changes within the military. [06:13] Then after January 2005, the National Guard was made part of the military. They did a lot of work to ensure that they were part of the Army.

Before Najaf, we only had two battalions. We did not have the forces to replace them, and we had no additional forces to reinforce them. We didn't have a reserve force, and all the forces we had were Coalition forces. Now we have great forces, and we have set up the foundation to support them. Some of the forces have been able to conduct independent operations. First, we followed, and then we conducted operations alongside the Coalition, and now we are able to conduct some independent operations.

We are optimistic that we can build this force. There are two important issues. First, we have the Coalition to support the Iraqi military, but the most important one is that the Iraqi young people are coming to join the military. We see that an Iraqi soldier at a checkpoint is getting killed, and another one is ready to take his place. This is sending a message to the terrorists that we are not giving up.

BILL K. I'd like to go back to March. The Marines went in and then they were stopped. Then there were negotiations. Can you tell me about the negotiations?

GEN BABIKIR: What is it you want to know about the negotiations? I was part of all the negotiations from the teams that were coming from Fallujah and discussing with the council.

BILL K. Why did they form the Fallujah Brigade, and who was part of the discussions?

GEN BABIKIR. In the beginning we had an idea of having a division in that area. The seven battalions that were there would become nine, and we would have a division. We brought a brigade from the 1st division and then brought another division, and now we have the 7th Division.

BILL K. We know, we were out there and had an opportunity to see the 1st Brigade.

[This apparent confusion about the Fallujah Brigade and the negotiations in April continues from 12:43 for several minutes]

GEN BABIKIR. At the MOD we were not willing to pay their salaries if they would not listen to our orders.

BILL K. [15:36] Who was in control of Fallujah in 2004?

GEN BABIKIR. We had the two battalions there, but they were with the people, and the Coalition had the town surrounded.

BILL K. There were negotiations that prevented the Marines from going in. What were those negotiations?

GEN BABIKIR. That was one of the mistakes that the Coalition made. The Coalition thought that just by talking peace with them, they would be able to get some use out of those battalions that were there. We told them that this was a mistake and that it doesn't work that way.

BILL K. [17:05] Please go on.

GEN BABIKIR. The Marines had some sort of policy. This way they thought they could win the hearts of the people, but even LTG Sanchez was against it. This was an issue.

BILL K. Who was involved in these meetings?

GEN BABIKIR. The MOD, MOI, Prime Minister, LTG Sanchez.

BILL K. Was Bremer for it?

GEN BABIKIR. Even Bremer was against it. But he didn't want to disappoint the Marines. He didn't want to give an order. I didn't know why that was; why he didn't give an order. Didn't he have the authority to give the order? Every week we had a national Security Council meeting. And by then Paul Bremer was acting as MOD too.

BILL K. I understood that the Marines were not allowed to go back in, so the only solution was the Fallujah Brigade. Someone prevented the Marines from finishing Vigilant Resolve. Who did that? Who stopped them?

GEN BABIKIR. It was the Marines themselves because they thought they would reorganize these seven battalions. They were in that area and they were reorganizing them. If those seven battalions would reorganize and help, it would be a tremendous thing, but we told them that it would not work. [20:32]

BILL K. This is really good, but there is something I don't understand. The Marines went into Fallujah and then they were told to stop. Who told them to stop?

GEN BABIKIR. The Marines had their own orders. When I told LTG Sanchez what we should do, he said, these are Marines and we can't tell them what to do. I was always confused, is this the military? Who is running these guys? I was most confused and still don't know. Who has the authority over the Marines, who runs the Marines, and where do their orders come from?

BILL K. Did you want the Marines to finish the job in Fallujah? To go in and finish what was started?

GEN BABIKIR. Yes, then we wouldn't have to go in the second time. And there was a second reason. The Marines were cooperating a lot with the Shawani forces and they were doing what they wanted. They were focusing on the Shawani forces, which was not a huge force. They were ignoring the military and what they wanted. The Shawani force was a good force, but it wasn't a big force, and it wasn't their responsibility.

BILL K. [22:50] [Talking about 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division] What happened during April through August with Muqtada al-Sadr and the uprisings in Sadr City, Karbala, and Najaf?

GEN BABIKIR. [24:06] That was a huge mistake. That mistake falls on Paul Bremer. There was an issue of arresting Muqtada al Sadr for the killing of Khoei [Ayatollah Abdul Majid al-Khoei and one of his aides at a mosque in Najaf], and then he closed down Sadr's newspaper. They started demonstrating, and all of a sudden a war broke out. It was a mistake doing it at that time. And that became a force for the Sunni terrorist groups. At that time President Barzani was the IGC chairman [every month it switched]. That made it very hard to address the issues, so we advised them to defer the Sadr issue until later. I said, "Let's finish up the Fallujah issues first."

BILL K. How did we finally resolve the Sadr issue? [26:09]

GEN BABIKIR. Committees were coming to us for discussion. Their aim and goal was not terrorist activities, and many of their members were killed in Najaf. We have forces and take them to Najaf. And we said, "If you don't give up, we will take the mosque." Sadr was about to give in anyway, and we gave him some time. Sistani was in London, and then he arrived in Basrah and said not to go into mosque. Sistani took over the situation, and he let Sadr get out of the mosque and go home. We decided to leave that file open and let an elected government look at that case and see

if we need to do a follow-up. So he went to his home, and everything just basically quieted down.

MAJOR WEBBER. Considering the emphasis that you put on the mistake, what was the mistake?

GEN BABIKIR. The mistake was he [Bremer] launched after Sadr. We should have first finished the Sunni problem, and then we should have gone. Sadr was not going to stop; he was going to keep going. Through his newspaper he had become a mouthpiece for a lot of people. And we did have some evidence that he did kill Khoei in Najaf. But the timing wasn't right; he should have waited.

BILL K. What did Muqtada want?

GEN BABIKIR. What he wants now. [delete 29:14 to 29:25] If he was smart, as much as he and his family suffered under Saddam—Sadam destroyed his entire family—a person in that situation should appreciate the Americans and the Coalition more than anything else. So why did he do that and why does he still do, I can't answer.

But there are a lot of people that support him because of his father. And I have to say that when we were negotiating with the delegation from Najaf and the one from Fallujah, there was a huge difference. The delegation that came from Fallujah, they didn't have the authority to make any decision and we knew it. And the delegation that came from Sadr, we knew that they had the authority and they agreed on things. [31:17] But on Fallujah we never reached any agreement with them until we had to go in forcefully.

BILL K. Who was in charge of Fallujah then?

GEN BABIKIR. There was a guy name Janabi and Zarqawi.

BILL K. Can you talk about the lessons from Samarra in October?

GEN BABIKIR. [32:10] We were planning that operation for a long time, and it didn't take that long. A very successful operation.

BILL K. When did they start planning for Al Fajr? Why did we go in on 7 and 8 November?

GEN BABIKIR. We decided for a long time to try and do it peacefully. We had about 10 or 15 meetings with the delegation. But then we saw that we were not going anywhere with these delegations. And this time we cut their nerve center.

BILL K. Please discuss the planning and preparation.

GEN BABIKIR. We worked closely with the Marines, and first we surrounded the town.

And the insurgents, they have their own plan. They connected all the houses by tunnels underneath the ground. Also each house had weapons and ammunition so all they had to do was move from one house to another. The water towers would have two layers, the top layer would have water, but the bottom layer is where the snipers would hide and fire from. The houses had many false walls; the insurgents would fire from and blow themselves up. They would have holes in the wall and start shooting and then move. When we saw this, we realized they had taken this from the battle at Khoramshahr,¹³ Iran, when they were fighting the Iraqis. A famous battle, and the same tactics were being used. The Iraqis had seen those tactics before. It was very interesting. [37:40] None of us knew that this is what was going on in the Coalition, but when we found out we realized we had to go house by house. We found so many caches, it was unbelievable, and they had so many places filled up with TNT. Booby traps were everywhere. The terrorist organization was not a small one, but this country will become their graveyard.

The Iraqi people are familiar with war, and all their life they have been in war. They are not afraid. For them it is very usual. Someone gets blown up beside them, and they will continue what they are doing. Nowhere else in the world does this happen.

BILL K. What are some of the lessons from Al Fajr? As an example, from Vigilant Resolve you dissolved the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps [ICDC]. Additionally, you don't stop the operation; you continue and do it quickly to finish the job. What were some of the lessons you learned from Al Fajr?

GEN BABIKIR. [40:25] We learned a lot from their tactics, and it did give us a lot of information and intelligence on people, phone numbers, locations, bank accounts. And because this was a front for the insurgents, they were fighting a classic war, and they were able to evacuate their wounded to that area and build their IEDs. Many of the activities they were doing from this area, but we took that away from them. Now they have to move. They are fighting and now they have to hide. They cannot go back into Fallujah.

BILL K. How did his forces change as a result of Fallujah?

¹³ Spelling provided by MAJ Webber.

GEN BABIKIR. We learned a lot from their tactics of hiding in walls and using the roofs and holes in the walls. We learned a lot from air support. They knew that they couldn't fight a classic war and that we inflicted a lot of casualties on them and they lost all their equipment. They were thinking about creating a Republic of Fallujah in that area. [43:47] An off-limits area—just like in Samarra, they thought they could produce a Republic of Samarra. But now there is nowhere in this country that they can hide. They had control of this area and the situation, but now they no longer have that control.

BILL K. After Fallujah, the terrorists seemed to move to various areas, and the next area that they found refuge seemed to be next to the Syrian border in Al Qaim, but now you have finished up operations there. Where is the next hot spot?

GEN BABIKIR. Mosul, Talafar, etc, but one at a time we have cleared those areas. We now have information that they may be infiltrating through the Jordanian border area and Saudi Arabia.

BILL K. I'd like to go back to April and May of 2004. Could you talk about Karbala?

GEN BABIKIR. We really didn't have a large operation out there, and Sadr's people really didn't know how to fight. There were many of them, and we hurt them really bad. [46:01] We killed many of his supporters. But they didn't know how to fight; they didn't have the training. And Muqtada Sadr didn't have the preparation time the insurgents had.

BILL K. What was the relationship between Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi militia and Iran?

GEN BABIKIR. We never had any evidence. They have a relation with Iran because they are Shi'a, and there is a deep relation in the history but nothing more than that.

BILL K. What did I miss?

GEN BABIKIR. The question should be, "How did this military develop so quickly, and what were some of the mistakes of the Coalition?"

BILL K. Yes! That's what this is all about.

GEN BABIKIR. [48:35] One. The first mistake is that they said the high-ranking Ba'athists should not come back to any government jobs. If I were them, I would take all these people and put them in some sort of camp. By letting them go and cutting off their salaries they turned. We should have set up some camps and taken care of them

and supported their families by giving them some sort of salaries and try to teach them and reform them. That was a big mistake.

Two. The second thing is when the Americans were here, and they saw all the people looting, and they were actually closing their eyes and allowing them to do that. The biggest thing that happened during that time is a lot of ammunition and weapons fall into the hands of the wrong people. They thought this ammunition would just go away, but it came back to haunt them.

Three. They should never have called themselves the occupier; they should have continued to call themselves the liberators. The people were then embarrassed when the Americans called themselves the occupiers.

Four. They were not listening to the advice of their friends in this country. There are many issues in this country because it is a multiethnic country. [51:22] For instance, we were with the coalition in Mosul and we said, "If the Kurdish forces stay with you they will help you." When Mosul capitulated, they embarrassed them by kicking them [the Kurds] out. They took their weapons away, and when the enemy saw this they were encouraged by it and took advantage of it. And the first fight took place in Mosul. Taking the brown bag and putting it over the Kurdish forces in Mosul, that wasn't a good thing. You should never try to give advantage to your enemy at the expense of your friends. And they are still doing that. Some people will always be your enemy, and no matter what you do they will not be your friends.

Five. They left all the borders wide open.

Six. And finally, they dissolved the military. Those military officers were then afraid for their lives and ran away.

BILL K. Thank you, that is what I asked for. [54:53] I think 2004 was a turning point for Iraq.

GEN BABIKIR. The first unit that we developed for the military was a company for the 101st along with General Petraeus. That then became the guard unit for the headquarters of the 101st.

[56:50 – 58:17 MiTTs and ISF development]

GEN BABIKIR. ... And I think Iraq will be a good partner for the Coalition and NATO to fight terrorism somewhere else.

BILL K. What about information operations?

GEN BABIKIR. All the media is privately owned. We don't have the resources, and we are still working on that. This is a democracy, and they can say anything they wish and relay the news as they want. An example: We have a big operation about a month ago, and 11 of our soldiers [were] killed and 22 wounded. We captured 60 of them, but all the news talked about was the 11 Iraqi soldiers [that] were killed and 22 wounded.

BILL K. We have the same problem. [1:06] Unfortunately, that's one of the realities of democracy and the media.

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Transcript 5. Lieutenant General Nasir al-Abadi, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Joint Forces

1. On 3 February 2006, Lieutenant General Nasir al-Abadi, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Joint Forces, was interviewed at his office at the Ministry of Defense. POC for LTG Abadi was LTC Don Miller (DSN 852-1088/852-5296) and Mr. Raoul Henri Alcala, an advisor to the Ministry of Defense (MCI 914-822-9732; rhalcala@aol.com).



2. The following is a summary of that interview. LTG Abadi spoke English; an interpreter was not used.

Figure C-5-1. LTG Abadi

LTG ABADI. My position was advisor to General Paul

Eaton, who was the first MNSTC-I commander. He was a real gentleman. He started the Iraqi Army. He had to start from scratch. I was interviewed [by him] to enter the Iraqi Army in September 2003. In the interview, General Eaton asked me to be his advisor. I agreed, and we walked hand-in-hand in the early period. There were many issues with which we had to deal. Ours is an ancient army with centralized control. The authority chain was like a pyramid. General Eaton brought a team of experts from the U.S. One of these experts was Hughes. For 2 weeks we discussed issues and made presentations and eventually came up with ideas. A British man also proposed some good ideas. The initial proposal was to field three divisions of light infantry. We started the training school in Kirkuk with the ultimate goal of training and equipping 27 battalions. The last unit was supposed to be ready in Feb 2006.

There was a disconnect between the Ministry of Defense and the Army. In June 2004, when authority was transferred to Iraq, this issue reached a crisis point. David Gunford was recruiting civilians for the MOD; however, something went wrong with the connection with the Army. Paul Eaton always tried to see that there was a connection between the military and civilian leadership. Come June, we had two [disparate] organizations. Many problems persist because too many things were done in the MOD and not in the military.

MR. ALCALA: At that time, there were only three people in the MOD: Ali Al Alawi; Secretary General Brusca; and their spokesman, George. From a group of trained people the Defense Minister made his selections.

LTG ABADI. Come June [2004 when authority was passed], we had no place to stay. Paul Eaton was still in his position at MNSTC-I. When we moved here [referring to the current Iraqi General Headquarters Building, which is the Ministry of Defense Building], there was only one section of this building finished. I assumed duties as deputy commander in July 2005.

BILL K. Please go back to 2004 and share your insights regarding the first battle in Fallujah, the Blackwater incident, and the attack on the city by U.S. Marines. Specifically, why did the Marines withdraw and on whose order? Also, please comment on the negotiations between the Coalition forces, the Iraqi forces, and the insurgents.

LTG ABADI. I was there, but I was not part of the negotiations. If we had proceeded to eliminate the insurgents from Fallujah at that time [April 2004], we would not have nearly so many problems now. When the insurgents realized that they were losing the battle, they promised to stop fighting and to send out the insurgents. Our political authorities believed them, and so did yours. This was a mistake.

The Iraqi battalions, which were recruited for the initial attack on Fallujah, were recruited by the U.S. Marines. The people in these units were afraid of the insurgents. Some of the people [in the town of Fallujah] had told the Marines that they wanted to get rid of the insurgents and form a brigade to do it. The Marines believed them. The problem was that many of the people in these units were old Saddam military. [At this juncture, the general mentioned the following tribes from Al Anbar: Albu Fahd, Al Falahaat, and Jumaylaat]. These people had been smugglers for generations. The members of this newly formed brigade refused to wear our [new Iraqi military] uniforms. In fact, they insisted upon wearing old, green Iraqi Army uniforms. This, at least in my mind, was an indication that they had no intention of cooperating. The Marines thought that so long as they [these local military men] are in the area, we can use them. The authorities involved in these operations and decision-makers were the Marines, INIS [Iraqi National Intelligence Service], and the Iraqi brigade commander. From INIS, the representative was one of General Al Shawani's deputies, a major general from the area. This brigade, which was formed from local Sunnis, was just playing for time and wanted money for their so-called services.

BILL K. Who had the final say on suspending operations against the insurgents in Fallujah?

LTG ABADI. The Marines had the final say in this matter. Present from this Iraqi brigade were the 506 Battalion, 507 Battalion, and 508 Battalion. There was a serious incident between the commander of one of these battalions and someone in a mosque. We don't know the details, but he and his men entered the mosque and ransacked it. This incident convinced the Marines that this brigade had to go.

BILL K. Please provide your perceptions regarding the incident with Muqtada al-Sadr.

LTG ABADI. Remember Ghandi and the British? Well, it seems that the political authorities embraced the same philosophy, i.e., just ignore him and he will go away. The politicians here thought that he should not be arrested. To arrest him would be to elevate his status in his followers' eyes, and he will become important. Well, he became important anyway and could not be ignored.

BILL K. Was the Coalition advised to take action against al-Sadr?

LTG ABADI. The analysis [of his support base and capabilities] was shallow. He was supported by thieves. They were poorly trained and disorganized. His father disliked him, yet he took his father's name. The tradition of having a leader goes back a long time in Iraq's history. The people wanted a leader, and he was there to fill the role. Muqtada was accused of killing al-Khoei, and was supposed to be tried for it. The trial was deferred. We should have been firm with him.

BILL K. Please discuss the planning for the return to Fallujah.

LTG ABADI. It took a long time to plan for the return to Fallujah. It was a campaign. The first consideration was to minimize casualties, both civilian and military. There were 250,000 people in Fallujah, and we had to block the area from the outside and then clear it of noncombatants. A quick strike was promoted by the U.S. side. Some of the Iraqi battalions did search and cleared the city from south to north. Others went through the city from north to south. Some swept through the area quickly. It was a classic urban battle, and the enemy fought in small numbers, using AK-47 rifles and RPGs. There was no coordination among the insurgents in the houses. They only attacked in the daytime. In general, the insurgents could not go on the roofs. Some insurgents had been positioned in water tanks before the action started. They had left the water tanks half-filled with water. The battalions had to conduct clearing operations again to find and kill all of these insurgents.

BILL K. Please discuss the post-battle period.

LTG ABADI. Twenty-five percent of the homes in Fallujah were demolished and 75 percent sustained minor damage. Our forces helped move the people after the battle. We were good at getting information from the captured insurgents. What must be understood about the residents of Fallujah is that they were persecuted by the insurgents. They did not support the insurgents willingly. In fact, the locals told us the locations of weapons caches. Most insurgents fought till the death. Because the enemy didn't attack at night, Coalition and Iraqi forces were able to rest and stay fresh. Among the captured and killed insurgents were many people from the Saddam era, i.e., Ansar Al Islam, Tawheed Al Islam, Islamic Anger Brigade, and the Martyrs' Brigade. This battle revealed many shortcomings on our [Iraqi Armed Forces'] part. One of the big things was the need for training in MOUT [military operations on urban terrain]. That is why we have requested such training. We didn't have armored vehicles; no logistical support; no ability to plan; and improper equipment. Our communications equipment was civilian, and we had trouble with interference on our frequencies. We still have the same problems. In fighting insurgents, you don't need armored vehicles; however, when moving from one location to the other, you need armored vehicles. Iraqi soldiers were good interpreters. In fact, they were better than Coalition interpreters, because they can tell immediately whether the insurgent is from Iraq; and, if he is, they can tell quickly from what area within Iraq this person comes.

BILL K. As you look back on 2004, what were some of the lessons learned from that period?

LTG ABADI. Leadership in the Iraqi Army is one of the weaknesses that emerged from Fallujah. We need noncommissioned officers. There were no NCOs in the old army. There were only officers and privates. We have sent soldiers for training in the Kingdom of Jordan to fill this need. Logistical support is a problem, and we are working on it. We have other shortcomings, i.e., no fire support, medical support, inadequate communications, and inadequate intelligence. In fact, we just placed some soldiers in a training course so that we can field reconnaissance and surveillance companies in the future.

BILL K. Please comment on information operations [IO].

LTG ABADI. We have failed in information operations because we have no means. You need special people for such operations. Our budget has not allowed for training such people until recently. We initiated IO recently. We learned from Fallujah that Iraqis

can communicate [to our population] better than the Coalition. Our audience has two extremes. We have a relatively small educated audience on the one hand, and we have a much larger audience consisting of people who are looking for simple things in life. We have no one in between these two extremes—no middle class. Saddam eliminated our middle class. Many people fled to Jordan, the UAE, the U.S., and to other places of refuge.

In January 2005, Ayad Al Allawi declared that there would be no more Iraqi National Guard. His initial inclination was to transfer ING units to the Ministry of the Interior; however, he decided in the end to transfer them to the Iraqi Army. The 1st Div, 3rd Div, and 5th Div were the first Army divisions. The 2nd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th Divisions, which were initially Iraqi Civil Defense Corps and Iraqi National Guard [ING] units, they became light infantry units. The 9th ING Div became a mechanized division. With respect to the year 2004 and the many transitions, we had only three divisions, and we knew that we couldn't defend the country with so few forces. This motivated us to create the Iraqi National Guard units. Another important event of 2004 was that initiatives at that time set the foundation for where we are now headed.

BILL K. Sir, could you tell us about your background?

LTG ABADI. I am a fighter pilot by profession. I attended a school in India. I returned from India in 1970. I flew MiG-21 aircraft. After flying for a period, I became an instructor and taught in the academy for 2 years. Then, it was back to squadron life. Then, I was an instructor in the air combat wing throughout the war. I fought against the Iranians in the 1980-1988 war. In 1988 I became head of R&D. In 1992 they decided that I should retire. I became a general officer in 1986. I returned to Iraq in 2003.

We don't have any doctrine to guide us. We are setting up a training course to teach doctrine.

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**Transcript 6. Mr. Mohammad Abdullah Mohammad Zaien, Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Industry and Minerals**

1. On 2 February 2006, Mr. Mohammad, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Industry and Minerals was interviewed at his office in Baghdad. The two persons who facilitated this meeting were Mr. Mark Burr, Senior Consultant (Tel: MCI 914-60-7980), and Mr. Marc Chretien, Senior Consultant (MCI 914-822-5146).

2. After speaking a short while about his personal background, he immediately went into what he described as “the ordeal of Fallujah” in the post-strike period. Mr. Mohammed spoke English and did not use an interpreter.



Figure C-6-1. Mr. Mohammad

MR. MOHAMMED. Before the military strikes on Fallujah, we should have made temporary camps so that all internally displaced personnel [IDPs] could have been displaced to a comfortable and accessible area. It was very difficult for us [and our contractors] to reach places with food, medicine, and the like. Military conditions made it extremely hard because there was a threat to our safety from both sides. [06:21]

There were clear lessons taken from Fallujah, but we did not take them with us to Al Qaim. The bottom line is that if we plan to go into a civilian area and use military force, we must prepare extensively and carefully beforehand. [07:29] The Multinational Force made a big effort to help in the post-strike period; however, it was a big effort for them considering that they were trying to conduct military and civil-affairs operations simultaneously. We had to transport many essential items to the IDPs, including fuel [petrol for heat], dried foods, medicines, etc. The task of transporting fuel, alone, was very difficult. Where attacks [from insurgents] are possible, as they were in Al Anbar, it is hard to find drivers. We eventually identified locals from Al Anbar who were concerned about their families' welfare and used them as drivers for fuel trucks.

MR. MOHAMMED. We began by establishing meetings whose frequency initially was two per week, i.e., one on Monday and one on Thursday. These meetings were well

organized. These meetings later grew into the CMOC [Civil Military Operations Center] in Fallujah. The meetings in Baghdad were attended by Ambassador Taylor and General [unintelligible]. One of the problems that we...dealt with at the meetings was establishing communications between MNF checkpoints and our side. We had a powerful committee, because of the level of participation. Attending were the Deputy Minister of Commerce, Minister of Finance, Minister of Oil, the Minister of Municipalities, the Minister of Electricity, and others. [11:45]

MR. MOHAMMED. Before military operations are launched, we must make all necessary measures, which include reserves of medicine, water, food, and all other essentials for such emergencies. The primary consideration in determining a temporary camp's location is its accessibility. Another mistake we made was not paying sufficient attention to the needs of civil servants in the immediate post-strike period.¹⁴ These employees, i.e., police and other government workers, must be engaged somehow with something productive to do and with a stipend. For example, we could have placed the police in a special course of some type, instead of forcing them to flee into no-man's land with no job, no income, and no dignity. We could have linked the mayor of Fallujah with the mayor in another town. [14:05]

We knew in advance of the military phase [Al Fajr] that structures would be damaged, including houses. We should have had all materials available to begin immediately to restore them. Had we done this, and put people to work right away, they would have forgotten their woes. We should have continued to pay people. The payments that were made were too late. We eventually paid \$100 per family. If we had started with the preparations above, in a nice way, the insurgents could not have influenced things as they did in Fallujah. If we had been organized in the evacuation of residents, we could have done so in an orderly manner, and left only the insurgents. Many homes sustained damage, i.e., 2,500 of them.

One of the foremost tasks of restoring normal life to Fallujah and its residents was forming damage-assessment teams. We realized that this action should be accomplished quickly. We had 500 engineers and made 150 teams; each team had a camera. Each team had an engineer, a cameraman, and two others. The assessments took 1 month. I made four teams for performing these assessments. Each team had a

¹⁴ Mr. Mohammed is referring to both the immediate period after Operation Iraqi Freedom in general and then specifically, Al Fajr.

camera. They were able to complete 36,000 homes within 1 month. The overall assessment for damages to homes alone was \$492 million. This dollar amount does not include commercial properties, industrial buildings, or private businesses. After the assessments were completed, we obtained \$100 million from the Iraqi government. Since the initial allocation, we have received an additional \$75 million. We are still disbursing the latter amount. Thirty-five percent of the assessed amount of damages was paid to Fallujah's residents. The Iraqi Government will probably give some more money later, but I don't know that for a fact. These damages [negative psychological effects] could have been reduced if we had planned for the restoration and rehabilitation phase.

We should have given the citizens identification cards when they left Fallujah, not when they returned. When it was time to begin the reconstruction process in Fallujah, we utilized the project-management system. Through this process, we were able to coordinate the delivery of materials, the recruitment of a work force, and all other important functions that must be put in place. The Iraqi Government contributed \$100 million for reconstruction, and the MNF contributed \$192 million. One of the tasks of the project-management system was to establish priorities among the reconstruction tasks. A well-known fact was that the Fallujah water system was destroyed. The interim solution was to put 32 water tanks [with a capacity of 10 cubic meters each] in Fallujah. We used 20 water tankers per day until we completed the system and pipes. It took 45 days to complete the distribution system to 50% of the city. During the rainy season, most houses flooded with sewage water. We were forced to install a huge pumping system to evacuate this water. We then repaired the rainwater drain system within 2 months. Another thing we did was to supply cement daily in the amount of 400 tons to the city. We needed at least 25 trucks to transport this amount of cement and the same amount of trucks to transport the required quantities of gravel and sand.

BILL K. Was contracting with Fluor Amec a problem [Fluor-AMEC was contracted to fix the water and sewage system in Fallujah]?

MR. MOHAMMAD. It was a bad job by Fluor-AMEC.

With regard to schools, we were in a very critical position because we were in the middle of the year, and all of the school buildings had either been destroyed or damaged. We elevated the matter of solving this problem to the top of the list. We erected school tents. We covered the tops of (damaged) schools with tents so that

children could complete their examinations. This ministry [Ministry of Industry and Minerals] performed many functions that were outside of the scope of its responsibilities at first, including security.

Civil affairs should have been involved in the process from the outset. The experience in Fallujah dictates that before an operation of this type is launched in a heavily populated area, we must have at our immediate disposal a temporary hospital, ambulances, and all other necessities to ensure that we are well organized. [The Deputy Minister mentioned by name a person named Dr. Rafa' Al Assawi. He credits this man with knowing a lot of the details of the story. This doctor was working with the Iraqi Ministry of Health at the time of the major battle in Fallujah and is currently the director general of the Al Anbar health department.]

Ambulances must have special markings so that they can get into the affected area during military operations. Because we did not have such a system in place for Fallujah, ambulances were delayed far too long, when it is evident that every second counts.¹⁵

Dealing with the dead was a big problem, too. The corpses had to be iced/refrigerated and preserved to the greatest extent possible and turned over to the forensics man from waqf al sunni [a religious endowment from the Sunni faith; translation by G. Mauldin].

Al Anbar Province has now been divided into three areas for management. We gave one area to the phosphate company. We gave the middle one to the Provincial Governor, Al Ma'moun, and the third area went to Basil Mahmoud.

In Al Qaim, we made a storage area. We should have made camps. In the future, we must make complete camps.¹⁶

We must also look at checkpoints in another way. Marines are good soldiers, but it is a mistake to put them on checkpoints by themselves. We must put special people in

¹⁵ It was reported on many news channels in the United States that the insurgents had confiscated ambulances and used them to penetrate Coalition and Iraqi security forces around Fallujah. Through this process, the insurgents were able to plant explosives in these vehicles and get them past security before they detonated the explosives. These incidents resulted in a great deal of paranoia on the part of both Coalition and Iraqi forces regarding ambulances. This is probably the backdrop to the Deputy Minister's comments.

¹⁶ Many times during the interview the Deputy Minister said that we made some of the same mistakes when we conducted military operations in Al Qaim.

such places. They must have a special mind and have special skills which enable them to perform both a military purpose and a civil purpose at the same time. Persons manning checkpoints must know how to check people. There must also be women at these checkpoints to check women. It is simply unacceptable for men to check women.

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Transcript/Summary 7. Major General Adnon, Commander, Iraqi Special Police

1. On 30-January 2006, Major General Adnon, Commander of the Iraqi Special Police, was interviewed in his office located in the Baghdad International Zone. The opportunity for the interview was facilitated by Lieutenant Colonel Richard Williams, a U.S. advisor within the Coalition Police Advisory Training Team-Iraq (CPATT-I) (DSN: 239-7760, MCI 914-822-2958; Richard.Williams@Iraq.CENTCOM.Mil).

2. MG Adnon has been in the position of Commander, Iraqi Special Police, since 14 August 2004. The following is a summary and partial transcript (preceded by “MG ADNON.”) of the interview. MG Adnon used an interpreter.



Figure C-7-1. MG Adnon

MG Adnon was an officer in the Iraqi Army until 1984. He was the intelligence officer in the Taji Camp until he was dismissed from service by Saddam Hussein. After his dismissal, he returned to his house in Samarra, where he produced and sold agricultural products and served as the head of his tribe in that city. He did these things until the Iraqi Resistance held a conference in northern Iraq. He took part in organizing former officers in the Iraqi Army and participated in the attempted coup to overthrow the former regime in 1996. Saddam's secret police arrested him and held him in confinement. In 1997 he was convicted and received an execution sentence from the court. In the same year, his execution sentence was changed to life in prison. His sentence was changed because his tribe has influence in Samarra. His tribe is the Abu Al Abbas Tribe, the largest tribe in Samarra.

After receiving the life sentence, he remained in Abu Ghuraib Prison until 2002, at which time Saddam released a large number of prisoners from Iraq's prisons. Upon his release, he returned to Samarra. After a short period of time, he communicated with his nephew, Mr. Salah Al Naquib, who was the Minister of the Interior at the time. General Adnon told his nephew that the American troops would come inside Iraq this time and he asked his nephew for support.

MG Adnon said that he took actions again to organize his people in both Samarra and Baghdad. When U.S. troops reached Samarra, he and others posted welcome signs in the town. At the same time, there were some American pilots who were prisoners of SDI (a medicine factory). Some of the guards were members of his tribe and he gave the American troops directions to find and release the prisoners.

Soon after the liberation of the City of Samarra by American forces, it was proposed that General Adnon should be the head of the city council. An election followed and he was elected unanimously.

Afterward, his nephew, Mr. Salah Al Naquib, became the Minister of the Interior in 13 June 2004. General Adnon proposed to his nephew that he should be the security advisor to the MOI. It was Mr. Al Naquib's opinion, however, that local police were not capable of fighting organized terrorists and that Iraq's interests would be better served if General Adnon organized, trained, and equipped commando units.

On 14 August 2004, the first battalions of commandos were established. The Minister of the Interior wanted to create these units as quickly as possible, so the decision was made to use former army officers on condition that they did not use (inaudible) officers of the former regime. General Adnon said that the first commando units occupied their present camp, but that it was in very poor condition. All the buildings had been ransacked and looted, and all windows were broken out. Concurrent with occupying the camp and initiating all actions necessary to establish and equip the special police commandos, he received a great deal of assistance from LTG Petraeus.

General Adnon said that General Petraeus, who was in charge of organizing and equipping forces in MOI and MOD, sent a team of officers to help him. The team included Colonel Kaufman and an advisor named Mr. James Steele. When the advisors arrived, General Adnon had a broken table and one chair, yet he had already begun recruiting a new force.

MG ADNON. When the advisory team visited us, we took them to our armory. They were impressed at how well it was organized. When they saw our supply warehouse, they expressed their amazement at how well it was organized. They went to General Petraeus and told him that this unit [commandos] would be the only unit fighting in Iraq. General Petraeus and General Casey both then gave us good support. In the early stages, we conducted some very successful operations in Baghdad. In our first operations, some of the men wore their training suits and had no boots.

MG ADNON. In December 2004, Mosul fell into the hands of insurgents. Fourteen thousand [unintelligible] policemen left their jobs and ran away. The Minister of the Interior sent a message to me informing me of the situation in Mosul. He asked me to send a unit to Mosul to deal with the situation. I prepared a battalion to do this mission. I prepared the unit and declared its readiness to conduct the mission, but the Minister of the Interior did not give the order. At 11 o'clock that day, the Minister came to me and asked me if I had a unit ready for the mission. I told him that I had a battalion ready to go. The Minister asked me what time the battalion would arrive in Mosul. I told him that I could have them there by 6:00 A.M.

General Adnon gave the order for the battalion to move to Mosul. At about the same time, General Petraeus called to speak to him. He told the American general that he had an order to move a battalion to Mosul and that he had already begun moving it to that location. The battalion reached Mosul at about 6:30 A.M. Both General Casey and General Petraeus were helpful in providing helicopters to transport some of the commandos to Mosul. General Adnon said that he did not have adequate transportation assets to move all the men at one time. The helicopters transported 220 men, thus giving him a full battalion in Mosul when the operation was launched. The next day, the battalion began a sweep to remove the insurgents from the city. In one of the battles in Mosul, the battalion commander himself fired 40 RPG rounds. After 72 hours, all insurgents had been removed from Mosul, but the men kept going to secure the entire city. The sweep netted many foreign fighters from Syria and other places.

General Adnon then provided the IDA team a status report on the Special Forces Police. He said that there are 22,301 members. There are two divisions and one mechanized brigade. The 1st Iraqi Division contains four commando brigades, the 2d Iraqi Division contains four public-order brigades, and there is an independent mechanized brigade. General Adnon expressed pride in the fact that these units have been organized and trained within 18½ to 20 months. He said that without good sources of help, he and his officers could not have accomplished such a feat.

BILL K. Do the public-order units belong to you?

MG ADNON. Yes.

BILL K. Did the public-order units participate in the Battle of Fallujah [Al Fajr]?

MG ADNON. They did not, but they were deployed to Al Qadamiyah.

BILL K. I understood that some of the public-order battalions were sent to Fallujah.

MG ADNON. They were sent in after the liberation of Fallujah—in December 2004. General Mehdi was the commander of those forces.

BILL K. I understand there were a lot of problems in Samarra in October 2004.

MG ADNON. There was terrorist activity at that time in the city, and I took two battalions to Samarra. I located the battalions in a Forward Operating Base [either U.S. or another coalition partner's], because I didn't want the locals to know that the units had moved into the area. Two days after the units reached Samarra, they started their sweep. I sent one battalion into Samarra and the other battalion to sweep the villages around the city. Because I was from Samarra, I knew it very well. The time line for the attack was 11:00 P.M. By 7 o'clock, my forces were in complete control of Samara except for sporadic shots. I still maintained two battalions in Samarra. They have controlled the insurgency and stabilized the city. In recent days, the battalion commander in Samarra called and reported that he had arrested nearly all of the second echelon leaders of the insurgency cell in that city. At the present time, he claims there is only a few foreign fighters in Samarra, and he predicts that he will arrest the remainder within the next week [first week of February 2006]. We know their locations, and if I can get some helicopter support from the Americans, I can attack. At this time, 50% of the Iraqi commandos are trained in air assault techniques.

[MG Adnon then discussed actions in a small city called Mada'in.] It had become an outlaw city. It was outside of government control. It is situated at the start of the Sunni Triangle. There was disagreement between the U.S. authorities and me as regards the timing of any operation against insurgents in this city. I decided to do it on April 15, 2005. The Minister of the Interior called me to his office, and when I arrived, I found General Casey with him. General Casey questioned the viability of my plan, because I had put it together in only 48 hours. I told him that I would attack with one brigade and the other brigade will attack from the east side [of the city]. Concurrently, two battalions of commandos will go inside the town. When General Casey again spoke to the hasty preparations of the plan, I predicted that the operation would be completed by 12 o'clock. General Casey predicted that it would take us until 2 o'clock to finish the job. The operation was launched at 6 o'clock. The 1st Brigade was led by [unintelligible]; The 2nd Brigade was led by [unintelligible]; and the 3rd Public Order Brigade was led by General Mohammad. The other two battalions were led by our martyr [referred to his picture, not his name].

At 0940 hours, we completed the mission. We confiscated leaflets and the insurgents' caches. I called General Petraeus and told him that we had finished the mission and that the results were very favorable. I also asked him to pass this information to General Casey. After about 15 minutes, General Casey called me and expressed his congratulations. After about another hour, all of the staff officers from General Petraeus and General Casey visited me in Mada'in. I took them on a tour and showed them the leaflets, caches, and criminals. At 1330 hours, the Minister of the Interior himself came to Mada'in. We went on a tour of the city, and the Minister met the tribal leaders. We made a plan on how we were going to cooperate with local leaders before the Minister left the area. At 6:00 P.M. I returned to my headquarters. As a joke, some satellite channels reported that my son and I were killed in Mada'in. The Minister of the Interior himself appeared on television and refuted this claim.

I presently have two units operating in the area called Salafiyhah near Baghdad. I am waiting for their report. We are starting a new operation now to inspect and clear weapons and explosives from houses in Baghdad.

BILL K. The special police units have developed quite a bit in the past year.

MG ADNON. This is our history. General Petraeus gave me full support. At the beginning, the Ministry of the Interior had nothing. The support that we received from General Petraeus enabled us to be active. All of the vehicles, weapons, uniforms, everything that we have, came from General Petraeus.

BILL K. Police work is extremely important because of their continuous work with the people in a community.

MG ADNON. This is true, but at the same time, it is not the mission of the police to fight organized insurgents. When we sent the battalion to Mosul, Brigadier Rashid led the troops himself.

BILL K. What coalition units were in Mosul at the time of your operation against the insurgents?

MG ADNON. The U.S. unit was commanded by Brigadier General Hamm. Now, the 2d U.S. Division will be in charge of security in Mosul. At the time of the elections, I sent a brigade to Mosul. Now, I maintain a battalion at that location. During the elections, I also sent a brigade to Ramadi. Now, I have only one battalion there.

BILL K. What was the role of the special police in securing the road to the Baghdad International Airport [BIAP]?

MG ADNON. The road to the BIAP was called “death road” in the past because of the successes of the insurgents in placing bombs along the route. I secured it with two mechanized battalions. One battalion is in charge of the right side and one battalion is in charge of the left side.

BILL K. Please share your vision of the future for the Special Police.

MG ADNON. My vision is for these units to grow to 55,000. [He proceeded to talk about other special forces and police units in other countries. He referred to SWAT teams and Carabinieri of Italy. He said that he would visit Italy the latter part of February 2006. He referred to special forces in both Jordan and Egypt. He said he had information that in 1993, Egyptian special forces had attacked all the bases of the terrorists in Egypt. These terrorists were followers of Bin Laden. He said that he had studied in Yugoslavia and was taught two methods to fight terrorists—with the media and with military action.]

GEORGE M. Please clarify the size of your special police units.

MG ADNON. Each battalion contains 750 men, and each brigade contains 2,500 men. [With existing transportation, he could move a battalion to Mosul within 1 hour.]

MAJ CASTRO. Did tribal members join the special police?

MG ADNON. A few had joined, but that they work in Samarra.

BILL K. Are special police candidates recruited from the whole country?

MG ADNON. Yes. But in the beginning, we had a crisis. People were afraid to join the special police because of threats and intimidation. I don’t know if someone is a Shi’ite or a Sunni. In old Iraq, we don’t have such things as Sunni and Shi’ite. I am a Sunni and my Chief of Staff is Shi’ite. This division between Shi’ite and Sunni was not such a factor with Saddam, although he would use it when it served his purposes. I hope that we Iraqis can get rid of such bad things, because that is the only way for Iraq to go forward.

Transcript (Summary) 8. Major General Mehdi, Commander, Public Order Division

1. On 31 January 2006, Major General Mehdi, Commander, Public Order Division, was interviewed at his office at Camp Justice (north of the Green Zone). We linked up with SGM Bolduc and Major Creole and met with COL Davis, who was the Commander of the Advisory Support Team that supported MG Adnon. He provided a quick overview of the Public Order Division. This division is part of the Special Police commanded by MG Adnon (MG Mehdi's boss). MG Adnon is a political appointee (we spoke to him on 30 January). COL Davis said that there was some friction between the two (and his comment about Adnon being a political appointee may be the source of that friction).



Figure C-8-1. MG Mehdi

2. The following is a summary of the interview. MG Adnon did not speak English. The team used an interpreter from the Embassy.

MG Mehdi joined the Army in 1981; he was a second lieutenant in 1982. In 1994 he was a brigadier general in the Iraqi Army and stationed in Kirkuk. In 2004 he joined the Special Police. The Special Police Force consists of a Public Order Division, a Commando Division, and a Mechanized Brigade. He commands a Public Order Division consisting of four brigades, with approximately 800 men per battalion and 2,500 men per brigade.

In October commanders were asked if they would go to Fallujah. Nobody accepted, except for him. There were several reasons:

- Fallujah was an open area for insurgents.
- This was the first time the Public Order Brigade would be used—they had no experience and were not familiar with Fallujah.
- Some felt that this would be Iraqis fighting Iraqis.

He was able to convince his soldiers that they should fight. It was for the future of Iraq.

In Fallujah, he had two tasks—rebuild and chase insurgents. But first he had to prepare his soldiers. The first soldiers attended a 45-day course in Jordan on how to fight

insurgents. His soldiers graduated on 15 November. He put them on leave from 25 November to 1 December (everyone returned from leave), and then on 3 December they deployed to Fallujah. He had 800 soldiers in the battalion. The second battalion later deployed to Samarra. He had delayed their departure until 1 December to ensure he had the resources for Fallujah. Fallujah was the first priority.

In Fallujah there were no police, no government. In addition, there was no trust between the Marines and the Iraqis. But he saw a growing trust. The first week there was no trust. The second week they would fight and work together, and the third week the Marines would sleep while the Iraqis pulled guard duty and vice versa. Col Shupp later called them the “Marines of Iraq.”

MG Mehdi had two very hard days/periods in Fallujah. The hardest day was the third day he was in the city, approximately 8 December. His troops were ready to quit. He met with the troops and talked to them, and 17 left. He told his troops he would sleep and work with them. They went into the Wathaba School near the Jolan area at 1700 and received very close fire. So he went with his Personal Security Detail to confront the insurgents in the neighboring area. He then walked into a house at #7 Wathaba. He was the first one in. Normally, he was the second in, but he thought it had been cleared. He came face to face with an insurgent 2 meters away and talked to him about surrendering. There was a gun battle and COL Kareem entered from a different direction. The insurgents disappeared. MG Mehdi and his troops left and returned the next day at 0600. They found out that the insurgents had created holes between the houses to move quickly from one to the next. They had hidden the holes with drawers and other furniture. After a while, his soldiers learned to enter an area several houses down from known insurgents to be able to capture them. But the real point is that MG Mehdi was in the field with soldiers, and they learned to trust him, and he learned to trust them.

The second hardest day was 23 December 2004. After approval by the MOI and the Governing Council of Fallujah, civilians were allowed to return to their homes in a very controlled manner. The first group was supposed to enter through Entry Control Point 5. They met at 0800 but waited until 1100. At 1100, MG Mehdi went to Entry Control Point 3 (Sitire Command Post) to talk to the residents. He talked to them on a human level—as an Iraqi. He tried to build their trust. Many were afraid; they had no idea what to expect in Fallujah. At 1220 he led the first group. He understood their misery. He went with them to ensure that they were not assaulted by anyone. There were vehicles to take them into the city.

8 February 2005 was the first day traffic police started their duty. A city without police is not a real city. This helped restore local power.

MG Mehdi's insights:

- Fallujah was a turning point for the MOI. This was the first combat for the POB, and they succeeded.
- Fallujans are good people—95% good and only 5% bad. During the IED attack on him, it was a Fallujan boy that warned him, and a police officer that pulled him from the burning vehicle and lay on top of him to protect him.
- Have to build trust—with the coalition and the people.
- Fallujah did not end in 2004—a lot of the work was still occurring throughout early 2005.

MG Mehdi's comments at the end of the interview:

- Why did the terrorists pick Fallujah? Its location in central Iraq, with lines of communications to the north, south, and west; it has plenty of money; and the schools taught the strict Islamic fundamentalist philosophy.
- During Fallujah I, when the Marines left, it was a turning point. The insurgents gained strength from that event.
- We need to negotiate and talk—fighting is not the objective; the political resolution is the objective. In addition, trust and faith of the people are important, and it's important to coordinate the military and police actions with the political goals
- One of the problems with the delayed response in the early days of Fallujah (2003 and early 2004) is that we did not seal the borders.

The Public Order Brigade returned from Fallujah between 28 October 2005 and 1 November 2005, following the referendum. During the referendum, 17,000 people voted from Al Anbar Province; of these, 8,000 were from Fallujah.

Note: George was an excellent double check on Sammy as an interpreter. On a number of occasions George set the record straight on what MG Mehdi said and alerted Bill K to be more cautious about accepting some of the responses Sammy provided.

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Transcript 9. Mr. Saif Al-Din Dawood Abdul Rahman, Chief of Staff for Dr. al-Hassani, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament and member of Iraqi Islamic Party



Figure C-9-1. Mr. Saif

1. On 5 February 2006, Mr. Saif Al-Din Dawood Abdul Rahman, Chief of Staff for Dr. al-Hassani, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, and member of Iraqi Islamic Party, was interviewed at his office at the Convention Center in Baghdad (within the International Zone).

2. The IDA team was advised to interview Mr. Saif by Mr. Mark Burr, who is a senior consultant with the Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office (MCI 914-360-7980). Mr. Burr interfaces routinely with the Ministries of Trade and Industry and Minerals in the normal course of his duties. The following is a summary and partial transcript of that interview.

3. Before the interview began, Mr. Saif said that he had agreed to write a book about (his involvement) Fallujah. This undertaking would be accomplished in collaboration with a person named Ahmed Al Jumaili, who was one of the negotiators in Fallujah. Mr. Saif also asked Dr. Knarr to expound on the nature and scope of the lessons-learned project. Dr. Knarr obliged him. At the conclusion of the explanation, Dr. Knarr asked Mr. Saif to speak about the changes that occurred as a result of the battles in Fallujah in general, but the last battle (Al Fajr) in particular. Mr. Saif spoke English and did not use an interpreter.

MR. SAIF. I translated the documents that were associated with the negotiations. Copies were made available to the CPA.

Bill K. Please tell us about your background.

MR SAIF. I was born in Baghdad in 1978. [My family and I left when I was 6.] I have lived in the U.S. since 1980, except for 5 years in England. I am an American Iraqi and a graduate of the University of Maryland. The Speaker, Dr. al-Hassani, is a friend of my family. My initial visit to Iraq after the end of the major combat phase was in October 2003. I began my duties in my present position in 2004.

As for the Iraqi Islamic Party, I assisted on the professional level. I was not a member of the party. Dr. al-Hassani asked me to be his chief of staff when he became the Minister of the Ministry [of Industry and Minerals]. When I came here to Iraq [in October 2003], things were quite different. One's personal security was not such an issue. No one is optimistic at this point about the security situation. There were deeper divisions among us that were not so evident at that time. Political divisions were much deeper than we realized.

I sat in on the meetings of the [Iraqi] Governing Council. I could see the posturing and positioning of the different actors. This was an important time for all concerned. The U.S. should have continued its role as the governing body because the actors were getting to know each other through this process. In my view, the schedule for the Governing Council was rushed.

BILL K. Please discuss the events of 2004 in general, and specifically address the effects of the events of that period. Also talk to the mistakes that were made during this period.

MR. SAIF. One of the biggest mistakes is the artificial separation of the Sunni and Shi'a on the part of the U.S. This phenomenon was accentuated by the U.S. Historically, this division was accentuated on the Governing Council. Another mistake was the dissolution of Iraq's security forces. [07:51] The dissolution of the Iraqi Army and other forces eliminated the people who were trained and willing to do the job.

BILL K. Anthony Cordesman contends that the dissolution of the Iraqi Army would have occurred regardless of the CPA order, i.e., that in a practical sense it already dissolved. Please comment.

MR. SAIF. I disagree with Cordesman regarding his contention that the Iraqi Army would have dissolved by itself. In my judgment, over 70% of the Army would have returned if they had been recalled. These people had everything to gain by coming back. They were receiving a salary, and they were trained. Many were from Sunni areas, and they returned to those areas when the Army dissolved. As fate would have it, this is where we see many of the attacks coming from today. We are seeing new tactics and techniques used today that are probably a result of some of the training received by these former Army people. The former military [Iraqi Army] should have been preserved. Their existence and deterrent value would have weakened the foreign fighters in Iraq.

We [together] accentuated the split [referring to Shi'a and Sunni]. The Sunnis have now joined the political process. The Sunnis are fed up with foreign fighters. Things have turned in a different direction today. The key turning point was the elections of 2005. Since April 2005, this government has been in existence. Had the Sunni parties been involved since early 2005, the situation in Iraq would be different today.

BILL K. Please talk about the time frame of January through March 2004. Was there any single incident that sparked the distrust and anger among the citizens of Fallujah.

MR. SAIF. The Fallujans say that there was one incident in October 2003 [actually referring to April 2003¹⁷] that cast a dark shadow on their relationship with the U.S. military. From the Fallujans' perspective, they were having a peaceful demonstration at one of the schools in the city. U.S. Forces fired on the demonstrators and killed several of them. After that incident, things went sour. Al Anbar is a traditional tribal area, with tribal law. Because the Fallujans felt that the U.S. military killed one of them, then they were honor-bound to exact revenge. Concurrent with the events described immediately above was the cessation of stipend payments to former members of the Iraqi Army. Recruiting was in progress for the new army of Iraq. The people of Ramadi were told by the [Islamic] Scholars Association not to join the new Army. Thus, the loss of dignity, coupled with the cessation of stipends, left the former members of the Iraqi Army susceptible to bribery.

BILL K. What about the Blackwater incident? What impact did this incident have on the Fallujans' attitude.

MR. SAIF. The Blackwater incident was not the catalyst. Resentment was already bubbling beneath the surface since the October-November 2003 demonstrations. The anger among the Fallujans simply manifested itself in their treatment of the men from the Blackwater PSD [Personal Security Detachment].

BILL K. Please discuss your recollection of the first Battle of Fallujah [April 2004].

MR. SAIF. The City of Fallujah was cordoned on all sides, except for ingress/egress point that went to farmlands. On either 4 or 5 April 2004, the network Al Jazeera reported what it termed a civilian disaster. The broadcast enraged the Sunnis in Mosul, Samarra, and Ramadi and caused many issues. Soon after this time, we held

¹⁷ Although Mr. Saif refers to the October and November time frame throughout this transcript, the events he describes took place on 28 April 2003.

some meetings. Some of the meetings included attendance by Ambassador Bremer, General Sanchez, General Richman, and Ambassador Jones. [20:15] We told them [United States] that unless the fighting was stopped, the IIP [Iraqi Islamic Party] would pull out of the IGC [Iraqi Governing Council]. We insisted that unless the [military] operation was stopped, we [IIP] would pull out of the IGC. Either in the meeting in which we threatened to pull out or the following one, we reached an agreement to negotiate. The intended purpose of the negotiations was to reach a consensus. The date was around the 10th. Fighting was still going on. In the meeting, we agreed that the first step was to aid the citizens. This was on 6 or 7 April. The Red Cross and other organizations sent in trucks. The next day, we [a group of Iraqis] were supposed to go into the city. This was my first encounter with the U.S. military. We had given a list of all of our names to Colonel Dolby, who was under General Sanchez. We tried to go into Fallujah on Friday; however, we were not able to get in. The checkpoints had not been notified that we were coming. We had to wait for 2 hours. We had all of our badges, yet we were delayed unreasonably from reaching Fallujah and negotiating with the city. The U.S. military offered to escort us into the city. We declined, because we know our own people sufficiently to deduce that we will have no credibility if there is such an implicit link between us and the U.S. military under such conditions. On one of my trips to Fallujah, I was almost shot by the U.S. military in the vicinity of Abu Ghraib. The lack of meaningful coordination, with all its implications, was both annoying and frustrating for us and posed a serious threat to our personal safety.

BILL K. Who was on the Fallujah Council?

MR. SAIF. Our first meeting was in Mosul with the wise men or instrumental people. I believe that some of the attendees were insurgents. In the meeting, we asked the people what they wanted, what were their grievances. They stated that they resented the shooting incident of October-November 2003.¹⁸ Another grievance was what the attendees described as insensitivity or indifference of U.S. military to Iraqi citizens. The third issue took the form of a demand for the U.S. military to withdraw to the pre-April 4th places. In return, the attendees promised to calm down the city. By this time, the U.S. military had taken a significant part of the city. After the initial meeting, there were some side meetings to put together selected [Iraqi] people with

¹⁸ Ibid.

the representation from the CPA to negotiate a settlement. These people were called the Fallujah negotiators. The main ensuing problems were that we would reach an agreement to cease fire, but the citizens would complain about [U.S. military] snipers. There was widespread distrust between the two sides, and the snipers played a huge role in these attitudes.

We went to Fallujah at least 10 times to find the right kind of people to participate in the negotiations. During this time, the Iraqi Islamic Party decided that the U.S. was not negotiating in good faith. The IIP decided to pull out of the negotiations. Dr. al-Hassani and I overheard General Abizaid say to Ambassador Bremer, "Give me 3 days and I will finish Fallujah." Dr. Hassani said in response, "If you do, all of Iraq will become a Fallujah." It was exceedingly difficult to have meaningful negotiations while the fighting was still going on. I told General Sanchez that we need a complete cease-fire so we can have real negotiations. We reached an agreement to a unilateral cease-fire at 9:00 A.M. the following day [12 April 2004].

BILL K. What were the origins of and who created the Fallujah Brigade?

MR. SAIF. After the cease-fire went into effect, we held talks. My boss [Dr. al-Hassani] discussed with General Sanchez and Ambassador Bremer some of his ideas on how to deal with the insurgency in Fallujah. One way was to bring in clean people from the city itself and from other tribal areas. That was our initial suggestion. We were not fully involved in the creation of this brigade. You should talk to Weber about this issue. General Conway was a force in bringing things together. A colonel [unnamed] and General Conway said, "Old men must agree so that young men may live." General Conway seemed to care about the tragedy of the whole situation. He ordered the forces to pull back from the hospital. The hospital was on a peninsula.

BILL K. What did I miss that you would add?

MR. SAIF. The negotiated agreement was typed, and the Coalition Provisional Authority has copies. There were two signed agreements which summarized the provisions of the negotiated settlement. Ambassador Jones was the lead negotiator on the part of the CPA. In the negotiations, we would agree in principle to something, and 2 days later we would come back to conclude the steps toward defining the meaning and intent of the agreements.

To illustrate the good faith of the local residents in maintaining the cease-fire, I would relate an incident. One night someone in a pickup truck was riding around firing mortars on the U.S. Marines. The local Fallujans actually fired on the pickup truck.

One of the mistakes with the Fallujah Brigade is that we did not arm them properly. The apprehensions about arming this brigade are understandable from the CPA's point of view. The insurgents, who came back into Fallujah [after the cease-fire], were better armed than the soldiers of the Fallujah Brigade. The result was that the Fallujah Brigade fell apart.

The residents were deeply annoyed at having their city and their lives under the control of the insurgents, but after the outsiders became well entrenched, the citizens of Fallujah were helpless to change it.

BILL K. Was there collusion between the militias of Muqtda al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia and the insurgents in Fallujah?

MR. SAIF. I don't know the details of the incidents surrounding Sadr City. From my perspective, what happened was that politicians on the Iraqi Governing Council wanted to use force to eliminate a political adversary. Sadr was against the Governing Council and some of the politicians in it.

As for collusion, I don't think there was a high level of network cooperation. [However,] our eastern neighbor gains from having influence in western Iraq and Baghdad, because such a situation bolsters Iran's strategy. This strategy is to support the western [Sunni] Provinces [so that anti-U.S. elements will have the means to perpetuate the insurgency] and have the U.S. kill them off. Later, their allies in Iraq [Shi'ites] will be in control. You should talk to IAP [Iraq Alliance Party] about Fallujah—specifically Ayad Samar Leya.

[Mr. Saif was probably addressing the negotiations in Fallujah when he made the following statement: "The IAP made the decision more than once to pull out [of the negotiations]. Bremer was annoyed at the language of statements from the IAP."]

MR. SAIF. Things went to turmoil in Fallujah. Neither the Iraqi military nor the police had any control. By October or November of 2004 the situation had reached a point of unacceptability for a sovereign government. The insurgents were well armed and well organized. People of Fallujah still resented the U.S. military over incidents earlier in the year of 2004. I was involved in relief and reconstruction efforts. Dr. al-Hassani is a better source to speak to the details of the relief effort because he was a

minister at the time. The relief effort started slowly at first. It was a unilateral ministerial effort, because we got no cooperation from the other ministries. The other ministries dragged their feet in the beginning.” [At this juncture, Mr. Saif strongly urged Dr. Knarr to see Dr. Raf’ Al Asaawi Sulaiman Al Jumaili, currently the Director of Health in Al Anbar Province.]

[Mr. Saif then returned to the issue of Fallujah.] We did not have maps, and we were unable to satisfy the U.S. military requirements for giving grid coordinates for various locations. We had some very difficult communications issues as a result. The checkpoints were also a problem for us and any other Iraqis. The kinds of problems that we experienced at the checkpoints were typical of what you would find when new units move into an area. Continuity among personnel and units in situations like Fallujah is paramount. Later, we were given maps and taught how to read coordinates from them. This helped a great deal in alleviating the communications problems. Once the relief effort got underway, it worked OK. A British general [unnamed] was very helpful in dealing with and rectifying many of our problems.

After the fighting ended, reconstruction was the biggest problem. The funding simply did not come. We were promised \$200 million, but only \$100 million came. We stipulated that more money must be allocated to this project. The dollar estimates for reconstruction were significantly greater, i.e., \$275 million. We were promised by the finance minister that the next \$100 million would come soon. In assessing the damage to homes and other properties in Fallujah, we used a classification system for degree of damage, i.e., lightly damaged, moderately damaged, and totally destroyed. It got off to a slow start, but was later a well-oiled machine.

BILL K. What type of assistance did you receive from the Coalition?

MR. SAIF. Communications with the [U.S.] military is a big problem. The lack of effective communications slows down everything. The Coalition was very good at letting Iraqis distribute supplies and was helpful in setting up an operations center. The Coalition was also very good at identifying needy people and determining and reporting their locations. We went one time at night to Fallujah by helicopter. The chopper discharged us outside of the base, instead of inside, and when we walked away from the chopper, we fell into a deep hole. This was another example of miscommunications, because we had dispatched our cars ahead to await our arrival inside the base. When we were discharged from the choppers outside of the base, then we had to go through the security/inspections routine before we could get to the cars.

From my vantage point, the Department of State and Department of Defense did not coordinate their actions and policies well. My role in Fallujah was logistical/administrative, not political; therefore, I will refrain from making any judgments about matters that are purely political.

Transcript 10. Lieutenant General Qadir, Commander, Iraqi Ground Forces

1. On 25 January 2006, Lieutenant General Abdul Qadir was interviewed at his office at the Iraqi Ground Forces Headquarters, Camp Victory, Iraq. LTG Qadir was the Commander of Iraqi Ground Forces for Al Fajr. He was appointed the military governor for Al Anbar during Al Fajr and for a short period afterward.

2. The following is the transcript of the interview.

COMMENT. LTG Qadir made it very clear that this was on the record for distribution. He mentioned that he was the first Iraqi officer to go on television and say that he was against terrorism. LTG Qadir used an interpreter for the interview, but periodically he spoke in English.



Figure C-10-1. LTG Qadir

LTG QADIR. I am currently the commander of Iraqi Ground Forces. At the beginning of 2004, I was the Deputy Chief of Operations for the Iraqi Forces.

BILL K. Were you involved in Vigilant Resolve in April 2004?

LTG QADIR. At that time these operations took place, the Ministry of Defense was not formed. [04:23] We were there and in training, but the Joint force was not yet formed. The Iraqi forces just consisted of battalions at the time. Additionally, they were called the Iraqi Civil Defense Forces and not called the Army.

BILL K. Were you involved in Najaf in August 2004?

LTG QADIR. Yes, I was working in operations at the time.

BILL K. What were some of the lessons from Najaf? [06:00]

LTG QADIR. The lessons from Najaf were very important, especially now. Because that was the first interdiction, the first contact between the Iraqi forces, Coalition forces, and Iraqi police against the Mahdi militia. At that time we discovered the capabilities of the militia because they used to brag about themselves, and we had an opportunity to discover their real capability. We also discovered the relationship between al-Sadr's Madhi and the Badr forces.

BILL K. What was the relationship? [7:56]

LTG Qadir. It was a bad relationship, and we took advantage of that, even if it was only in obtaining information from the Badr Corps. Right now, in my opinion, [during] the upcoming time or phase, especially in the south, our mission is going to be how to deal with the militia more than how to deal with the terrorists.

BILL K. Is there a relationship between what happened in Fallujah I and what happened in Najaf?

LTG QADIR. Of course.

BILL K. What was the relationship? [10:09]

LTG QADIR. At that time in Fallujah they wanted to be the representative or the sponsor of the Islamic side of the Sunnis. And the operation that happened in Najaf corresponded to Fallujah, so they can say we did it to Shi'a [i.e., that the Iraqi Government was not just targeting Sunnis but also Shi'a if they harbored terrorists].

BILL K. Did you participate in planning for Samarra?

LTG QADIR. Yes, but Samarra was a small operation. It was a battalion operation, and it took 1 day; it was not as big [as Fallujah]. The insurgents in Samarra are a mixture of religious extremists, regime loyalists, and smugglers and criminals. So the kind of terrorists in Samarra is totally different than the kind you find in Najaf and Fallujah.

BILL K. When did you start to prepare to go back into Fallujah for Al Fajr?

LTG QADIR. After April, it was our opinion that the situation was wrong because the people that were from the previous regime were the wrong people to be in charge. I know them personally, and they are the people that benefited from the regime. It was a big mistake because the foreign terrorists in Fallujah felt they achieved a big victory. May started a bigger problem in Fallujah. So the terrorists started to attack the same brigade they formed. So the same time they [the Fallujah Brigade] were being attacked, they could not do their job. So we knew that the time was coming that we would have to go in full force into Fallujah.

Even though we had discussion with the religious people and Allawi, I was fully convinced that the terrorists had to be part of the lesson for everyone to know that we were fighting the terrorists. So the month of June and July we started planning the operation.

BILL K. When did you know you were going to be the commander of forces in Fallujah? [17:00]

LTG QADIR. At that time they were looking for a commander, someone qualified as an officer, but they were also looking for someone that was from Fallujah. But they couldn't find someone like that. So when the time approached that the operation was to take place, because of my work in operations, the decision was made for me to be the commander. That's why I then worked with LTG Sattler.

BILL K. LTG Sattler said to say hello.

LTG QADIR. He is my brother. We were for about 3 months almost day and night; we worked together... [he elaborated on their great working relationship].

BILL K. Where are you from?

LTG QADIR. I am from Baghdad, and my grandfather was born in Baghdad. [20:08]

BILL K. Were all the Iraqis convinced like you that we had to go back into Fallujah?

LTG QADIR. Some had objections, but the majority of the people thought we should go back in. It was a tough fight. The fight was a hard fight. There was not a battle like it before or after in size. Even though lots of the politicians later said that they objected to certain things, and it shouldn't have done certain things, they said it for political reasons. [21:53]

Funny thing, or humorous thing, I was recently watching Al Hara, a television station, and there was a person from Fallujah on the television show. He was talking in the same type of language that I used...about Fallujah at the time: "We had to get rid of all of the terrorists that came from foreign countries to destroy Fallujah." We are not against the people of Fallujah; to the contrary, we are here to help them. But any person that would carry a weapon against the legitimate authority and help the terrorists, we had no choice but to fight them. The person on TV repeated my words: "We must get rid of the terrorist and defeat them." So I was very happy to hear that, because that was the purpose, so that the Iraqi people and residents know that is what we were doing—we were getting rid of terrorists.

BILL K. Information operations was a big part of winning the Iraqis' support. [25:40] In Fallujah I many thought that we lost the information operations battle, but in Fallujah II they thought we won the information operations battle, and LTG Qadir was part of that. Can you comment on the use of information operations?

LTG QADIR. In Fallujah I we cannot say it was a legitimate Army command at that point. But in Fallujah II we were a legitimate Army; when we went to Najaf we were

legitimate. So our duty and task mission is to let everyone know that there is no province or territory that is above the law. We had to send a clear message that this applies throughout Iraq. So the force of the incident proved that Fallujah was a support base for the terrorist for IED to VBIED, and we captured about 375 warehouses full of supplies for the terrorists...like a good Islamic institute that was full of RPGs and explosives. That means this kind of cache is for more than just Fallujah.

BILL K. How well were the Iraqis and Coalition forces integrated during Fallujah?

LTG QADIR. As far as the link, the Iraqi Army was very professional and organized. For us, we started the training in coordination with the Coalition prior to Fallujah by months. So we had a Military Transition Team [MiTT] team at division, brigade, and battalion. At the same time the Coalition MiTT was in the battle with the Iraqi forces, they also trained during the battle. So I don't think that this type of training has happened anywhere else in the world. At the same time, the Marines used to go on the front lines with the Iraqi forces. And the Iraqi forces were fighting right behind them in a search operation, especially in the farm area. Because of the experience and knowledge of the Marines, they were way better. And also there were some operations where the Iraqis were in the front, and the Americans would come in behind, like in the religious areas such as the mosques. The Iraqi Army can search these areas and use the American equipment to search for weapons. At that time, we had one brigade from the 5th Division and one brigade from the 1st Division, and we also had Special battalions.

As you know, our Army logistics support was very low. So all the logistics support was provided by the Americans. It was a very organized operation and the linkup was fabulous.

Bill K. As you look back on Al Fajr, what did you change as a result of Al Fajr?

LTG QADIR. Al Fajr operation broke the wall between the Iraqi soldier and the terrorist. It gave the Iraqi soldier more enthusiasm about fighting terrorism. Then the Iraqi Army became the fighters of terrorists. Now you see that hundreds of officers and soldiers go on TV. Now they are not afraid to be on camera or TV. So after Al Fajr operation it became a national operation that we go to defeat terrorism.

BILL K. Who else should I talk to?

LTG QADIR. The commander of the 1st Brigade, BG Abdullah Tariq. Also talk to his deputy, COL Razzak. Another brigade commander is BG Issa. Also talk to COL Fadil al-Barwary, the commander of the 36th Commandos. He attacked the hospital. So they gave him 3 hours to take over the hospital. He had finished the operation within half an hour. Even the Marines were surprised. He had only one wounded soldier, and he had wounded himself by mistake. It was a special mission, and he is a very good officer.

BILL K. What did I not ask that you wish to add?

LTG QADIR. I would like to add my personal regards to General Sattler, General Hejlik, General Natonski, Colonel Jamal, and also the NCOs. [44:37]

I would also like to add that it was a very unique experience during Al Fajr when we worked with the U.S. Army. I have never experienced such things before, but even from the first phase of the battle, I saw something very unique. The U.S. Army was already building and fixing things, but they were still in the battle. They were working on the electricity and building things. This is something I have never seen in any other Army, and I am impressed. They had formed a special headquarters inside Fallujah, the CMOC [Civil Military Operations Center], and the battle was still going, and they had completed the CMOC.

I was then responsible for bringing all the representatives from the different ministries to support the reconstruction. I was also the governor for a period of time. I met with Allawi Hassani [appointed by Allawi to head the Fallujah reconstruction working group] and Mahmoud [Hassani's deputy] and took them to the CMOC. The CMOC project was totally new. I never imagined that during the battle the Army would rebuild. I always thought the Army would destroy and others would come and build. But this was very unique. There were officers and NCOs and soldiers of the U.S. Army; they were doing things like plumbing work. So they came to him to ask how they can fix the gutters and plumbing and sewage.

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Transcript 11. Colonel (Promotable) Razak, Commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces Division



Figure C-11-1. COL Razak

1. On 19 January 2006, the team interviewed Colonel (Promotable) Razak Salim Hamza, Commander, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces (IIF) Division, at his office in Camp Dixie, Al Qaim. Col Razak has been commander of the 1st Brigade since May 2005. From October 2004 until May 2005 he was the executive officer under Brigadier General Tarik. General Tarik had a heart attack and is currently recuperating. It is expected that General Tarik will be assigned to the Ministry of Defense or to General Abdul Qadir's staff at Camp Victory. Later that evening, at 1930 hours, we attended the brigade daily battle update brief. The staff presented a daily update very much like what you would see in a U.S. unit. COL Razak was promoted to Brigadier General on Saturday afternoon, 21 January 2006.

2. The following is a transcript of the interview. Mr. Mazin was the interpreter.

BILL K. Please discuss the history of the brigade. [1:22]

COL RAZAK. The 1st Brigade was the first brigade established in Iraq. It was established on 2 October 2003. The 2nd Battalion was established 6 January 2004. The 3rd Battalion, which was called the 4th Battalion, was established 24 February 2004. Then the headquarters was established 15 May 2004.

Then, the 1st Division had been established, and it is named as the 1st IIF Division. Afterwards, when the brigade had been created, gathered together, and trained by the Coalition forces, we can see that all the units which had been established were before the establishment of the MOD. All the weapons, training, supplies, and supplementals were supplied by the Coalition forces.

After we had the three battalions and the headquarters of the brigade, we started real combat operations. The first operation started July 2004, in Sadr City, in Baghdad. The second combat mission was in Najaf, in August 2004. The brigade as a whole participated in Fallujah. This was the first mission for the complete brigade itself with the Coalition forces in Iraq. [6:20]

On the 15th of January 2005, two battalions and the headquarters moved into Mosul. At that time, Mosul was held by the insurgents, and it was necessary for this brigade to go there and take it back. And the mission there took 2 months. The 3rd Battalion joined a mission in Talafar for 10 days; all the results were positive. The mission had been done: to destroy the insurgents and terrorists who were trying to destroy Iraq.

After the Mosul mission, the brigade was doing the job on the southwest of Baghdad which covered Baghdad Jadida, Yusufiyah, Sal Man Pak, Mahmudiyah, Latifiyah, Abu Ghraib, and Doura. It was there for 3 months.

Then, all the brigade moved into the western part of Iraq. One battalion in Ramadi, one battalion in Haditha and Hit, and another battalion in Rawah. This operation lasted from June to October to get the security and protection and safety of the people at these places, these areas. What is observed here, wherever this brigade goes in any area, the results we get, they [the city] gets all required security and the security required for this area in a high degree. Then the other missions started. The last mission now, it is in Al Qaim,¹⁹ which is considered the toughest and most important. It is here. [11.34]

Here [Al Qaim], in this part of Iraq, three battalions work; the planning and the operations started here. This was very warm [operationally hot] area. All the foreigners, the insurgents, were concentrated here in this part of Iraq. By the will of God and the help of Coalition forces, which we were [with] together, side by side, [We] started from planning and preparing for the operations and also the movement and execution of the operations. Up to this date wherever the Iraqi soldiers sleep, the Marines and the American soldiers are sleeping also. Food, supplies, everything, all the services are being done here. We found unlimited supply and cooperation in this territory; we have the hand to make all the plans, good plans, for the operations that had been done here together with the coalition.

When one of my officers was questioned about the brigade's capability to operate, he answered that this brigade is doing a very good job and is highly sufficient to execute the operations. After we have secured this area, we have all the necessary staff

¹⁹ Al Qaim, next to the Syrian border, was considered to be a critical border crossing area for foreign insurgents.

sections required from intelligence, administration, supply, and everything was integrated.²⁰

The information received by G2—from this information from G2—it is found that east of Al Qaim there is some insurgents staying there, and it needs an operation for clearing this area from them. When we told the Coalition of the operation, they gave us the freedom to do the planning and execution freely at this period. By their support and cooperation, we made the plan of the operation. We presented this plan to officers and generals in the Coalition. They agreed with it, and it was executed on the 19th and 20th of November. This is the first mission, the first operation that a brigade, military Iraqi force, is doing this job, for the first time. The name of this operation was the Lightning Moon Operation [17:52].

By the will of God, we are now feeling very well, and we are good in a position, but we need Air Force support and good administration. The difference between the first and second operation and this operation—it is clear that our soldiers have developed in this work. Also, on the level of squads, and at the level of the platoon and battalion, then it comes into a level of brigade. Now each section of the brigade from information and administration, each part gave their advice to the commander. This comes from the cooperation together with the Coalition forces, and we got all the benefits from their support for us. They have very important obligation. We are very thankful for what they have done, the Coalition forces, for our brigade to reach this point where we are now. This is a summary and a history for our brigade here.

BILL K. I think that your brigade was the first Iraqi unit to be given the mission of counterinsurgency. Is that correct?

COL RAZAK. Yes, that is correct.

BILL K. I think you were developed for that very reason, because that was one of the missions, counterinsurgency, that was not covered, and I believe you were created for that mission. [22:22]

COL RAZAK. Yes. This brigade has done a part of the job that no other brigade has done. This brigade now is ready, and it has the ability and all the necessities so that

²⁰ As we attended the the evening battle update brief, it appeared that each staff section knew its job and provided a good status of its areas, including upcoming events and requirements. That said, there were a lot of things that the brigade didn't have. These are discussed in later interviews.

we can do any operation in any part of Iraq, as required. Now as we are Iraqi people, we have the feeling that these insurgents are dangerous people against Iraq. Now we want to stop them, to finish them so that we can develop and rebuild Iraq.

BILL K. Let's go back to July when the headquarters was organized, as your brigade developed from operations in Sadr City to Najaf in August, to Mosul, and then Fallujah. What were some of the things that you learned that enabled you to develop into the force that you are today? [24:57]

COL RAZAK. First, establishing operations. This brigade established as battalions; then the headquarters of the brigade was established. This plan, which the Coalition forces developed, was correct. First, they established a battalion operation, the second operation was two battalions, the third operation was the brigade as a whole. It was together, operations and training. As a result of that, the brigade itself as a whole, they—now they have the ability to make the plan and execute the operation. Now we can rely on ourselves to make any operation, but still we need the cooperation of the Coalition.

From our experience of these operations, the vehicles we have now are insufficient and not good compared to the operations that we are doing. Communications also are not at the level we want. Also, we need the administrative support and the level of the division and the MOD. Also, we need fire support. As for fire support, at the level of the soldier, the squad, the company, the battalion, the brigade, it's valuable. [28:19]

BILL K. You mentioned training the unit. What are some of the challenges that you found in trying to train each of the battalions and the brigade?

COL RAZAK. From July 2004 up to this date, the brigade was executing operations, and we did not have any time for training, maybe only 10 days training. Also, the whole brigade did not have any chance of training as a whole unit together. What we need now, firing range operations, commanding and controlling, and the staff officers and brigade and battalion training, so they can advise battalion and brigade commanders on a good plan. That is very important now. I need this training!

BILL K. So your staff makes recommendations to you on what type of training the battalions and brigades will need?

COL RAZAK. Exactly. This will give very good training for the brigade, and we hope after we finish this operation now we have some time to train. And we hope we can have very good supplies and equipment, better than we have now.

BILL K. When you leave here, what areas will you train on?

COL RAZAK. Baghdad, South Baghdad, and Aristimiyah.

BILL K. What events or what topics will you train on? You said you would train on firing ranges. What other type of training will you do? [31:57]

COL RAZAK. You can train in Aristimiyah. I have a range, and in one area in Baghdad, big area, you can train a battalion and company on mission training.

BILL K. Mission training?

COL RAZAK. That is very important, mission training at company, battalion, and brigade level. Training all the soldiers and commanders of the brigade on operations order; on how to build a plan; on my staff; the battalion staff; and on company, platoon, and squad commanders' missions. It's very important now to give the brigade the chance to train to get to a higher level.

MAJOR CASTRO. At the very beginning in Sadr City, in the brigade, how trained or experienced were your soldiers prior to that?

COL RAZAK. This brigade, for 1 year and 4 months, in the beginning, the training was individual training, and then they gathered them together and started to train [collectively].

MAJOR CASTRO. Was the 1st Brigade composed of former Iraqi soldiers that wanted to come back and serve? Did they serve under Saddam?

COL RAZAK. Most of the individuals in this unit, even as officers, they were not in the previous Army.

MAJOR CASTRO. I asked that question because I wanted to see how fast and how well your unit has become such a dominant force today with what they started with. So I was trying to see if you had experienced soldiers to start with.

COL RAZAK. This is a very good question. Any soldier, any officer who joined, this brigade, this new Army, he has to be willing [to work hard] with this new Army. This makes him learn very quickly.

Our officers commanding the battalions, they are at a high level of qualifications, and this increased our worth. What they do here has achieved results.

The experience came not by training, but by the real operations, training and missions, and that is very important. All the brigade and all of the Iraqis made [a]

mission or two. Why is the brigade good? Because we make many missions. If any brigade does missions and operations, this will provide experience and increase the soldiers' qualifications. [37:23]

BILL K. How do you recruit your soldiers, your Jundi, into the brigade to get a good cross section of people from across the country?

COL RAZAK. What do you mean by recruit?

BILL K. To recruit, to go out to bring someone into the Army, when you have a volunteer. Do you go out and ask people to join?

COL RAZAK. Many youths at the present time, now, they are on waiting lists. Nobody told any soldiers to come volunteer here, but they come by themselves.

BILL K. How do you select the best?

COL RAZAK. It's not up to me to choose.

BILL K. But you have so many who want to join, how do you make the selection?

COL RAZAK. Committees and the MOD.

BILL K. They do that?

COL RAZAK. But not at the level required.

BILL K. Does the 1st Brigade have a good cross section of people from throughout the country? [40:35]

COL RAZAK. From Basrah, Mosul, Kirkuk, Baghdad—all the country. The same soldiers, nobody tell them where to go, but each one goes into his unit. But here, when the soldiers come into this brigade, he is taking a place as a part of the brigade, and he is prepared and becomes qualified. [41:57]

COL RAZAK. What makes the brigade successful? It is the relation, a good relation between the Iraqi and the Coalition forces.

BILL K. As you saw the brigade develop from the beginning, if you were the Coalition, what would you have done differently to assist you better?

COL RAZAK. The Coalition forces give all the necessities required for this brigade, but now what we need is better equipment and more technology for this brigade to get better results. [43:37]

LTC SIMPSON. He [COL Razak] told me before one of problems is that they brought many officers in who had only 1 month training. They don't know how to be officers; they don't know how to be soldiers. They have had to deal with that over the last couple years. They are appointed as a major or a captain after a month or two training.

BILL K. You mean into the Iraqi forces?

LTC SIMPSON. The Coalition supported that action.

BILL K. So what you are saying is, that is something that the Coalition should have done differently. They should not have supported the direct appointment of [untrained, inexperienced] officers to higher grades. That's what they could have done differently?

LTC SIMPSON. That's a big deal.

COL RAZAK. Now this bigger problem is between brigade and MOD and many officers. One officer goes in the military academy and study 1-1/2 years, and he is commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant. This other officer trained for 12 month at Kirkush and he is directly appointed to major. How come? The major should have the experience of being a platoon and company commander and an XO.

COL RAZAK. That is a problem.

LTC SIMPSON. ...one of the things that makes Colonel Razak such a good commander is that he's done it all.

BILL K. That's what I wanted to ask him next. Please talk about yourself. What is your background? [45:36]

COL RAZAK. My history as an officer, soldier?

BILL K. Your history.

COL RAZAK. I graduated from the school after 12 years of studies from second-degree class, 6th secondary class, and I joined the military college in 1983. I graduated as a lieutenant in July 1985. I chose to join Special Forces. I entered into training for Special Forces for 6 months and go in brigade Special Forces in old army and work at brigade as a platoon commander. [47:19]

In war between Iraq and Iran, I work as a platoon commander and company commander. I was wounded five times in war between Iraq and Iran. I work steady as

a platoon commander at military academy and company commander at the military academy and staff in school of Special Forces.

In 1994 I went to Staff College in Iraq. After 1-1/2 years I graduated as staff captain. In Iraq, when you go to Staff College and graduate, you get a red ribbon on your lapel. Very difficult study in Staff College. [For] 1-1/2 years, I read every day between 9 [and] 10 hours, very difficult. I study armor, airplane, navy, all this study in the Staff College.

After graduation from Staff College, I was as a staff officer in the brigade for 4 years. Then I became a battalion XO; then I became a training officer in school for Special Forces. Then I also was a battalion commander Special Forces, in the rank of colonel, when I was in previous Army. [50:29]

When the war started between Iraq and the Coalition, I was a battalion commander Special Forces. When I came back into this new Army, I was a commander 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Division. I did that for 4 months. Then I worked in this brigade as the XO for one year, and now I am commander of brigade 2 or 3 months now.

BILL K. So you've been with this brigade for about 16 months?

COL RAZAK. Sixteen months.

BILL K. Good.

COL RAZAK. I love this brigade.

BILL K. You have a great brigade.

COL RAZAK. MOD and many generals tell me go in another brigade. They said after 6 months I will go as commander of another brigade. I said, "No, I stay this brigade as XO, and maybe in the future I am commander of the brigade."

BILL K. That's great, and now you are the brigade commander. I would like to see your briefing this evening, and I would like to tape that, if that is OK with you.

COL RAZAK. No problem. [52:12]

BILL K. I don't have any more questions, Tony, Bob?

COL RAZAK. Before we conclude our speech, we can say this brigade is maybe lucky, because the advisors who are working in this brigade from the Coalition forces work

as officers and soldiers in this brigade, not in Coalition forces. They are a part of this brigade, and this one of the reasons why this brigade has been successful.

I am thanking the advisor who is sitting with us [LTC Simpson], not because he is sitting with us, but because he is present here. I am very grateful for him and the advisors who have been working with him before also. When we are working together closely, he is giving very good aid and very good advice required for our operations. Any problems we have here with this brigade, when we sit together, we can solve it easily and fix the problems.

LTC SIMPSON. One of the things that also need[s] to be brought into perspective is the development of the Army. How does the partner unit work effectively with the Iraqis? This [Marine] battalion here with Col Alfred, Col Alfred should be taken as a speaker, [taken] around to battalion and brigade commanders and tell him how to make it work. Our job is to train the Iraqi Army, and that's what we are going to do. Whatever he has to do to make that happen, that's what he does, and until Coalition commanders get that message across the board, you won't have the kind of progress that we've had with this brigade, and it's just that simple.

BILL K. That's a good point. You said colonel?

LTC SIMPSON. Lieutenant Colonel Alfred, Battalion Commander of 3/6.

If you don't have that kind of support, you can forget it. If you are constantly fighting with the Coalition—and we've had that with our battalions before, to where they didn't give them [the Iraqis] the leeway. If you don't give people the opportunity to make mistakes, they never will. You have to give them that opportunity, a lot of times. They just don't want to give up the reins. [56:05]

BILL K. That's a good comment. [End file 57:20]

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Transcript 12. LTC Yassir, Commander, 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces Division



Figure C-12-1. LTC Yassir

1. On 19 January 2006, LTC Yassir Haziz Muqmad, Commander, 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces Division, was interviewed at COL Razak's office, Camp Dixie, Al Qaim. Mr. Mazin was the interpreter. COL Razak attended the interview.

2. The following is a transcript of that interview. Mr. Mazin served as the interpreter.

BILL K. When did you join the Iraqi Army?

LTC YASSIR. I joined the old Army in 1992. I graduated in 1994 as a second lieutenant and joined the Special Forces. When I graduated from the Special Forces, I joined Human Corps with special training. I served in the old army with the Republican Guard. I participated in the first war, except Kuwait, and the second one in the old army.

BILL K. Did you know COL Razak when he was Special Forces?

LTC YASSIR. He was my commander for a long time.

BILL K. When did you join the new Iraqi Army?

LTC YASSIR. I submitted my request in November 2003, and on January 2004, I was accepted to join the new Iraqi Army in Kirkush. I graduated on 24 February 2004. I graduated and finished my training in Kirkush.

Directly after I graduated from Kirkush, I moved to Taji. I stayed in Taji for a couple months like a regular army. May 1st, 2004, I joined a battalion like a task force or a Special Forces unit. [4:38] I spent a month after joining the task force, and the AST's [Advisory Support Team's] advisor at that time, from the Marines, then joined us.

We did some missions around Taji. At the end of June 2004 the 3rd Battalion was moved to Aristimiyah.

You know about the events of the Muqtada al-Sadr militia at that time. The 3rd Battalion [named the 4th Battalion at the time] operated on a mission in Sadr City in Baghdad. Muqtada al-Sadr militia was like a test for all the soldiers; from that you recognize who is the best or who is the worst for them. It was a difficult mission for the battalion. The battalion was a small unit. Many soldiers were wounded and also four from the AST.

BILL K. Wounded?

LTC YASSIR. Yes.

BILL K. Where?

LTC YASSIR. In Sadr City against the militia. Two from the AST were seriously wounded. They moved them to Germany. After that they pulled out of Sadr City for 1 day they then moved them to Najaf. The planning for Najaf wasn't very good. There were some great mistakes in Najaf. The first time the Coalition forces deal with the Iraqi unit, the partnership was not very good. There was no trust between the two sides.

BILL K. And when was that? [08:21]

LTC YASSIR. All of Najaf.

BILL K. Najaf, OK.

LTC YASSIR. You know that both units are supposed to have a good experience, especially the Iraqis. When they want to go to, like this mission, they are supposed to do a good job.

There were some important events during this mission in Najaf. The negotiation between the Iraqi Army and Muqtada al-Sadr; we engaged them. That is a very important event, when we engage with Muqtada al-Sadr himself. All the militia will stay in an area about 500 meters—the Shi'a and Muqtada al-Sadr. He was very powerful at that time in Najaf and all the south of Iraq and also in Baghdad.

BILL K. Sadr City?

LTC YASSIR. Yes, Sadr City and Najaf.

We went inside Muqtada al-Sadr[']s office, and I negotiated with him and told him he is supposed to obey the law, and if they refuse, it will be bad things for them; we will

attack them. And Muqtada al-Sadr, he agreed about the condition and allowed us to search his area.

BILL K. You talked to Muqtada al-Sadr?

LTC YASSIR. I spoke with Dr. Alis Mason. Alis Mason is the presenter. He is very important guy for Muqtada al-Sadr. Muqtada al-Sadr is the religious man for militia, but Alis Mason is very smart man.

We live in a bad situation at that time in Najaf because there were many militias ready to fight, especially from Iran. There are many Iranians still inside the office ready to fight. I started searching. We pushed two companies to search inside the office. The problem is that there are many rooms underground that are supposed to be searched also. We captured weapons, different kinds. They filled two 5-ton trucks.

After this operation in Najaf, I'm supposed to be able to reorganize and retrain the battalion. When I returned from Najaf, I was informed that the next mission is in Fallujah. [13:44]

BILL K. Let me go back to Najaf. It sounds like when you got there, Muqtada al-Sadr had already moved out of the Imam Ali Shrine, and he moved into his office, and that your unit then worked and negotiated with Dr. Ali Mason to get them to turn over their weapons? [14:25]

LTC YASSIR. Yes. Have you heard about al-Sistani? He is one of our Shi'a leaders. He controls all the Shi'a in Iraq, maybe even in Iran, and he advised al Sadr to pull out from the Imam Ali Mosque and to stay in his office, and [he] will be respected and nobody will be hurt.

BILL K. I understand then that Sistani conducted the negotiations to get Muqtada al-Sadr out of the Imam Ali Shrine. Is there anything that the Coalition could have done better in that situation?

LTC YASSIR. Najaf or the whole situation?

BILL K. Let's talk about Najaf.

LTC YASSIR. In Najaf the Special Forces did smart things. You know Najaf, the mosque for Imam Ali or the Muqtada al-Sadr militia—if the war happens [and damaged the mosque], it will be very bad for the Coalition forces and for all Iraq. Everything would be damaged—not just for Shi'a, for all the Muslims.

When we moved to get Muqtada al-Sadr the Coalition forces watched; if we needed support they would help. Before searching Muqtada al-Sadr's office, they surrounded it and didn't let anybody visit, especially the night before; they stopped everything. Six o'clock the evening before the Monday night attack, they [Iraqis] wanted to do some prayer or some religious tradition, and we stopped them and did not allow them to do anything. As we developed the plans to attack the office—now it is just office, not mosque.

This time between Sadr City and Najaf was a very hard time for the Coalition forces because they started to learn about the new Iraqi Army and train them and put them to the test. Most of the new Iraqi Army is from the old army. There is different rules and different relations.

BILL K. That's hard.

LTC YASSIR. We spent a month before the Fallujah mission. That's not a lot of time to get trained and organized.

BILL K. What kind of training did you do for Fallujah?

LTC YASSIR. We trained on how to fight in the buildings, clearing buildings, and inside the big city.

BILL K. Where did you do this training?

LTC YASSIR. Near Taji. We got good training on how we can move around in one area, how they can send the support, the QRF [quick-reaction force]. Additionally, we got more equipment before the Fallujah mission, as an example, night-vision goggles.

BILL K. Well, before Najaf, did you have enough equipment and enough body armor, helmets, and weapons?

LTC YASSIR. Not like Fallujah. Everything was good, but not like Fallujah.

BILL K. What Coalition unit did he work with in Najaf?

LTC YASSIR. He forgets.

BILL K. That's OK, just curious. I can go back and find out what unit and talk with whomever.

LTC YASSIR. A tank unit—four tanks.

BILL K. I was thinking of 2-7 Cav or 1-5.

LTC YASSIR. I think 2-7.

BILL K. They were down in Najaf.

LTC YASSIR. Before Fallujah, we shot the rifle in Taji, and we got good training, good preparation for Fallujah mission. We also faced another major problem in Najaf: the Brigade Commander quit.

BILL K. I heard that. In fact, Marcus told me that the commander quit.

LTC YASSIR. And also, his XO was very weak. He cannot lead, and he cannot do anything. The real commander at that time for Iraqi brigade was Marcus De Oliveira. He was the commander; he was the commander for Americans and for Iraqis.

BILL K. Was it General Kalid?

LTC YASSIR. Kalid, yes.

BILL K. These are some of the names that I was given. Yes, that's right, brigadier general.

LTC YASSIR. Colonel [LTC] Mohammed is G2 of brigade now. He was the executive officer then.

LTC D [LTC De Oliveira, the senior AST] was very successful in Iraq. He brought the 1st Brigade up. LTC D, he worked very hard; we respect him.

After the XO, the old XO and the old commander quit, they gave us two commanders, General Tariq and Colonel Rosel. The task for them was very difficult. They were supposed to build the trust for the brigade for the general and for colonel. They tried to bring the brigade together, the three battalions and the brigade headquarters. It was that we were separate before; each battalion worked alone, independent from the brigade. When they changed the two commanders to brigade, they spend a month retraining and reorganizing the brigade. They pushed the good things in the brigade to the front. [31.54]

BILL K. What were some of the good things that they pushed forward, and what were some of the areas that needed improvement that they had been working on?

LTC YASSIR. The good things we found in the brigade were the soldiers. The soldiers were ready to work, most of them. There are many elements that are very good in the brigade; they deserve to get a good position.

The bad thing, there was no leadership at that time. Also, there is a shortage of the soldiers and NCOs and officers; most of them quit. Additionally, the battalions are only half strength.

BILL K. What is the authorization for the battalion?

LTC YASSIR. Seven hundred fifty-nine.

BILL K. And you were at 400?

LTC YASSIR. Three hundred. In Sadr City in Baghdad, just 100 people. In Najaf there were 150. It was the number for the battalion. We were trying to get new soldiers and get them at a good level for training. That was hard. [34:47]

BILL K. How did you recruit soldiers to bring up the numbers?

COL RAZAK. I sent the request for soldiers back to the division, and the division went to the Minister of Defense, and they sent more soldiers. There are many recruitment centers in Baghdad, in Basrah, in Mosul, and from the recruitment center the recruits will be sent for the training center in Taji, Almaniyah, and Kirkush. Once they complete the training, they will be ready to join the unit. Unfortunately, the training is not at a good level.

BILL K. Do you get a selection out of any of the soldiers? In the United States, if soldiers are good, they can go to a certain unit. Do you get any type of priority on the caliber of soldier?

COL RAZAK. We can be sent anyone.

BILL K. So you can get anybody, and then you have to train them?

LTC YASSIR. For example, they send the soldiers for different units. The 1st Brigade, 1st Division, is best division in Iraq. But, they have 10 divisions. They send the same thing for all, and the officers and the NCO are in the brigade, and we take care of the soldiers for everything.

BILL K. So now you are preparing for Fallujah. You have maybe 300; you've gotten new equipment like night-vision sights. Every soldier, every Jundi has body armor, helmets, and an individual weapon, and training consists of clearing buildings. Where do you do that training?

LTC YASSIR. At Rustimiyah and Taji they get training.

BILL K. So how long before you went to Fallujah were you told you were going to Fallujah?

LTC YASSIR. Before the mission in Najaf.

BILL K. When did you deploy to Fallujah? [38:52]

LTC YASSIR. November 1st. [On] 11 November we started the operation.

BILL K. Did you get any type of training when you went to Camp Fallujah to the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp [EFIC]?

LTC YASSIR. My battalion was with the 1st Regiment, [commanded by] Col Shupp. He provided short training. We checked the weapons and went to the range to shoot all the kinds of weapons such as the AK, RPK, and RPG.

BILL K. So a lot of individual weapons training at the ranges. Did you do any platoon-type training for clearing buildings or any other type of training?

LTC YASSIR. Yes.

BILL K. And you did that at the EFIC?

LTC YASSIR. Right.

BILL K. OK, so you also did collective training for your platoons and at least squad; did you do company training?

LTC YASSIR. No, the training was for squad and platoon.

BILL K. Colonel Shupp went in on the 8th of November with his units, and then you came in on the 11th of November. What unit did you follow?

LTC YASSIR. First, the Iraqis and Americans surrounded the city; the American Coalition forces surrounded the whole city.

We started 11 November, 11 or 12 November; I'm not sure of the date.

BILL K. I can find that out.

LTC YASSIR. The first duty, the first task for the battalion was to work with 2-7 Battalion.

BILL K. LTC Rainey.

LTC YASSIR. LTC Rainey unfortunately never trusted the Iraqi Army. And before the operation started, they never gave me the map of Fallujah, any maps. I think because LTC Rainey did not deal before with the Iraqi units; it is the first time.

It's supposed to be the first mission, first operation; LTC Rainey is supposed to occupy all the street. The main street in Fallujah.

BILL K. Can you show me? [42:58]

LTC YASSIR. Railway station.

BILL K. Yes, here's the train station.

LTC YASSIR. Henry [4th Battalion, now called 3rd Battalion, advanced down Henry].

LTC YASSIR. The first day, the first light, they move the forces [from the north down Henry, see Figure C-12-2]. Third Battalion is supposed to stop at this level, and that day, they arrived at this point [to Cathy, blue boxed area, bounded by George on the east and Isaac on the west]. The second day the 3rd Battalion occupies and controls all this area [down to Elizabeth, green blocked area, bounded by Isaac on the west and George, then Henry on the East]. The second day they control completely all this road. [V2:16:25]

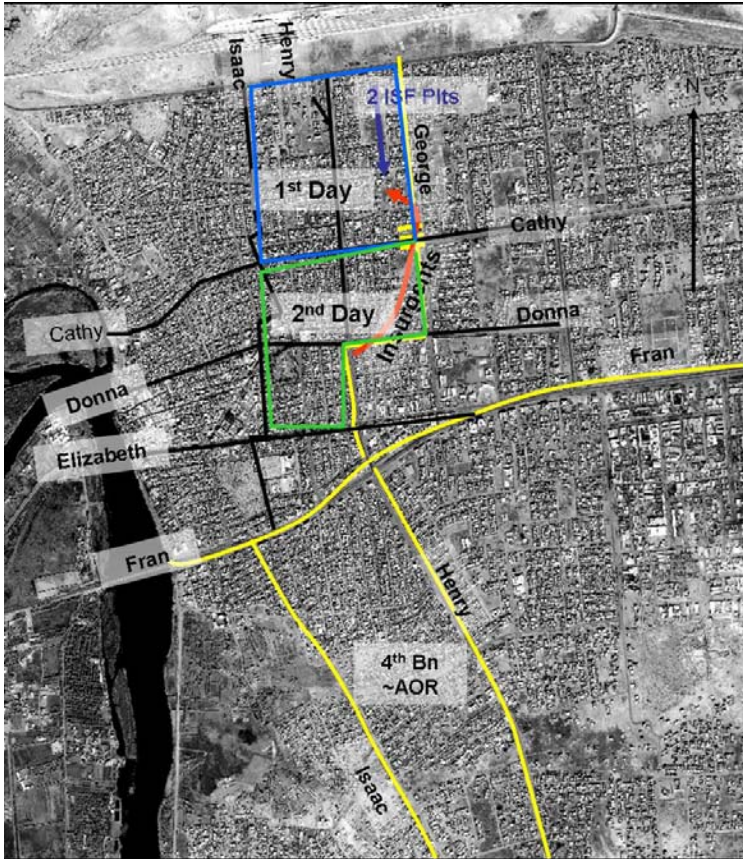


Figure C-12-2. 4th Battalion, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces Brigade Operations

BILL K. That's pretty fast.

LTC YASSIR. The second day, during the night, the insurgents, they turn off and they come into this area [note red arrow].

BILL K. They got in behind you?

LTC YASSIR. Yes.

BILL K. First day, second day [marking on map].

LTC YASSIR. In the battalion, the 3rd Company and 5th Company. The insurgents, they move in behind. We watched them by night vision.

BILL K. You watched them come in behind you?

LTC YASSIR. Yes. We controlled our fire. We didn't shoot them; we watched them. They are coming. They arrive to this level. Here is the street. Here. There are four houses, and also there is an open area. I push two platoons; they moved down behind the insurgents. [V2:18:16]

BILL K. Your team came in behind the insurgents? [47:18]

LTC YASSIR. Yes. Two platoons from here.

BILL K. OK.

LTC YASSIR. We moved and stayed in these houses. The terrorists were in these four houses. When my forces stay in here, I tell the people [that] the soldiers occupy two houses. From the roof of two houses, nobody sees them. They send a message, "Don't shoot anything, we are sending some forces to treat this target." I sent a message to the brigade headquarters for COL Razak, "There are some bad guys who are behind

us [in an area that the regiment assault force has already moved through].” And when the two platoons surround the enemy, the terrorists, they start to shoot them. They surprised the enemy because the enemy moved to a different position, and we surprised them. Our forces shot them from behind. For 30 minutes we attacked the enemy. We killed 11 of the enemy. When we check it in the morning, we find all of the area full of blood from the enemy.

It was a very good operation. We stayed for a week here in this area. On the fourth day the Coalition forces changed the unit. Col Willy Buhl with 3/1 Marines arrived. He is a great man, a wonderful man. I liked to work with him. He gave my battalion more support and more jobs.

BILL K. That’s good.

LTC YASSIR. From this area we expanded. After we control this street, we move to next street. [51:05] We controlled this area. Next step, we searched this area.

BILL K. Then you went south; then you did that area?

LTC YASSIR. There is the battalion headquarters in this area.

BILL K. Let me ask you something. I think this is important back here, so you [COL Yassir] called back to you [COL Razak] at the brigade. Where were you located at that time?

BILL K. You are in the high-rise area, and that is where Col Shupp is—you are with Col Shupp. OK, now you turn to Col Shupp, and you tell him what is going on there.

LTC RAZAK. Yes. I ask Col Shupp if he needs any help. He says, “No, just for the battalion commander to kill this enemy here.”

BILL K. That’s very good.

LTC YASSIR. At that time, after they hit the targets, the second day they visit the commander, the old commander with Col Shupp.

BILL K. That’s great. Now you set up your battalion TOC [tactical operations center] here and what? Do you search this area? [53:30]

LTC YASSIR. Yes, searching this area. The Marines are searching this area before us.

BILL K. Yes, that’s right. They’d search, and then they came through with Pat Malay. LtCol Pat Malay had 3/5.

LTC YASSIR. The Coalition forces were supposed to search this area, but when we searched the area [after the Americans], we find horrible things. Big caches. The [the Americans] didn't enter the concrete. The insurgents placed the cache underground, and then they cover it with concrete and put on the air cooler. They hid all these caches. They dig in the garden, the house garden, inside house. We found big caches in this area.

MAJOR CASTRO. Col Shupp was saying if it wasn't for your units, they never would have found the caches that they found.

BILL K. He said they would have never found that if the Iraqis hadn't researched those areas.

LTC YASSIR. We also found intelligence Algeria officers—intelligence officers from Algeria—yes, they are very important guys.

LTC YASSIR. I'll tell you the story.

BILL K. Yes, please! [55:52]

LTC YASSIR. After we finished these three sections, they give my battalion more area and each company a section. Here in the middle, here is the headquarters for the company. This is my second company, beside headquarters, and we have a normal house. One soldier come to normal search, because each day I advise my soldiers each day to search around the house we use. When he went to this house he saw new shoes.

BILL K. New shoes?

LTC YASSIR. New shoes that we did not see the night before. He was thinking, "We have something or someone come to this house." He tried to search all the rooms [this area], but did not find anything. We have box like this, but big.

BILL K. Oh filing cabinets, big bookcases.

LTC YASSIR. We got it from the house. They were then covered by the blankets. When they uncovered the blanket, they found eight [insurgents] inside the house. They opened the door—it's a small door—in the ground. [57:58]

BILL K. A trapdoor.

LTC YASSIR. Yes. Underground, they found bad guys asleep.

BILL K. Asleep?

LTC YASSIR. Yes. And he [the Iraqi soldier] stops, and he calls his friends to help him. He found this insurgent was working for the Algerian Intelligence, and he was responsible for some operation or some bad-guy mission from the insurgents in Fallujah in this area. He [the insurgent] then showed him [the Iraqi soldier] some places they hide the radio for communication between the insurgents.

MAJOR CASRO. He was supporting the insurgents? He was helping them?

LTC YASSIR. Yes. And they found the money. Very, very important events here. Also this area we [are] searching they found big caches.

BILL K. In that area? Did you find more caches in here than up here?

LTC YASSIR. Yes. Also this area. [We found] caches in this area and this area.

BILL K. OK. What happened next? [1:00:03]

LTC YASSIR. After that we control everything. I was responsible for all this area and for the checkpoint. And we was work with 3-1.

BILL K. With Willy Buhl?

LTC YASSIR. We were then relieved by another Iraq unit.

BILL K. Did the 2nd Brigade then come in to replace you?

COL RAZAK. [The] 2nd Brigade and 4th Brigade.

BILL K. [The] 2nd and 4th came in, and when did you leave Fallujah?

COL RAZAK. 22 December.

BILL K. You were there a long time.

LTC YASSIR. We were the last battalion, 3rd Battalion. And then we go to Rustamiyah.

BILL K. Oh, Rustamiyah. Now the rest of the brigade went to Mosul? [1:01:07]

COL RAZAK. We stayed 15 days in Rustimiyah, and 15 January the brigade and 1st Battalion and 3rd Battalion went to Mosul. No training, no anything, no equipment, no fix vehicles, no fix equipment; just go all the time. Officers and soldiers do not go on leave.

LTC YASSIR. We lost three soldiers on this mission [Fallujah].

COL RAZAK. All the soldiers in this brigade in this mission, Fallujah: 22 dead and 88 wounded.

BILL K. Up in here?

LTC YASSIR. Yes. Snipers. One of them we killed when he drove his pickup, and we shoot him. The third soldiers in this battalion that died in this area here. Also, this area we controlled. There are civilians here, and we helped the civilians.

Also we found documents, like propaganda documents, from al Qaeda and other organizations for Zarqawi. Some said, "The Jihad in Iraq starts today." And we found different kinds of rockets. Also we found maps for Fallujah for EFIC. On one map they showed where the Americans live. And they found money for the insurgents; we found travel checks from Turkey to Kurdistan to al Qaeda here in Iraq in Fallujah.

BILL K. So you left Fallujah on 22 December, and where did you go next?

LTC YASSIR. To Mosul.

BILL K. You went to Mosul. Why did they pull you out and send you to Mosul?
[1:05:30]

LTC YASSIR. Because the insurgents completely control Mosul and because they want to provide security for the election.

BILL K. For the January election, that's right. Did some of the insurgents move from Fallujah up to Mosul?

LTC YASSIR. Maybe.

BILL K. I heard maybe you pushed them out here and then they squirted up there.

What did you learn from Fallujah? What did you learn from Fallujah that helped you later?

COL RAZAK. We learned a good lesson from Fallujah. We benefited from the intelligence information. We built a good system inside the city, and we found the targets. The people, maybe they never trust us, but we want to build a good system to build information [intelligence] for us.

The insurgents now use force to succeed in Iraq. They attack the Coalition forces, the people, the new Iraqi Army, and use propaganda. They use the propaganda and say the foreigners are coming to occupy our country. We use the same weapons—we use propaganda—to explain to the people these are bad guys, they want to cheat you, it will not work. That is very important, to get the message to the people.

BILL K. You know, that's a very good point, because what you're saying is that this is an information operations war. The insurgents say we need to get rid of the foreigners, but then you, the Iraqi's and Coalition, say we need to get rid of the insurgents because they are bad guys. [1:09:30]

COL RAZAK. We are here to defeat the enemy not just by the rifle, by the weapons, but by their propaganda. We prove that for our people in Talafar, in Mosul, in Baghdad, in Ramadi, in Haditha, we are coming to serve and to save them from the bad guys. We are coming here to rebuild things, do reconstruction in this area.

BILL K. Where did you go after Mosul?

LTC YASSIR. I took the battalion to Talafar.

BILL K. You stayed in Mosul for the elections? [1:10:45]

LTC YASSIR. Yes, there were two Iraqi brigades in Mosul. [The] 1st Brigade and 3rd Brigade, 3rd Division. That's good!

It used to be just 1st Brigade that did every mission—Najaf, Sadr City, Mosul—but now there are many brigades, like the 3rd Brigade.

BILL K. So 1st and 3rd Brigade were in Mosul, 2nd Brigade came to replace you when you finished your work in Fallujah, then 2nd Brigade came in as you moved up to Mosul with the 3rd Brigade. Is that right?

LTC YASSIR. Yes.

BILL K. So the division had 2nd Brigade here and 1st and 3rd Brigade in Mosul.

LTC YASSIR. Yes.

BILL K. How long did you stay in Mosul?

LTC YASSIR. Forty-five days.

BILL K. Forty-five days, so you were up there until the 1st of February? Right after the elections?

LTC YASSIR. 1st of March.

BILL K. That's right because you were in Fallujah until January, is that right?

LTC YASSIR. On 29 December and 15 January [we] go in Mosul, and 3rd March come back to Baghdad.

BILL K. Oh, back to Baghdad.

COL RAZAK. Rustamiyah. And stay for 10 or 15 days' vacation, no fix anything, and there were many missions inside Baghdad, around Baghdad, for 2nd Battalion in Doura, 3rd Battalion in Amariyah, and 1st Battalion in Baghdad. The whole brigade went 6 or 7 days to Latifiyah, Mahmidiyah, and Al Yusufiyah. Mission for Col Buhl here, with the brigade, and come back Rustamiyah and stay 20 days. Many missions around Baghdad, and all the brigade move in Ramadi and Haditha and Hit and Rawal, and when finish this area, we came back to Al Qaim and now stay in Al Qaim.

BILL K. How is the morale of the unit with so much movement to all the hot spots? How is the morale, and how is the equipment? [1:14:23]

LTC YASSIR. Now the vehicles are in bad condition, very bad condition, the equipment is not enough and not a good level. We depend on Coalition forces to help us buy the equipment.

MR. MAZIN. He wants to go back to Talafar, he wants to talk about Talafar.

BILL K. Yes, please.

LTC YASSIR. I want to talk about Talafar. I worked with Colonel Davis for the Strykers. When I arrived in Talafar, there is one Stryker battalion and one ING, Iraqi National Guard battalion. The Iraqi battalion refused to join the Coalition forces to work inside of Talafar; they are scared. Talafar was completely controlled by the insurgents. And the Coalition forces never trust the Iraqis. Because the ING, the Iraqi National Guard, they could do nothing.

BILL K. So they did not trust the 3rd Battalion because of their experiences with the National Guard battalion.

LTC YASSIR. Yes. They assume the same [quality of performance].

BILL K. Yep, put them in the same basket. That's too bad. [1:17:26]

LTC YASSIR. They are moving by the Strykers inside the city. And there is a bad area of insurgents who were very well established in the north side of the city. After 2 days we moved the battalion to Talafar. When we arrived to Talafar we stayed 2 days, and after that we started our operation. In the center of Talafar there is a castle where we put two companies from the battalion. Also in Old Talafar there are two companies. When I moved, I moved with the support company. The area in Talafar is like this. There are two hills around the town, one to the left and one to the right. They were

occupied by the support company to help the soldiers. They put a PKC [weapon] here and here.

BILL K. For fields of fire.

LTC YASSIR. This area I want to control. It is near the street here, and there are some houses. And also there is a street here. There are small houses here, and they are joined together. We controlled completely this road. We started at 0900. After 1300 there are bad guys, and they shoot us from this area. They stay and search and attack us from 2000 at night until 0800 the next day. It is about 150 bad guys; they are trying to move from this area. We heard there is a prince, Amir, the leader for the insurgents. This prince has with him about 600 in this area. This leader, the prince, they call him, is responsible for all this area. Maybe all of Mosul.

BILL K. Maybe all of Mosul.

LTC YASSIR. And step by step they push my companies. [End file 1, 01:22:30; start file 2]

LTC YASSIR. Two of my companies occupy the castle. The castle is in the center of Talafar. When I tried to move my companies from the castle to occupy areas in Talafar, the insurgents attack with about 18 mortar rockets, 68 mm, and we had 21 wounded. They pushed the company from the castle to this area in Talafar. And also three IEDs. When I moved the company from the castle in the center of Talafar, they ran into three IEDs. Because of the attack from the enemy by the IEDs, the soldiers feel very bad. The rest of the battalion arrived in this area, and then we opened up and fought against the enemy. The positive things from the Talafar operation is that this was the first time the new Iraqi Army conducted an operation alone without Coalition forces.

BILL K. An independent operation?

LTC YASSIR. From the planning to the fighting, we...did this operation. The negative—I missed the support, air and armor, from the Coalition. Because I am inside the city and I needed aircraft to help send messages, and from the air they can see the forces.

BILL K. Yes, like UAVs or airplanes.

LTC YASSIR. In the end of the day, 11 in the evening, I went back to the castle, and when we positioned all my forces in the city, I met Colonel Davis. He was very happy about what was going on in Talafar; he never believe that happened.

BILL K. LtCol Davis?

LTC YASSIR. Yes, LtCol Davis. Stryker...

I asked LtCol Davis to send more Strykers to control the corner of the city, and I asked him about Intel information about Talafar. They divided the city into three parts. LTC Davis knew there are many caches inside the city but didn't know exactly where they are.

The second day in the morning, LtCol Davis sent Strykers to control all the corners in the city. They put all the forces around the city, and we started searching in each part of the city. The second day, we found a cache inside Talafar and captured about 60 insurgents.

The third day, we got information from a civilian that there is a cache in the valley outside the city. We searched the valley and found a big cache. They put the cache inside the ground, and they hid it by covering it with soil.

BILL K. Was this valley north of the city? [06:50]

LTC YASSIR. Yes. We searched all the city—it is a big city—with 335 soldiers. This mission was done by the 3rd Battalion. But before, they used five Iraqi battalions and two American brigades to search all this. In the same city that they searched before.

BILL K. Three hundred thirty-five Iraqi soldiers? [07:48]

LTC YASSIR. Yes. And also maybe you heard what was going on here in Al Qaim, on the north side of the river, the 3rd Battalion area now. We searched and found many big caches.

BILL K. North of the River. I remember your map yesterday; you talked about that.

We shot video of the brief. Could I have some of the graphics that they used in that, because it shows where your units are.

COL RAZAK. You want me to put it on a thumb drive or stick for you? You want it tonight during the briefing, or now?

MAJOR CASTRO. You have last night's briefing?

BILL K. Well, we have the translation of last night's briefing, so if you give us the graphics, I have the words that go with it.

LTC YASSIR. And if you want, I give you very good, wonderful picture from Fallujah.

BILL K. Yes.

LTC YASSIR. We have many pictures about the caches, about catching the bad guys in the area where we worked together with the Coalition forces.

BILL K. I think you have quite a story to tell. [11:34]

MR. MAZIN. You get the benefit from talking to the Iraqis.

LTC YASSIR. The best unit in American fighting was Col Shupp, a wonderful man, and Col Willy Buhl. Many Iraqis leaders and officers take them as an example, Shupp or Willy Buhl.

BILL K. Talk to me about your NCOs. How do you develop your NCOs? [13:00]

LTC YASSIR. The NCOs now work together with the officers, and they join the mission. For example, the 3rd Battalion S-3 is now on leave in Baghdad. Now the NCO and warrant officer control the S-3.

COL RAZAK. There is not enough time to train the NCOs and our soldiers; they are just doing operations and missions.

LTC YASSIR. For example, we can get a great benefit from the commander, COL Razak, because he was a Special Forces teacher in the old Army, for a long time, in the Republican Guard.

BILL K. That's good. You know, in the U.S. Army the NCOs really run stuff. I mean they are the ones that make the Army work.

COL RAZAK. Also, we never forget that we work together with the Coalition forces and that both sides will get the benefits—the Coalition forces, also the Iraqis. [16:57]

The 3rd Battalion recently provides a good example. There is a soldier that works with the 3rd Battalion, north of the river. They work inside a small town, a small village. There is a checkpoint, and they build a relationship with the people. Some of the bad guys, they want to use the soldiers; they give them money to work against the battalion. They give them \$100 first, then \$200, and they want to use it to do bad things. Honest, good soldiers, they talk with the company commander and the battalion commander. The battalion commander ask permission from me, and we put together a good plan, and we discover this big group from the insurgents, from al Qaeda, work in this area. That is an example of our soldiers.

BILL K. That is a good example. Because now they feel very much part of the unit.
[19:42]

When I asked other people about the brigade, I focused on 2004. Their perception of course was 2nd Battalion in Fallujah I. And they remember that the 2nd Battalion was ambushed; they never made it to Fallujah. [21:51]

COL RAZAK. Let me answer, please. There is no MOD, no 1st Division, no 1st Brigade; there is just battalions—2nd Battalion and 1st Battalion at that time.

BILL K. Now in Najaf, by that time there was the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalion. A lot of forces arrived late.

It happened so quickly in Najaf. It started on about the 4th of August, and I believe your unit got there probably about the 25th of August. Sistani had already come back, I believe. So there were many things that were already done...when your battalion got there.

But I think the full appreciation for what you could do happened in Fallujah because, as the Coalition said, they could never by themselves have gone through Fallujah and found those things that the Iraqi soldiers, that the 1st Brigade, found.

I think the training that you got before going into Fallujah for the house clearing was very important. The brigade developed and organized throughout 2004, and finally in late 2004 in Fallujah, you had a brigade. Your training at first was checkpoints, and then it was presence patrols, and then you got the house clearing. House clearing is hard work; it's hard and its dangerous work. [24:38]

The Coalition forces saw that growth and how the brigade developed up to Fallujah. The reason I wanted to see the brigade is to see how much more you've developed since Fallujah. You are now doing independent operations in one of the hottest spots in Iraq. [26:21]

COL RAZAK. The name "Al Qaim" means many things for the Coalition forces and also for the Iraq Army. Nobody is ready to move in this area, to catch the insurgents here. But the great job that we have done with RCT 2 and RCT 4 and 3/6—we got good results; we cleared all this area. Three months ago nobody could move in this area, but now we are shopping from the market.

BILL K. Yes, that's good.

LTC YASSIR. That never happened. The Coalition forces can't shop in Baghdad, but they can here.

BILL K. That's right, that's a good point.

COL RAZAK. That means we are working very hard and very well with the Coalition forces to clear this area. This is another area that Coalition forces and the Iraqis have pushed the insurgents out of and will not allow the insurgents to come back again.

For example, the last operation in Mosul and Talafar, the 3rd Battalion cleared and patrolled, and they captured and they killed, and found many caches in Talafar. But we turned it over to the weak units—the ING, the Iraqi National Guard—and again the insurgents control the area. I am worried about what is going in Al Qaim when we leave.

BILL K. I understand that the 3rd Brigade, 7th Division, is coming in behind you?

COL RAZAK. Yes. [30:20]

BILL K. When I asked Col Shupp what was important about Fallujah, he said, "It was important that we destroy the insurgent network and base camp in Fallujah. But when they moved out, they moved out to places like Al Qaim." And now, you are in Al Qaim to get them out of Al Qaim, so I think that is good.

COL RAZAK. He said the insurgents are now in Al Qaim—before that they were in Fallujah and Samarra and Baghdad—because they think Al Qaim is a safe place, and it's close to the border.

BILL K. This is good, this is very good. Well, thank you.

LTC YASSIR. Thank you very much! Please visit us in Rustimiyah.

BILL K. I would like to. I would like to come to Rustimiyah.

COL RAZAK. There, after 20 February you can visit us.

BILL K. I would love to do that.

COL RAZAK. You will find the best things there. You will find us in training.

BILL K. Yes, I will come run with you.

COL RAZAK. You will win, because I am old!

[End file 2, 00:33:25]

**Transcript 13. Mr. Mazin, Interpreter, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces (IIF) Brigade,
1st IIF Division**



Figure C-13-1. Mr. Mazin

1. On 20 January 2006, the team interviewed Mr. Mazin Muhammad Rhada at the 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division conference room, Camp Dixie, Al Qaim. Mazin is a Kurd who was gassed during one of Saddam's attacks in the late '80's and was evacuated to Iran for medical care. He worked with the Anti Saddam Forces throughout the '90's from his homeland in Northern Iraq. After the war he became an interpreter for the Coalition Military Assistance Transition Teams (CMATT) in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and worked for MG Eaton and later for BG Schwitters. In March

2004 he volunteered to work with the 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division, and he worked very closely with LTC Marcus De Oliveira.

2. The following is a summary of that interview.

MR. MAZIN. I was born in Baghdad in 1960, and I went to Baghdad University and joined the Iraqi Opposition in 1980. When the first war against Iran started, I escaped to the north of Iraq to join some militia to work with the Kurdish people, in Kurdistan. I spent 7 years in the north in the mountains.

I was wounded by chemical weapons in Mater Gard [phonetic spelling] in 1987 [a number of Kurdish villages were subjected to chemicals by Saddam in 1987]. That forced me to cross the border to Iran to get some medical treatment. Someone from the United Nations helped me get to London to get medical treatment, and after that somebody said you can get sponsorship to go to Australia. I spent 2 or 3 years in Australia and then came back to Kurdistan and joined the Iraq opposition when the north of Iraq got protection from the coalition forces after 1991. I worked with the Iraqi opposition until the dictatorship ended.

BILL K. Where did you learn to speak English—Australia?

MR. MAZIN. Some in Australia and in London. I got it from Baghdad University mostly; the Iraqis learn English in high school.

BILL K. You went to Iran, you said, for medical treatment. What was wrong?

MR. MAZIN. Because I was wounded with chemical weapons in Mater Gard [phonetic spelling] in 1987. When the former regime attacked Kurdistan, I got wounded by chemical weapons.

BILL K. Chemical weapons—you were there?

MR. MAZIN. Yeah, mustard gas.

BILL K. That's incredible. What about your family?

MR. MAZIN. My family now is OK. The former regime killed my two older brothers, and I now have one. My sister, she is still living in Kurdistan. My daughter and my wife live in Australia.

BILL K. What was the name of the town?

MR. MAZIN. Dohuk, close to Dohuk, the great mountain. All the Iraqi opposition protect themselves by the mountain.

BILL K. Wow, that's amazing.

MR. MAZIN. Yes, it is.

BILL K. What kind of chemical weapons did they use? Did you say mustard gas?

MR. MAZIN. They use—I guess it was mustard gas. There is another they were using, phosgene or something, but I guess it was mustard gas.

BILL K. So when did you then come back to Iraq? [03:21]

MR. MAZIN. About 1992 when Kurdistan was protected by the Coalition forces. All the Iraqi opposition work together north of Kurdistan trying to change the former regime.

BILL K. So you left your family in Australia then. How long have you been away from your family?

MR. MAZIN. About a year. She visits me all the time in Kurdistan, north of Iraq. It is a free country now.

BILL K. OK. What year did you go to Australia?

MR. MAZIN. 1990.

BILL K. And then you came back to Kurdistan in 1992, and have you been in Iraq since 1992?

MR. MAZIN. In 1992 I visited London, Syria, and Iran. I went back to Australia in 1997, when the Iraq Army attacked Kurdistan again, 1996–1997, near Dohuk, because there was a civil war between the two sides, the KDP [Kurdish Democratic Party] and PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan], Barzani and Talibani. That [was] is a horrible thing that [was] is happening there.

BILL K. So there was conflict between Talibani and Bazani.

MR. MAZIN. Yes. Talibani worked with the Iranian troops at that time, and the Iranian[s], they cut ties and help Talibani. They forced Barzani to make a deal with the former regime of Saddam Hussein to help. They asked him to commit troops to Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk. That's a horrible thing. They killed many from the Iraqi opposition, and they forced us to escape again to Turkey. They captured me for a while, with some leadership from PUK, but the Red Cross protected us. They help us to go to Turkey. From Turkey it is back to Sulamaniyah because Talibani is back again to fighting Barzani. It's a civil war; thousands of innocent people are killed by this war.

BILL K. So then you came back the last time to Iraq in 1997?

MR. MAZIN. In the middle of 1997.

BILL K. And you have been here since 1997?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, 1997.

BILL K. When did you work for the Coalition Provisional Authority? What did you do after the war?

MR. MAZIN. The Iraq opposition was trying to remove Saddam Hussein from Baghdad, and we worked together with them. Someone from the United States came to get training for Iraqi opposition, especially the Arabic. I am a Kurdish from north Iraq. I work together with them at first, then with the Coalition forces coming into Baghdad, from Mosul to Baghdad, into IZ, the Green Zone.

BILL K. When did you then start working for the CPA?

MR. MAZIN. For a long time in the north of Iraq in Sulamaniyah.

BILL K. OK, but you said you worked for Mr. Bremer.

MR. MAZIN. No, not Bremer, I worked for CMATT.

BILL K. Oh, CMATT. OK.

MR. MAZIN. We worked together to do Iraq Security Forces to help the Iraqis not depend on the Coalition force forever. I was the first volunteer as an interpreter. I met General Petraeus, General Eaton, and I advise them that it is a great mistake if you depend on the old rules and the old Army. Because of that, there are new rules, but step by step they change, and they depend on the old rules now. I told him, don't trust; never depend on these people. Maybe step by step we will change the mind of these people, but the military will destroy everything. They destroyed Kuwait, and they destroyed Iran.

BILL K. It is a great mistake to rely on the Army?

MR. MAZIN. No, to depend on the old rules, for the old Army.

BILL K. When you say "old rules," what do you mean?

MR. MAZIN. The former regime, and the old Army. I feel the same rules could happen here now.

BILL K. Because we are relying too much on the people who were around in the old Army. When Bremer dissolved the Army and directed the deba'athification, did you think that was good?

MR. MAZIN. That was very good. We can't depend on the Ba'ath, on the former regime, or former Army. But we can work with them for 4 or 5 years, and after that retire them. Now the old regime, all the old Army leaders now control everything, from the MOD to the division, brigade, platoon. I work for a long time with the new Iraqi Army. I think we need at least 10 years to see change. Three years is nothing—for 35 years the dictatorship destroyed everything.

BILL K. Well, do you think it is OK now?

MR. MAZIN. I am sure there are good leaders from both sides, from Coalition forces and from Iraqis. You can, after 8 or 10 years, build a new Iraq.

BILL K. It's going to take awhile.

MR. MAZIN. At least 10 years.

BILL K. Do you think we are trying to do it too fast? [10:25]

MR. MAZIN. Yeah. I think somebody from the Coalition Force, the leadership, they want to do the magic. They want to change the people; that is impossible.

BILL K. This is supposed to be a lesson for us. If this ever happens again—and I hope it doesn't—but if it ever happens again, what would you have done differently than [what] we did? What would you have done differently had you been in charge?

MR. MAZIN. I think there is an honest guy here in Iraq. I think that democracy rules are not suitable for Iraq. If they did prefer a leadership for the Shi'a religious leaders, that's a great mistake. That is no more different from Saddam Hussein. I think the democracy rules here in Iraq can't be like the United States or Europe. That's impossible. We need to relearn the people how the democracy rules here.

BILL K. How do you do that? How would you do that?

MR. MAZIN. Maybe we need to change the people and not give the bad guys the chance or opportunity to be leaders for this country. We spent a year to form a cabinet for Shi'a. They do horrible things for the country. They work together with the Iranians to destroy Iraq, not to reconstruct Iraq. That is very bad. I think the United States just watched what was going [on] in Iraq. I believe in democracy, but not this way in Iraq.

BILL K. You know, there are quite a few people in the United States that agree with you. Because there is not an understanding of democracy and how it works, [they believe] that we are giving the enemy too much of a chance.

MR. MAZIN. It's impossible to give bad guys to be leading Iraq. There are stupid guys in the south, from the north; they vote for the bad guys. I am Kurdish; I think that the KDP and the PUK are not more different from the former regime. The same techniques are used in a dictatorship against our people. I am Kurdish, but I talk the truth about what's going on North of Iraq.²¹ That is true, that everything is OK north of Iraq. We need an honest guy to lead these people, not believe in Kurd or Shi'a or Sunni, but believe in all of Iraq. We want a strong guy.

BILL K. That's a good point. So you were with the CMATT when it started. When did you join the 1st Brigade? [13:32]

MR. MAZIN. March 2004.

BILL K. And why did you join the 1st Brigade?

MR. MAZIN. No, first I joined the division, December 2003. They asked me to volunteer in Taji because I have experience, and they told me there are many Kurds in Taji.

²¹ Mr. Mazin consistently speaks of Kurdistan being separate, that is, being north of Iraq.

They need someone who can speak Kurdish and Arabic and English to help those people to join the Army. I told them I was ready. It was a hard mission for me.

BILL K. You joined in March, and then of course Fallujah I happened in April. That was very quick. Talk to me about Fallujah I, how the brigade or the battalion was tasked. I know you didn't go to Fallujah with them, but you saw it; you saw it at the brigade and division.

MR. MAZIN. The problem, it happened too fast. They sent the people without training and without any experience. Most of the soldiers at that time, they came in for the pay because they did not have a job. They did not give them a good education, and [there was] no guidance about what was going on in the country. Most of them were from Kurdistan or the south of Iraq. They are jobless and they need money. That's the problem, especially for the Shi'a when they start to fight against Muqtada al-Sadr's militia. They refused to fight against them.

BILL K. And in fact, I guess they had only been up in Taji for a month or so before they were committed.

MR. MAZIN. Yes, it [is] a short time. They did not get good training. Also, the MiTT [military transition team]... I am sure from my experience working with the MiTT team [that] the team is very important. The relationship between the units and the MiTT team is very important. If they build a good relationship and trust between the two, they will succeed in this mission. For example, with LTC D [LTC De Oliveira, the senior AST] they work, they eat, they do everything with the brigade.

BILL K. When the major [referring to an interview conducted previously with the Iraqi convoy commander] was talking about the convoy as it left Baghdad and was en route to Fallujah, it was ambushed. He talked about half the vehicles getting through, the center vehicle turning and blocking the way. He also said that the insurgents wanted the American advisors. Can you talk about that?

MR. MAZIN. These people are very good people, this joint Army. Maybe they're not professional soldiers, but it's like the United States because they serve the people from a federation. The insurgents come in and protect themselves in this area because [of] the tradition of the people. They [the insurgents] asked to be helped; they [the people] help them without asking why. They like the foreigner when they come in. They give him everything, but that's also what happens with the MiTT team. The Iraqi soldiers protected them. And about the soldier that stopped the convoy. I am

sure this guy is a Shi'a working with the Sadr militia. Maybe there is some relationship with them.

The same thing happened in Najaf. The MiTT team, LTC D and his team, did not allow him [Coalition forces] to move inside a mosque, did not allow foreigners, the Christians or something. Me, I move alone with the radio, with my pistol inside the mosque, and then pass information for COL D.

BILL K. Did you go into the Ali Imam Mosque?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, inside it. Ask COL D.

BILL K. Well, that is something. So you were with him down in Najaf?

MR. MAZIN. Najaf, Sadr City.

BILL K. The 36th Commandos were working the mosque also?

MR. MAZIN. No, I worked with the brigade. But the soldiers refused to attack, because most of them are Shi'a. They are scared from the civil war [wary of inciting a civil war].

BILL K. That's something. You went in the Imam Ali Mosque.

MR. MAZIN. Yeah, me and LTC Yassir together, we entered the mosque.

BILL K. Col Yassir? LTC Yassir went into the mosque?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, 3rd Battalion, yes, went into the mosque.

BILL K. I wish he would have told me that. That is interesting.

MR. MAZIN. Also, there is a big meeting between Muqtada al-Sadr and the governor and Sistani inside the mosque.

BILL K. Were you there?

MR. MAZIN. Yeah, I entered. They did not allow me in after that. I am supposed to make some tradition towards my hand, my face. I told him its OK, it's easy, I am Muslim. And I was there at this meeting, and Muqtada al-Sadr, he refused all this. He said, "I never accept soldiers, the Iraqi Army to search. I never give up my weapons."

BILL K. That was something. What made Muqtada al-Sadr change his mind and move out of the mosque? [20:12]

MR. MAZIN. We stayed for 45 days there, and we showed that the Iraqi Army will search and unit 36 [Commandos] is ready to attack.

BILL K. Yes, yes they were.

MR. MAZIN. And he is scared from that. And also, Sistani advised him. Somebody from his party—his name is Ali Mazin—he's a very smart guy, a political guy; he advised him because the government and the Coalition force want to attack.

BILL K. But then they did search his office and stuff, right?

MR. MAZIN. They searched everything. He accepted at last.

BILL K. It's interesting. They say it was Muqtada al-Sadr's militia, but weren't a lot of the militia criminals and terrorists?

MR. MAZIN. The problem is that they treat the people by their religions. His father, Muqtada al-Sadr's father, is a very good man; he is like a religious leader for the Shi'a. And Saddam Hussein, he killed him with his two brothers, and for that, Iraqis like him. He took the name of his father. He said he represented his father and also said he would protect the hungry people, the poor people of this country.

BILL K. He did?

MR. MAZIN. Yeah. I think there are some advisors in south of Lebanon and the Iranians give him some guidance or advice, because he is [a] very stupid man. I am not sure he has any experience, political experience. Maybe somebody is behind him, because he is not very smart; he use politics, and he cheats the people.

BILL K. Something else I heard, too, and maybe you can tell me whether it's right or not. I heard that in some of the areas, he could not control the militias unless he fought against the Coalition. I understood that they would support him as long as he was anti-Coalition.

MR. MAZIN. Some militia from Muqtada al-Sadr? Yes, Muqtada al-Sadr wants to stop the Coalition forces from staying for a long time in Iraq. He says they come as foreigners and occupy our country, and there is no more difference between the Sunni and Shi'a. Also, they help some insurgents, indirectly in Fallujah and the rest of Iraq, because there is no more difference between Sunni and Shi'a. He is very smart. I am very sure it is not his opinion. Maybe Hezbollah gave him some guidance to use this way, to turn the people against the Coalition forces.

BILL K. When did you leave Najaf? [23:53]

MR. MAZIN. Najaf was the 1st Brigade, LTC D, and 3rd Battalion and 2nd Battalion.

BILL K. So you left in early September.

MR. MAZIN. Yes, I think so.

BILL K. Did you then start preparing for Fallujah?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, we work with LTC D to prepare because there is no commander [of the brigade]; I talk at that time with LTC D because the old commander, General Sallad, quit during Najaf. I am surprised how we are working in Najaf. We succeeded in Najaf; there is no commander. LTC D said [that] there is a commander; LTC D is the commander.

BILL K. So he commanded the 1st Brigade?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, he was a good commander.

BILL K. Yeah, he was good. Then the brigade trained up for Fallujah?

MR. MAZIN. Yeah, we start in Baghdad for a short time, and the MOD promised LTC D when we visited MOD he will send the 1st Brigade a good commander, General Tariq. I am sure was educated in the former regime, but he is a good man. He is a good man because LTC D controlled him; he controlled him completely. He is a very good man, very smart; he knows the traditions between the Iraqis and Americans.... LTC D, maybe because he from Brazil, I don't know. There is no more difference between them—they eat together, and they work together.

BILL K. Now General Tariq, he was Special Forces wasn't he?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, Special Forces. He was friend with COL Razak.

BILL K. LTC D said he tried to get General Tariq before the cameras, and he said General Tariq was reluctant. He said he was real good and firm with the soldiers, but he just didn't want to get in front of the camera.

MR. MAZIN. LTC D step by step, he turned everything over to General Tariq. When LTC D finished his mission in Iraq, General Tariq cannot work with any ASTs [Advisory Support Teams]. I understand why Tariq cannot, because there is nobody that can replace LTC D. It is impossible. He [LTC D is] a very good man; he did a very good job for Iraq, especially for the 1st Brigade.

BILL K. So you started preparing, and as they have already said, they trained first in Rustimiyah. Then in Taji they did the MOUT training, the room clearing. Was this a new mission for them? [27:38]

MR. MAZIN. New mission, a new mission for the 1st Brigade, especially Fallujah. When they heard Fallujah, everybody was scared.

BILL K. Well, talk about that. Talk about that because I've always heard there was an aura about Fallujah. Give me the history of Fallujah.

MR. MAZIN. It is a horrible. Fallujah—most of them worked with the former regime for intelligence, the Iraqi security, or the Special Forces. Al Qaeda, they find a good environment for them to work. I guess Iraq started from the west, especially from Fallujah. Most of the Fallujah—most of the people—change from socialist Ba'ath party to Islam, the Salafad or the Wahabis. They change, and they organize themselves very well. Different kind of parties work there, from Ba'ath party, Islam movement. They work together, and they are very smart. Most of them are professional officers, and for everyone, for Iraqis or for Coalition forces, when they heard Fallujah, they start shaking. I agree with them, because it is a horrible thing. They cut the head by the sword, they cut the head by the small knife. That is very bad guys that live there, and they give them opportunities. The prime minister at that time, PM Allawi, led everything. They spent 3 months to negotiate, and they [the negotiations] did not work.

BILL K. Were you in on any of the negotiations?

MR. MAZIN. No. I heard from the news because some of my friends work with the prime minister's office. They found this information in trying to stop the war because there is innocent people also there.

BILL K. In Fallujah, were...a lot of criminals there?

MR. MAZIN. Most of them are criminals. Most of them deserve to be killed; I am sure of that. It is my country. I work for them, but I am sure there are many bad guys; they send the car bombs and the VBIEDs and IEDs to all of Iraq.

BILL K. So there was a real concern about going into Fallujah?

MR. MAZIN. Yes. Also, the preparation for the brigade is not very well. There is a new commander, General Tariq, and Executive Officer, COL Razak. They spent 15 days with us, and [building] the relationship between the MiTT team and the soldiers.

Having a new commander is a problem, but General Tariq succeeded completely in this mission. Maybe the guidance and advice from LTC D helped him succeed at this mission. [30:39]

BILL K. Did you go then straight from Taji to the EFIC [East Fallujah Iraqi Camp] in Fallujah, in Camp Fallujah?

MR. MAZIN. No, we moved from Rustimiyah.

BILL K. OK, so you trained in Taji, went back to Rustimiyah, and then into EFIC. And was that 2 November?

MR. MAZIN. Yeah, 1st or 2nd of November. Unfortunately we selected a bad road in the west of Baghdad. The enemy attacked us with two IED. Three or four soldiers were wounded.

BILL K. So you were attacked as you moved to support Fallujah II?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, they attacked us and started shooting at us. The soldiers were very scared at that time, but they moved towards Fallujah; nobody stopped us.

BILL K. But then, this time you made it?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, and the reaction from the soldiers was very good.

BILL K. They counterattacked, very good. So you arrived there on 2 November, and you linked up with—you probably linked up with General Natonski? General Sattler?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, I heard in DFAC [dining facility] Rotunda they met him. There is a briefing, there is meeting before the operation with Col Shupp—I remember that.

BILL K. Yeah, and Col Shupp was there; that's right. Did they have any type of briefing or rehearsal for the brigade?

MR. MAZIN. Yes, Col Shupp is very smart and also [so is] the general. They use the Iraqis like a partner. There is no more difference between the Iraqis and the Americans. They share everything—about intelligence information, about the planning, and moving together. On the first night will be attack by aircraft in Fallujah. We are working together, [it] is very good. It's more different from Najaf and Sadr City and also from Mosul. The best, we worked together.

BILL K. That's good; that's very good. So you trained up, you trained with the coalition, and on the 8th of November is when the coalition moved into Fallujah. [33:22]

MR. MAZIN. Yeah, we watched the first night when the coalition moved into the train station.

BILL K. How long after the attack started did they move the [Iraqi] units?

MR. MAZIN. The next day; during the night they attacked Fallujah. Tanks are moving down the street in the morning, early in the fight, before 6 o'clock. Then the troops—Iraqi troops, the coalition troops—start moving inside Fallujah to search and patrol.

BILL K. You know, it was interesting. LTC Yassir indicated that the Army colonel did not trust him.

MR. MAZIN. Yes, because this is the first time he dealt with Iraqis. Not all the Americans; some of them never trust Iraqis. I give them advice to never trust anybody that's in this country; they don't know them.

BILL K. But it sounds like on the other side [of Fallujah] in the RCT7 area, when we talked to the lieutenant colonel and the major out at Hue City, it sounds like they worked together pretty well.

MR. MAZIN. Yes, 2nd Battalion and 3rd Battalion, they did a great job.

BILL K. But it sounds like it worked. They worked very well with the coalition, too. What I mean is, even though the Army colonel may not have trusted LTC Yassir's people at the beginning, it sounds like 2nd Battalion worked very well with RCT-7.

MR. MAZIN. At first, the colonel didn't trust them, but I am sure when the mission was over, he will be trusted. Because he never saw a brigade like this.

BILL K. Well, in fact, he said that once they started he felt very good about what they had done. When you look back at Fallujah, what changes resulted from operations in Fallujah? What changes in resourcing, equipping, and training resulted from Fallujah?

MR. MAZIN. When we got back from Fallujah to Rustimiyah, there were many general visitors—General Patreaus, also General Casey. They helped the brigade very much, and they built a new fort for them, New Rashid. The Coalition forces, they built this special place for the 1st Brigade. And also there were many changes in the school. They also send some of the officers and NCOs to get training. And they received equipment, vehicles. Everything is good, to include the food. Everything is good, and they help the brigade. There was special treatment for the 1st Brigade.

BILL K. What about when you look at the larger picture, when you look at the country. What did Fallujah do for the country? [36:59]

MR. MAZIN. I think that Fallujah, it gave a lesson to the insurgents, [and to] all the bad guys who were thinking of joining the insurgents. Maybe there is some town or some area in Iraq that is trying to help and protect the insurgents; they stopped. For example, when they start in Fallujah, most of the insurgents escaped to Ramadi. Tribes in Ramadi fight them there. They stop them, they say, "We don't want our city destroyed like Fallujah." That is a good lesson.

BILL K. That is a good lesson. So what you are saying is some of the destruction was good.

MR. MAZIN. Yes. Very good.

BILL K. Because it taught the other people that you don't want your town destroyed, too. Well, it seemed to set the conditions for the elections; the elections happened in January 2005. The brigade was in Mosul?

MR. MAZIN. They had the first election in Mosul.

BILL K. That's right, they had the first election in Mosul. And second election was here.

MR. MAZIN. Here in Al Qaim.

BILL K. That's right.

MR. MAZIN. Both the referendum and the election.

BILL K. You know the 1st Brigade has led the way in many of the hot spots in Iraq. It was also the first counterinsurgent force that was developed, because of its experience, but sometimes the pace takes a toll on units. [39:58]

MR. MAZIN. Yeah, I think the problem that is facing the brigade now with the MOD, with the same leaders that retained the tradition and rules from the old Army, [is that] they want to destroy this brigade. I know some people in the MOD hate the brigade; they want to destroy it. The relationship between the brigade and the division commander is very bad. I want to talk more about the division commander. He was from north of Iraq, from Kurdistan, from the KDP. Barzani protects him. And they deal with the brigade like a company. He wants Coalition forces to stop this [good] treatment of the brigade. I am sure somebody in the MOD or division wants to destroy everything here, because most of the soldiers, NCOs and officers, get

education and everything from the Coalition forces. And the success of the brigade make some people angry.

BILL K. You know, some of the recommendations that have been made are that we put a MiTT team with the MOD, much in the same way that you find them at the units.

MR. MAZIN. But that is not enough. They do not put honest guys in the MOD. The MiTT team, what they can do?

BILL K. All they can do is watch and advise.

MR. MAZIN. There are good guys and honest guys in this country; we need to put that kind of leadership there.

BILL K. As you of course know, the brigade continued to develop even after that, with Mosul, Talafar, and now another hot spot was Al Qaim.

MR. MAZIN. But unfortunately there are many good soldiers that quit. Now the new soldiers here are about 60%. Why so many quit? Because there are bad rules and bad treatment of them. That's what's happening.

BILL K. When you say rules and treatment, how has that happened? [41:40]

MR. MAZIN. Maybe from the leadership, from the officers. Some of them use the old rules from the old Army. For example, when I told LTC D there is soldiers in the jail for nothing—they put them in jail for a month in that condition, a place not suitable soldiers—LTC D went to the commander and he asked him why.

But now, when they put somebody in the jail, when they complain to the ASTs or the MiTT team, "Why did they put the soldier in jail?" he said, "I cannot do anything." Why are you an advisor? You are supposed to advise.

BILL K. You mean, he ought to at least make some sort of comment?

MR. MAZIN. Everything has changed for the worst. I spent 3 years work[ing] to build a new Iraq Army. I think the first year is better than the second year. Also, the second year is better than this year. It's up to the team; the team is very important. Also the interpreter is important. The team would not know anything that is going on—not see, not hear—anything. It's up to the interpreter to pass the information to the team. He needs to be honest; he's supposed to be smart. That's very important. The CMATT is supposed to send an interpreter for the team, not the company.

BILL K. And so the interpreters are not coming from the CMATT; they are coming from the units.

MR. MAZIN. Before the CMATT, they send interpreters, but now Titan sends interpreters. They pay for them. And the interpreter, when they hear there is a mission, sometimes the hard mission such as in Fallujah or Najaf or Qaim, they quit. They are supposed to send good interpreters for the MiTT team.

BILL K. You know, you've seen a lot. What would you do differently if you were the Coalition? What would you have done differently during the past 2-1/2 years?

MR. MAZIN. From the Coalition forces?

BILL K. This whole thing is about what lessons the Coalition needs to learn. The customer is the Iraqi people, so what could we have done better?

MR. MAZIN. I am sure if they send the top guys, good guys that know the tradition and culture of this country, it will be a MiTT team that will succeed.

BILL K. So you need good people in the MiTT teams.

MR. MAZIN. That is very important; we deal with the different cultures and different people. Sometime it will be any soldiers or any officers. We need smart guys, tough guys to deal with these people. I think there are some people in the MiTT team who do not deserve to be there. We need to establish in United States or Coalition forces a committee to chose who is suitable or unsuitable for this mission. [46:10]

BILL K. They need selection criteria for suitability to be on a MiTT team.

MR. MAZIN. Exactly, that is very important.

BILL K. I agree.

MR. MAZIN. If you want to succeed at this mission to build a new Iraqi Army, you need to have a good team.

BILL K. And we did that with Col D.

MR. MAZIN. D is the best. Before D there is many like Patrick Boykin; he is very good, I worked with the Marines at that time, Col Flynn, yeah.

BILL K. Col Flynn, I've heard that name.

MR. MAZIN. Col Flynn, he was a very good man. He was working the 1st Division.

BILL K. Yeah, I've heard his name. Bob, Tony, what'd I miss?

MAJOR CASTRO. When you were in Sadr City, what was the joint arena? This was a major event to kick them out. What were the repercussions if it failed, if the mosque had been destroyed? They wanted to destroy the mosque?

MR. MAZIN. I think some of the mosque be destroyed. Somehow they attack by the aircraft; they destroy. They get crazy, the people in this area. We come, we negotiate.

MAJOR CASTRO. You were told about one of the former leaders of Iraq, 1957–1960 time frame. He led the country, but no one ever knew what his affiliation, his religious beliefs—was he Shi’a, Sunni, or whatever. Do you think that should be the way that the government should be towards the military and towards government—not to worry about what your background is; everybody would be treated equal. What’s your opinion? [48:39]

MR. MAZIN. That is kind of impossible, because as Saddam Hussein said, some things never change. Unfortunately, every month there is a different man there—one from there, one from Sunni, one from Kurdistan, one from the south—which is very bad.

We want to teach the people how you can believe in the democracy. We never ask if you are Muslim or Jew or Christian or Arab or American. I think part of the mistake is up to the Coalition forces, the United States, to let the people believe these bad things. If they want to learn the people about the democracy process, we are never asking where are you from. I am sure Saddam Hussein gave bad things for everybody, from Sunni, from Shi’a from north, from south. They do not care to say the Sunnis work with the former regime, or the Sunni now work with the insurgent.

I am sure the Shi’a [and] Muqtada al-Sadr will work with the insurgents, and most of the Shi’a now work with the Iranians. I am sure the Iranians are worse than the insurgents. The great enemy, not for Iraqis, but enemy for all the world, [is] the Iranians. As we discussed about what is going on here Iraq, it is not supposed to be safe; it is a Sunni insurgency. I am sure the next step, if the Sunni are accepted into the political process, I think the next problem will be with the Shi’a. We are one country.

MAJOR CASTRO. What’s funny is that you get a different perspective from the media at times, just the way we portray it, but I’m glad to hear it, and that’s why I was asking.

MR. MAZIN. Paul Bremer, he came here and was talking about one leader for Kurdistan, a Shi’a. It will be a fact; it is very bad things. We refused that, we want anybody,

Christian or Jew, to be a leader who can serve our country. It is no matter [that] he is from north, or from Christian, no matter; we want a good person to serve our country.

MAJOR CASTRO. What I wanted was your opinion, and I appreciate it.

MR. MAZIN. Maybe we depend on 3 million Iraqis that live outside of Iraq in Australia or America. Maybe it will be, we need them now, not after 5 or 10 years, to get a lot of money. Maybe we depend on these people because they get a good education. It is a different culture; we need them to change these people.

MAJOR CASTRO. Bring the diversity back. [End file 00:55:19]

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Transcript 14. Interview of Personnel from Two Military Transition Teams (MiTTs). One Brigade MiTT (1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces, IIF, Division) and a Battalion MiTT (3rd Battalion of the 1st Brigade)



Figure C-14-1. MAJ King, LTC Simpson, Maj Heil

1. On 20 January 2006, the Team interviewed members of two MiTTs. One MiTT was assigned to the 1st IIF Brigade, 1st Division, and the other MiTT was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade, 1st Division.

2. LTC Simpson, U.S. Army, was the Senior Advisor, 1st IIF Brigade. He is a member of the 80th Division, based out of Virginia. With him at the interview

was 1SG Bright, SSG Harrington, and Major King, his S-3, who was assigned to the 85th Division from Indianapolis, Indiana.

3. Major Heil, USMC, was the Senior Advisor for the 3rd Battalion MiTT. Accompanying him was SSgt Alley, GySgt Parrella, and 1stSgt Lane. Most of them were from the 25th Marines located in the Northeast United States.

4. The transcript of the interview follows.

LTC SIMPSON. I'm LTC Simpson, Senior Advisor, 1st Bde IIF. I have a 10-man team at the brigade level. This is MAJ King, my S-3. [SSgt Harrington arrived later.]

MAJOR HEIL. I'm the 3rd Battalion MiTT Team Leader. SSgt Alley is my 1st Company advisor. He's been working with that same company for the whole tour we've been here, about 9 months at this point. Gunny Parrella, he's my S-4 Advisor. He does the logistics for the MiTT team, but more importantly he trains the S-4 personnel in the Iraqi unit. 1stSgt Lane is my senior enlisted advisor; again, he has a dual role with the team, as well as training the senior enlisted Iraqi personnel on their duties.

BILL K. What units are you part of?

MAJOR HEIL. Back home, all of us are from 25th Marines, 7 of the 10 are from 25th Marines, and we have 2 guys from 3/24 and 1 from 4th AV Battalion.

LTC SIMPSON. I am from the 80th Division, I teach [at the] CAS3 [Combined Arms and Services Staff School], and MAJ King is from the 85th Division.

MAJOR KING. [The] 85th Division and I'm based out of Indianapolis, Indiana.

LTC SIMPSON. And ours is Virginia.

BILL K. And your unit is based out of?

MAJOR HEIL. Out of the Northeast, New York.

BILL K. Kind of a regional?

MAJOR HEIL. Right.

BILL K. Have you ever done this type of work before?

MAJOR HEIL. No.

LTC SIMPSON. No, never, other than [when] I was on active duty. I was an exchange officer in the Japanese Army for about 10 months; that's the closest I've come to this type of job.

BILL K. Did this come as a surprise to you to come and work as part of a military transition team?

LTC SIMPSON. To me, yes, it was. This is considered a Special Forces mission, even though we are trainers as an entity. When I was a lieutenant, the plan was that the 80th and all the divisions were supposed to go to Benning and Jackson and so forth and take over those missions and allow the active duty guys to go out. I was really surprised.

BILL K. Tell me how important you think this mission is? By the way, I can tell you how I think it is—I think this is the key to the national strategy—but tell me what you think.

MAJOR HEIL. I agree, it is. When we were in Taji, we had General Casey come and speak to us, as well as General Petraeus. He basically said it was his main effort, which I think it should be. As an economy-of-force measure, it's the way we are going to reduce our troop levels here. I think on the smaller scale, we've seen the result of what previous advisor teams did and the level the unit was at already by the time we took over. As I look back, in the time that we've been here, we can see a lot of improvement and a lot of changes across the board for the guys, leadership-wise, tactical-wise, logistics; everything is a lot better. Some of it's due to their own initiative, but I think a lot of it wouldn't have happened unless they had that push from the advisors.

LTC SIMPSON. I agree. I think that this is the only way that you are going to win—not just by getting our people out, but the fact that you put an Iraqi face on what’s going on. The people accept that. It’s not somebody hanging over them; it’s their own people, and you can see it right here in this mission. Col Razak runs it even though the Marine battalion commander is there. He gets feedback all the time because he’s an Iraqi just like they are. When you are building a unit from scratch, it’s basically what’s happened in Iraq—the only way you can do it is to have embedded teams like this. I wish the teams were a little bigger so that we could push more manpower down to the lower level, but we are still doing a lot, and we are making a lot of inroads. [04:32]

BILL K. As you look back on the history of the ASTs initially, and now the MiTTs, there are things we do right, and there’s thing we do wrong. When I say “history,” you’ve met people in your jobs, your predecessors, who have talked about some of the things they’ve done. You’ve seen General Petraeus; he’s passed the baton on to Dempsey. As you look at the inception of the program, talk to me about some of the lessons learned as the program evolved. [05:21]

MAJOR HEIL. I agree with LTC Simpson. I wish we had a few more people, because I think the lower the level you are at with these guys, [the more] it rubs off on them. I’ve seen it with companies where the companies have taken on the personality of their advisors. I think if we had them at an even lower level it might be more influential.

I think as these guys transition into independent ops, one thing that is going to be very tough for them to do on their own is to communicate because of the language barrier, the encrypted communications. They have to have a communications cell with them, and those guys almost should be independent from the advisors that are teaching them tactics and leadership and getting out on patrol with them. I think that would help.

I think there is a move afoot to put ANGLICO [air and naval gunfire liaison company] teams or a similar unit with them. I think that’s a great idea, because on their own, we haven’t really had the opportunity to teach them much fire support, and it’s going to take them awhile to get used to that. All the fire support available is coalition anyway; all the air, all the fire support, is coalition.

I think some things need to get taken away from the advisors or at least pushed more into Iraqi hands. As an example, they need a personnel system. The first sergeant has

done a lot with getting PERSTATS [personnel status reports], driving personnel accountability into their heads. Our unit does that pretty well now, with a little bit of guidance. But on a higher level, they need a promotion system, an assignment system, a personnel evaluation system.

If they can do that and get a handle on personnel at a higher level, it would also help things become a little fairer. Most of the guys in our unit have been there for 2 years, and there's no set pattern of rotation out of the battalion. We did a unit history—22 out of 24 months they've been deployed since they were formed up. They need a little bit of a break. [08:00]

MAJ KING. Let me hear the question one more time; make sure I get the right question.

BILL K. As you've seen the evolution of the ASTs to the MiTTs, what are some of the challenges—what were some of the good things and some of the weaknesses—that if we ever had to do this again we ought to start off with instead of learning as we went along?

MAJ KING. I was training MiTTs for 18 months before I came over here. I was part of the training when they came out of Atterbury, Indiana. We drove home a lot of the weapons systems that we thought that they needed. But we really felt they needed communication tools. We didn't give them the type of communications that they needed like the Harris radio, and later on we started to see a movement towards teaching the Harris radio.

When the 80th Division came through, we trained more of the comms, not enough, but more comms, and just like Major Heil said, it's key if they are going to operate on an individual basis, then they need to be into that communications stuff. It really seems to be the one final piece now to make independent operations go forth.

MiTT teams, we've taken everything from different units and TSBs [training support battalions] and sent them over here. There is no one perfect cell—anything from infantry soldiers to quartermaster are on teams—and there seems to be no one perfect cell. They seem to all either work extremely well together or have several problems.

BILL K. What are some of the MOSs [military occupational specialties] in the cell that you think are important to a MiTT?

MAJ KING. Communications. The guys working at the company level need to be infantry, they need to know the infantry standards, the infantry CTT [common task

training] becomes very important. The one thing that needs to be brought home is this is not our army, and it never will be. It's not an American army; it's an Iraqi army. It's very apparent when they write an Op Order that we have a five-paragraph [order]—yes, they have something that is similar to a five-paragraph, but it's not our five-paragraph. Does it make it wrong? No, it doesn't. Is it the way we want it? Is it the American army way? No, it's not, but does it meet the standard? Yes, it does.

BILL K. Is it Sergeant Major Lane?

SGM LANE. First Sergeant.

BILL K. Major Heil talked about personnel accountability. I find that interesting. You talked about the basics. Can you talk about personnel accountability, NCOs, etc., in the Iraqi Army and some of your expectations and some of the things that may have surprised you?

1SG LANE. We pretty much knew before we came that there really wasn't an NCO structure, a staff NCO structure. That was pretty much one chief and the rest were Indians, and I think that hit home when we finally met with the unit. I think that's definitely a problem that needs to be rectified through professional military education, training, and things like that; that is, take advantage of the NCOs that are out there. Accountability, that's definitely a big thing, and that's just going to start from the top down. Accountability is just not a priority, I don't think, for the Iraqi unit themselves, whereas it is for the MiTT teams or any of the coalition forces out here. [12:33]

BILL K. Have things progressed, NCO-ship as well as personnel accountability since you've been here?

1SG LANE. I think that personnel accountability has gotten a lot better. I think because of the advisors that we have on our team at the company levels, they are definitely introducing the NCO ranks, [and] they are energizing their company commanders, their counterparts, to take advantage of those strong NCOs that they have. They are starting to utilize them, so it's been night and day from the first time we got here until now. In everything from personnel accountability to letting their NCOs become NCOs, I think it's a step forward.

MAJOR HEIL. I think the best thing on the MiTT team that you do is you take NCOs and put them with companies, and by example, they see that NCOs are capable of a lot. That's the best way to train them. They watch us, and they are pretty good observant, thoughtful people, and when they see what can be done, by our example, I

think that's the best way to train. So the one thing I wanted to say was keep putting NCOs and staff NCOs heavy on the team, two or three officers is enough, out of 10. [14:02]

LTC SIMPSON. One thing is they need to have a script system. Jundi can quit any time they want to, and because of that, we have a huge personnel turnover. You get to a level and lose 50 or 60 guys that would go on leave and don't come back, and so you are constantly doing a retrain, other than [for] some core element that stays. They really need some kind of scripting program throughout the Army to force these guys to stay in and make a commitment.

...It would also help if you had people who knew that they were going to be here for 2 years, like it or not. Once you got big enough, they don't have enough officers to do it all, so they'd have to start relying on the NCOs. As an example, they say, "COL Simpson?" and I say, "Go see 1SG Bright. That's 1SG Bright's job—he does that—I don't do those things." Well on the other hand, they have seen me work, and I heard feedback on that—I can't believe the Jundis see me doing physical labor or something like that. They just don't understand it because their officers just don't do that.

I think that by the examples that we set, [we] really start to teach them. I mean, you could see something as simple as I put shotgun shells on my gear, and the next thing I know, PSD [personnel security detachment] guys are sticking rounds up in their gear. They really watch what you do, good or bad, whatever you do. [16:52]

BILL K. Whether you have a shotgun or not.

LTC SIMPSON. Right. They are going to take your example and use it. I think it was good using reserve forces out here, but unlike the Marine Corp, the Army doesn't keep an active duty staff in their reserve elements; they have AGRs [active guard and reserve]. They are just full-time civilians wearing the same uniforms; those aren't guys who are out rotating with units and doing different things.

I told the 108th—I spent a whole day with them telling them that they needed to really look at who they were going to put on these MiTT teams. They needed to do a hard selection, not just because I'm a major, or a colonel, or a first sergeant. Who is this guy, what does he do, what are his capabilities, is this somebody we really want on this team? And they didn't do that very well, and hopefully the 108th will learn from what we told them.

Additionally, you need to have more team time in training. There needs to be time when the team trains as a team, not as a part of a big group. You need to get the foreign defense people involved in the development of training. They've been doing it for years down there at Bragg. The school is down there. Why don't we get people from there to look at the training and decide, "Here's how we can adapt it, these are the things that we need to do."

The language training that we did was woeful! I mean, a couple of hours every night you are sitting around doing language training, you were either being taught by guys who weren't Iraqi: "Well, in Iraq they say it this way, but in Egypt they say it this way," and we're like, "Wait a second!"

I think the best trainers that you can get are taking guys that come back from this mission and putting them into the training, taking them and telling [letting them say], "Well, this is stupid, and we're not doing this, this is a waste of time."

There was an AAR [after-action report] done by the 98th on all their training, and you could have just taken 98th off there and put an 80th on there, and nobody did anything to fix those problems. It's not the guys at the lower level that are training them; it's the guys that are making the decisions about how we are going to establish all these resources. Where are we going to put these guys? There isn't a man on the team that should come out here who isn't absolutely proficient at every weapons system out there; they should have that all before. You hear, "There isn't enough ammunition, there aren't enough weapons, there isn't enough time." There is time for it if you do a training schedule that really looks at the tasks that need to be accomplished.

It's just like there needs to be a comms guy; there needs to be a guy that knows maintenance backwards and forwards, both for our side as a team, and for the other side for the Iraqis, because they don't necessarily have guys that can fix stuff. There needs to be a guy who understands the logistical system. Now you can have guys that are dual hatted, but these are the kinds of things you need to understand; more and more you need to have someone at least at the brigade level that understands contracting, because we get involved in contracting, we get involved in negotiations; I mean all kinds of stuff that goes on there. [21:20]

We do language aptitude testing, and it's sitting on everybody's record. If you've got a guy that's really good at it from the team, then maybe you push him into a special—

like a Berlitz course for 2 weeks—where he gets immersed in a language, and you’ve got a guy on the team that’s really good at it.

Comms was big. Three or four radios for the whole 310 guys who trained on them. If you can’t do it in the States, then bring them here. Put them on their equipment, and do it here. Everything—every single thing—shouldn’t be a learning experience when you hit the ground here, and too much of that occurs. We are not really taking the guys that have done this before, and saying, “The Iraqi Army is at this level, from where we were at. These are the things that you are going need to be able to do when you get over here, and this is the kind of thing that we need to train you on.”

I was over here in May for PDS [predeployment survey], and the guy was teaching IED classes, and I’m like, “It’s all changed”; that’s how fast it changes. You have to have a guy that whoever’s teaching that is the one that’s getting intel reports on various areas. If you are going to this part of the country, this is the kind of thing that you need to be trained on. If you are going over here, these are the things you need to be looking at. When the guy tells you they put it in dead animals and garbage on the side of the road, well, the first trip you take out here, you go, there is garbage on the side of the road and dead animals.

The number of missions that have gone on in this country—things are changing, they are evolving, and they need to understand what their threats are. I think that the mission has been held by SF [Special Forces] for so long that the rest of the military really hasn’t caught up to it, and we need to go back to SF. I know they are crying because their teams are all being deployed, but you have got all these retired SF guys out there, why can’t you bring them back under contract and have them do the—and have them be involved in the training.

BILL K. My next question I’m going to ask everybody in the room. I’m going to ask you two questions. Number one, you’ve been here for so many months, you’ve seen a lot of things, and I know there’s times when you’ve been proud of what’s going on, and there have been times when you’ve been disappointed. There are a couple of obvious answers that the first couple of guys are going to mention very quickly. But think real hard about some of the moments that you are most proud of in working with the Iraqis, and some of the disappointments. And I say disappointments because those are kind of lessons that we need to learn; maybe it’s a cultural thing that we just simply didn’t know. SSG Harrington. [24:36]

SSG HARRINGTON. I really don't have a moment. I think the thing that makes me the most proud is that you definitely see improvement in some things that the Iraqis do. I don't have any specific answers, but the thing that makes me the most disappointed is the same answer, you can teach monkeys in a year to do some things, and some things these guys just can't figure out.

BILL K. Example?

SSG HARRINGTON. I think a big example is disseminating authority down as far as the NCOs, putting a lot more weight on the NCO's shoulders. I know how we operate. I mean we put a lot on sergeant's and corporal's shoulders. These guys will put the same thing on a captain's or major's shoulders; the battalion commander has to be told everything. It took 7 or 8 months, where you can definitely see a change to where some of the NCOs are taking charge. They are allowing them to do that. Of course, those NCOs are sergeants major and the senior NCOs. I think for me, my proudest moment is when that happens, when the NCOs start getting the control.

BILL K. That's good, so it really links to both. I mean, the biggest disappointment was their inability to push power down and for them to accept and execute. And of course, your proudest moments have been when you see that take occur.

SSG HARRINGTON. And it's not only the commander that is not pushing it down, it's a lot of times the lower ranks are scared to take it because of the old Army. They weren't allowed to look better than the person above them, so they are scared to take that leap and take control.

BILL K. Good, thanks. 1SG Bright? [26:39]

1SG BRIGHT. I have to agree with Staff Sergeant Harrington on this one. Knowledge is power here, and if you hold the knowledge, you have all the power, and being a senior NCO in the Army and the Marine Corps, we depend on our NCOs, and they don't depend on their NCOs here. So I have to agree with Staff Sergeant Harrington on this one, that they don't allow their NCOs to do a lot here. But every once in a while you will see a senior NCO get on some Jundi and snap them, square them away, and it makes you feel good, that maybe it is something that's starting to come around—that they are actually allowing the NCOs to do some things, even at the brigade level.

BILL K. Thanks, First Sergeant. Major King?

MAJ KING. This isn't anything that I had any impact on, but I was over in 3rd Battalion's area the other day. I walked out to the main gate and asked the Jundi how it was going, and the one thing that he was able to say in English was, "No Ali Baba," which in that area means no bad guys, and then he said, "We ran them off." And he took ownership in what he had done up there. That's something you don't see a whole lot up here...taking ownership in something that you do. So that was one thing; they get it, they get it.

One of the other things was, when they do something they blatantly know they are not supposed to, they just blatantly know, "I know I am not supposed to do this, but I'm going to anyway." And you can tell them not to do it, and you can turn your back, and they'll walk right back over and do it again. We had an instance in Al Wasad, it was a 3-day event where they did a lot of things, and you just keep telling them, "No," and they say, "OK," and they walk away, and minutes later they were back at it. It's disappointing when you see that, disappointing that they know the difference between right and wrong but they do it anyway.

BILL K. Thank you, that's a good comment. Mark?

LTC SIMPSON. The good thing I think is seeing, at least at the brigade level, the senior officers and the staff officers actually listen to what you are trying to tell them. They realize that I have nothing to gain here other than their success: "I want you to be successful. It's not about me; it's about you." I don't think there's been two times that Razak and I butted heads on anything. I mean, if I come in and say that it's wrong, then he does everything he can to fix it.

Now the problem is, it goes back to what they are saying. If he barks, it will get fixed. But he should only have to turn to one guy—say he turns to a sergeant major—and then the issue get fixed. Many times it's an officer running out there telling them, and if they hear Col Razak's name attached to the order, they get moving real fast.

They had some good things where they [old Army] used to throw soldiers in jail, which is a great disciplinary tool. If we had a jail here, on a couple of occasions they have no problem with throwing them in jail for a couple of days.

COL Razak sets standards, and part of that is because of his previous military training, and he wants things to be done correctly. When we had the old commander and he [COL Razak] was the XO, it was a constant frustration. But when the old

commander was on leave, we got things accomplished. When the commander was back, the staff would go to him because COL Razak was making it too tough.

So the two things are [that] I've seen the brigade staff come together and realize their responsibilities for supporting the battalions and that they are really nothing without their battalions. When we first got here, COL Razak kind of micromanaged some of the small missions we had with the battalions. I kept drawing him back and drawing him back to where he pretty much lets the battalion commanders do what they want to do, with regards to the mission and accomplishing it. [31:56]

MAJOR HEIL. I think that the proudest thing overall is [that] before you come, you hear stories about Iraqi forces falling apart and running away, and I think some of that happened in the past. We haven't been in the urban Battle of Fallujah during our time here, but every time shooting has broken out, these guys have never run away from it. They've always gone towards it, and I've never been concerned that they were going to leave our team out to dry. I've always had a lot of trust that they would engage the enemy and that they would stand fast. They've proven it several times.

The area that we've made the most difference in and the thing that I'm the proudest of is their C2 [command and control]. We have a TOC [tactical operations center] over there that they run 24 hours, 7 days a week. They keep good control of the operations. They've made a lot of progress on the whole staff working together and understanding that intelligence drives the operation, logistics supports it, comms makes sure they are up at all times, and they actually control their space as a battalion should. They never need to go back to doing just company ops, or sometimes Coalition forces will want to take a company away from you and stick it with a Marine company or with an Army company. We fought that successfully. They don't need Marine, Marine/Iraqi; they can operate as a battalion and control their space.

Just one more specific example of C2. When we first got here, we had a horrible S2. The most he could do is say, "We caught this guy because he was a bad guy." "How do you know he's a bad guy?" He would say, "Well, his neighbor told us he was a bad guy, so he's very bad," and that was as far as their intelligence went, and they were not a good partner to the American units.

But we switched out the person. We put another guy in there who's done a lot better, and around Christmastime I guess, this guy, LTC Mushtak, came out with an intelligence summary that was textbook; it was perfect. He explained the trends,

patterns, and what he thought was going on. He looked at patterns of cache finds, IED finds, different triggers on IEDs, different tribes in the area; it was a real nuances approach to it. It was fantastic. He was lecturing a company commander from 4/14, [who] was just sitting, writing down as fast as he could, because it was real good. To the point of understanding that not only do we have to find the bad guys, but we have to influence the ones that are on the fence. I didn't expect that out of him, and there is no way he would have done that 6 months ago.

The other thing he did, probably the most specific thing I've ever been proud of, came from our S2. We had three leave groups, and once they had all gone on leave once, we were getting ready to turn over to a new unit, [and] he said, "Don't let anyone else go on leave. Flood the area with our soldiers the last 2 weeks that we are here. Just hit every place we haven't been to push them back, and keep the pressure on them so that the new unit can come in and have a benign environment, so they [the enemy] doesn't even know a changeover is going.

I liked that because I couldn't believe he didn't want to go on leave, but also because usually the Iraqi units don't play nice to each other. They are really jealous of each other, and when we relieved in Ralla, we didn't interact very well, but they have really taken on the responsibility of, "This is our area, when we turn it over to 1/37, we want them to be set up for success," so I thought that was big progress. [36:13]

BILL K. What about disappointments?

MAJOR HEIL. Even though I trust them on the big things, such as I know that I wouldn't find our MiTT team isolated with the Iraqis running the other way, I don't trust them in small things. Money-wise, pay-wise, I know that they are ripping us off. I think that their ethics, their personal ethics, they've made some progress. They've gotten to the point where they sort of know sometimes the right thing. But I am still at the point where when one of our counterparts tells us something, I like to check it, because I think it's usually suspect. They are always cooking the books. We always have to have safeguards.

BILL K. Staff Sergeant Alley?

SSGT ALLEY. Proud moments, there's a couple of big things. There are times you get good suggestions, and they are absolutely hesitant about it, they don't believe that it will happen. Staff Sergeant Harrington just talked about the NCOs; we fought to let the NCOs take the patrols out. It used to be an officer; it had to be an officer in charge

of the patrol. We fought and we fought, and when it finally got done, the NCOs didn't screw it up, so they proved us right.

Other things, the little small missions that you think, "Should I be out there with them?" and they do good on them, and they don't disappoint me. They go out and they find stuff; their ability to find stuff is something we won't understand. I'll never understand it, and the time I've spent with them, that makes me happy to know that they are learning and doing and following through on what we've tried to teach them.

Disappointment-wise, they are no different from anybody else on this. They will absolutely do the dumbest thing and you say, "Why'd they do it?" Sometimes they just look at you and say, "I don't know."

GYSGT PARRELLA. Sir, we all come over here and we think, "What it's going to be like?" Whether it's personal goals after each month or whether they are team goals, we're wanting your counterpart to accomplish a mission or do something without our help; that really makes me happy.

In the past month and a half, my counterpart, the S4 in logistics, seems like he's doing more things on his own, calling brigade, "Hey, I need food, I need water, I need fuel, cold-weather gear," whatever the case may be, where 9 months ago, they wouldn't even ask for a trash bag or food without running to one of us. So in the past month, month and a half, it's made me pretty happy seeing them do that by themselves.

Now, a disappointment that I've had—but it kind of goes hand in hand, whether we like it or not—on the logistics side of the house, we need U.S. forces because the logistics system here is really not in place, not up to par. When we go and plan a mission, as an MiTT team, with our counterparts on the IIF side of the house, we will still have to talk to other Marines, other soldiers, to logistically make this mission sound.

Something as simple as it's 120 degrees, we need ice, or it's 120 degrees, we need water. So you are helping the Iraqi side of the house with the logistics, so you finally coordinate it.

I'm going to give you an example, a 120-degree day, and these guys need water to drink or water to wash because they have to wash three or four times a day, so we coordinate to get a water bowl from the Army units. It took 3 days to get the water bowl, per request of the Iraqi soldiers, to make it easier for them so they can wash.

Here is my disappointment part of it. After all the coordination is complete and the water bowl is sitting there, you as an advisor come around the corner and see a soldier sitting inside the water bowl taking a bath.

BILL K. Wow!

MAJOR HEIL. I knew that story was coming out

GYSGT PARRELLA. It's disappointing because as a big bathtub, that's good, but 600 Iraqi soldiers are trying to get a drink of water, and now you have to decontaminate it. So my point is, all the hard work you do to help these guys

BILL K. That's incredible, what did he say? [42:26]

GYSGT PARRELLA. Good. [Laughing from all.]

BILL K. That's incredible. First Sergeant?

FIRST SERGEANT LANE. I don't really have a proudest and most disappointing; I have a most rewarding and least rewarding. Being that I worked with the S1 the majority of the time, I am sure Major Heil would say that one of my most rewarding times would be when if I asked the S1 where a specific soldier was, he would be able to answer that. They've come to that point now, and I guess that's pretty rewarding...

I would say the most rewarding would be at a lower level. It would be at the discipline level, where they are really starting to get little things. Where when we first came into country, if we ever pulled over on the side of the road, say a convoy, and we started moving again, we would look to the left or the right, wherever that convoy was parked, and it would be just littered after being there for just 30 second or a minute. Now you actually see soldiers and officers, sergeants major, they all stop and they will start correcting their soldiers when they start seeing them litter. We don't see the littering as much as we used to, and that to me, is a form of discipline. I'm starting to see the discipline part really start to come out and blossom a little bit, not at a dramatic level, but it's starting to come. [44:20]

Everything from trash, to when you come up to a checkpoint—it wasn't uncommon for us to come up to a checkpoint and look at the soldier, and he would just stare right back at you, without his Kevlar on, without his flak on, and basically give you the "What's the problem?" look. Now you see them, as you come up to the checkpoints before you arrive, all of a sudden they will start running for their helmet, they will put it on before you get there, and they will put their gear on. Granted, they still do it

when they are not being watched, but at least they are starting to understand and starting to get into repetitive corrections, so to me that's a little rewarding.

Least rewarding, I would have to say, is the military justice system. That can be a problem because, examples: you will have soldiers who refuse to come on missions, and they will stay back at their base, and let's say Aristimiyah. The unit will come out here for 2 or 3 months, so basically that soldier is AWOL [absent without leave, because he didn't come out with the unit]. So you would think that he was basically discharged from the military, but a month or two later he's back in your unit. And to me, that's a big problem, and it's not very rewarding. It's very disappointing because you have those soldiers who are trying, and it's going to be a cancer. It's going to cause problems later on down the road if they don't get a handle on their justice system, their military justice system.

And that's just one example. Other examples are soldiers that are caught stealing or taking drugs or what have you. They get thrown in what they call their jail, and you would assume that that's it, we will never see that soldier again. Then, a few months later he's back in your unit. It's frustrating; it's more frustrating than it is anything else. To me, that's the most disappointing.

BILL K. Good point. [46:20]

LTC SIMPSON. A lot of those things are because of the Ministry of Defense or even the division. They will kick soldiers out, and the brigade is throwing guys out. MOD actually sent two soldiers [that were previously thrown out by the unit] to the front gate of this FOB [forward operating base]. They came all the way up here; now we've got them back. Excuse me? Because anybody who wants to come in the Army, they will just take them, because they are so hurting trying to fill the units. But look at this, these guys are terrorists, a lot of them, and they brought them back into the system because they think they can control them by having them back in the unit. COL Razak, as soon as he heard, he said they did something like this in Fallujah, and we ended up going back in and killing them all.

BILL K. The Fallujah Brigade.

LTC SIMPSON. And so we have to be really cautious. One thing, we come here with a cultural perspective that somehow we think our U.S. culture doesn't have similar issues that we see here, but we do. If we want to learn anything about Iraq, take it

back home and see what socialism or welfare does to our country, because that is a lot of the problems that we see here.

Out here, we see it less because we have farm people who work for a living, and you don't see as much of the sitting around on your butt as you do when you get down into the Baghdad area. I mean there is still some of it here, because they don't have plants [industry] and so forth. But when you take the work out of the people, which has happened to this culture, don't make the decision that will kill you—if you get in my way I'll kill you. So people tend to think that stealing is OK; we feel that in our own culture. We have to learn from some of the lessons that we see here. What happens when you have this type of environment, where the government does everything for you, when the government pulls your butt out of the hole instead of you digging your way out of it. Those are all issues that affect this culture.

Many of the things that guys will do, Iraqis will do over here. Because I was a police officer, I really think that is a big thing for MiTT teams in the future. Because many of the environments that you are dealing with here are just like going after druggies and other kind of criminals. So you get a perspective if you've been a police officer before. I've seen stuff that some of our U.S. citizens have never seen. So when someone says, "This guy did this," I say, "That is nothing." I say, "Let me tell you about what I saw 20 miles from our nation's capital." We have to understand that they are different people, what they've gone through, and I've seen an evolution.

It's like when First Sergeant Lane was talking about trash. I saw trash all over the place. I was walking through the brigade one day, and I was with Col Razak, and he was like, ripping people's butts [about the litter]. I walked out the door and there were six guys with garbage bags picking everything up. He understands standards, but sometimes it's about reinforcing standards without him. If you see around here, these people take their garbage out of the city and they put it out in the desert, because the desert has been eating up stuff for hundreds of years. So understanding how their culture is—it isn't the way we like to see it—but I think we see a lot of growth.
[51:04]

BILL K. If you were going to change one thing in the MNSTC-I [Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq] or MOD in supporting the Iraq organizations, what would it be?

LTC SIMPSON. Give me an MiTT team at every level of MOD, not a guy with dual hats over here—he's the J4, and he works with the logistics staff at MOD. No, I mean a guy who lives, eats, breathes, and sleeps with all those higher level organizations so number one, he can really see what's happening, not get BS'd every Tuesday about how we are doing and all these great, wonderful things and go back to his job over here doing his regular job. They need to be "that's their life." They live in MOD, they watch, they take notes about what is going on over there. I've been to the MOD four times, and it's a zoo. It's literally a zoo, and there [are] not enough people with the mission to fix the MOD.

I think they need their own type of MiTT down there, advisory team that, for example, when we came out here, they say now MOD is in charge of contracting for Iraq. It was a nightmare, so now we have GSs and Air Force guys that are here working on contracting stuff. How come we don't have, "This is the Iraqi contracting officer; I am the American contracting officer. Come watch me. Here's how we are going to do a contract for this. Now you see how I do it, now you do it; I'll watch you," and they build and develop it.

They don't do that, they just go, "Now it's yours," or they gave them tremendous amount of money instead of them having to come back and us write a check to them. There's been a lot of thievery that's gone on out at MOD. I think there's a 15 most wanted list of guys that have ripped off stuff out of MOD, serious money that could have been used for the soldiers. So I think MOD needs more of an MiTT team than anyone else.

The other problem we have is that what we see in 1st Brigade won't even come close to what 1/37 sees. Their MiTT teams are on a completely different level of people, and what you might see up in Mosul or the northern areas, they are clearly different. So each place, each environment, they have a TRA [Training Readiness Assessment].

BILL K. TRA, that's right, 1-4.

LTC SIMPSON. That's a serious report that needs to be fixed. If you are the man that says, "I want that report," then you set the rules for that report, and they are in stone, all the way down to the lowest level. There is no MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force] that decides what they want it to look like, 2nd MARDIV [Marine Division] decides what they want it to look like, and RCT-2 decides what they want it to look like, or 101st decides what they want it to look like, and everybody wants to do their thing. It

should be theater wide—“This is how it’s done, if you put this, this is a comment”—a set of rules that makes it consistent across the board, and I don’t think they are seeing that consistency right now.

MAJOR HEIL. That report has changed every month that we get it.

LTC SIMPSON. And how many times has it changed since you’ve been here? [55:20]

MAJOR KING. That report goes all the way to the SecDef, and it has changed, working on my second iteration, and it changed after they gave it to me this time.

MAJOR HEIL. It’s a good idea, in that it’s supposed to be like a SORTS [Status of Resources and Training System] report, which I handle at the unit back home. That’s not a perfect system, but it needs to come from the top where there are general rules. We work for 3rd ID, we work for TF Freedom, and now for 2nd MARDIV, and every one of them [has] a completely different subjective assessment. The front page is almost exactly the same, in format, but the rules on how you are supposed to fill in those boxes [are] significantly different in each major command you go to. It’s a good idea, but someone at the top needs to run it, and put out a pub on exactly what those boxes mean. Then it will be a useful tool.

LTC SIMPSON. [Monthly status reports] There isn’t enough significant change in a month, in a 30-day period, to warrant that report every 30 days. Maybe 2 months or every quarter you can get a significant amount of change to warrant that report, but to have us spend how many—between MiTT, then you’ve got the battalion, and the brigade; there are probably 5 days of man-hours of 4 or 5 people at every level, man hours going towards a report that’s going every month. Yeah, we look at things, but things don’t significantly change, unless they change rules.

BILL K. Please, anybody else, what would you change in MNSTC – I or the MOD in the system in doing what you are doing?

1SG BRIGHT. Logistics, the logistics system just flat sucks through the wazoo. For us to get stuff out of Taji is like pulling teeth. They need to have an American presence down there. If they don’t have an American presence down there, they need one. Whoever is there now, they need to fire them. Because we have been fighting since we’ve been in camp, since we came on board in September, about getting cold-weather gear just for our troops and getting replacement gear, just getting stuff to replace stuff that’s lost or sold.

LTC SIMPSON. There's no CIF [central issue facility] in place. I think that each division level should have some way of, you know, a depot that provides them with their shortages, but they just don't do it. I think the division level is still broke. Brigade would finally get things to where we know what's going on. We are tracking things that we need. We put report after report after report up to division of shortages for the soldiers and things like when we are coming off of an operation, as we are going back to rest [and] refit, and these guys have been at it for months. They need new boots, they need new uniforms. "What do you mean? They just got some 6 months ago!" Well, they've been on the battlefield for 6 months. All these guys need new uniforms. The Jundis are out there in it thicker than we are, so logistics is broke, and that may mean really bringing a COSCOM [Corps Support Command]—that isn't functioning as a COSCOM—to oversee the development of the Iraqi logistical system, because this one is broke. [59:46]

SFC PARRELLA. Accountability needs to be better too, you know. Our government, back in the 20s and 30s, to the victor went the spoils, so when you took office, you got your brother, your nephew, and your cousin in, too. It's still here; it's alive and well in Iraq. When they take office, they bring their brother's company in to feed the Jundi. We don't like it because we aren't getting any food here, and we make them go back and request new contracts, then we get a new company, but it's the same guys, just a new name.

There is no accountability for when the Americans give them the ability to go out and do something; there is no accountability for it. There is money out there somewhere belonging to the brigades and battalions that has been handed down, and as it gets handed down, it gets skimmed, and what was 1.5 million turns out to be 150,000 by the time it gets to where it was meant to go, and you are standing there asking, "Where did it all go?"

LTC SIMPSON. The first MiTT teams had a big pot of money. So they said, "Get what they need. If they need computers, get computers; whatever you need, buy them, and that was great. But when we came on, they said we need Internet, and we're going, we'll see what we can do. "Well, Colonel De Oliveira could do this and buy this." Well, "I'm not LTC De Oliveira, and I don't have a big pot of money, and now you've got to make it happen."

We've learned that we [have to] try to help them to a certain level, and then we have to put the onus back on them to fix it. If you want to live in lousy showers that are all

ripped and torn apart, then you live in them. We fixed them once; we aren't fixing them anymore. And we just let them live in it, and they're slowly getting the message that it's their responsibility, and not our responsibility, to take care of their mistakes.

BILL K. I am sure there are questions—there is a question that I didn't ask—that one of you guys is dying to answer...what I mean is—

LTC SIMPSON. The most talked about thing in Iraq.

BILL K. Say again?

LTC SIMPSON. The most talked about thing as an MiTT team in Iraq? Crap.

BILL K. You said that before. What do you mean?

LTC SIMPSON. The design, how you make your burn crappers. They use a lot of water where do they do their business. You've got to make a pit, and pour it in so the water drains off, so that you can burn the crap. You've got to make the holes a different size because they squat to crap.

It's probably the most talked about thing.

BILL K. I remember in Vietnam, we'd just burn it.

LTC SIMPSON. If you do it here...

[End file, 01:03:36]

Transcript 15. LTC Wisam, G-2, 1st IIF Brigade and MAJ Abed, Company Commander, 2nd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade

1. On 20 January 2006, the Team interviewed LTC Wisam Abad Razak, G2, 1st IIF Brigade,²² and MAJ Abed Al Jabar, Company Commander, 2nd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade at Hue City FOB in Hussaybah near the Iraqi-Syrian Border. Both participated in Al Fajr. In addition, MAJ Abed was the convoy commander for the convoy that was ambushed by members of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mehdi Militia in April 2004 as they traveled from Baghdad to Fallujah to participate in Vigilant Resolve.

2. The following is a transcript of that interview. Mr. Mazin served as the interpreter.



Figure C-15-1. Major Abed, LTC Wisam, Mr. Mazin, Major Castro – Map Discussion

BILL K. What is your name, current position, and when did you join the Army?

MAJ ABED. Major Abed Al Jabar, 1st Division, 1st Brigade, 2nd Battalion, company commander. The date I joined the new Iraqi Army: 4 August 2003.

BILL K. Is that when the brigade or the battalion was activated or originated?

MAJ ABED. No, there were no Iraqi units at the time. I joined something like the ING, Iraqi National Guard [he probably joined an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps unit]. This was at the time of Paul Bremer. The first battalion to be established in the new Iraqi Army was called the 1st Battalion. It was an independent battalion, and there was no brigade or division.

BILL K. Where was it located?

²² The "G2" designation didn't sound right to me and is normally reserved for divisions. But he was the brigade intelligence officer, and they called him the G2.

MAJ ABED. In Kirkush.

BILL K. When did you join the 2nd Battalion?

MAJ ABED. When I got training from the 1st Battalion of the new Iraqi Army, they put us in direct position to train another unit, to train the 2nd Battalion. That was also in Kirkush.

BILL K. When did you move to Taji?

MAJ ABED. The 2nd Battalion graduated in 6 January 2004 and moved from Kirkush to Taji. At that time I was part of the 2nd Battalion.

BILL K. What was the mission of the battalion?

MAJ ABED. The 2nd Battalion had a great mission, especially in the areas around Taji. It's a very dangerous area. The first mission for the 2nd Battalion was close to Taji. Then we moved from Taji to the west of Baghdad to search the area for the insurgents. Because we were one of the first battalions, the Coalition forces helped us and gave us training and uniforms. [V:06:11]²³

BILL K. When did you get word that you were going into Fallujah the first time? This was after the Blackwater contractor incident on 31 March. The Coalition called the operation "Vigilant Resolve."

MAJ ABED. We were told to prepare for the first mission in Fallujah for about a month.

BILL K. For a month?²⁴

MAJ ABED. Yes. For a month. I knew they wanted to move the 2nd Battalion to Fallujah, and they started to train us for this mission in Taji. There were two Companies, 2nd and 3rd Company, and one platoon from the 4th Company. They started to move us from Taji, from Baghdad to Fallujah.

At that time, the MiTT [Military Transition Team] team, the ASTs [Advisory Support Teams], were responsible. Major Lane and Major Myers were in charge of the MiTT team at that time for the 2nd Battalion. They did the planning for us for this mission,

²³ If preceded by "V:" the time was taken from the movie file.

²⁴ This didn't make any sense to me. That means they would have been alerted before the Blackwater incident. At first I thought he was speaking of Fallujah II, but Major Abed seemed to understand that this was the first Fallujah in April 2004, and the rest of story seemed to track with Fallujah I.

but there was something wrong. There were no more details. It was very dangerous, and they never trusted about us going there.

The big mistake that happened was that they never asked us which road we would select to move from Baghdad to Fallujah. We knew we would be moving to Fallujah, but in which road, we did not know.

BILL K. Do you remember the date that you moved from Baghdad to Fallujah?

MAJ ABED. No, not exactly.

BILL K. April, early April. [MAJ Abed agreed.] What was your position at the time?

MAJ ABED. I was a captain at that time. I was working as a deputy for the battalion S-3 at that time.

BILL K. How many people were in your battalion? [03:36]

MAJ ABED. At that time not all the battalion moved to Fallujah. They moved about 250—two companies plus two platoons from the other company—250.²⁵

BILL K. Two hundred fifty people. Did you feel trained to do that job? Did you know what your mission was in Fallujah?

MAJ ABED. We trained before moving to Fallujah, but for us, for checkpoints on the road there, the road, or the street or the highway in Fallujah, that's all that kind of mission.

BILL K. So you were trained to do checkpoints?

MAJ ABED. Yes. We trained for checkpoints and how to attack inside the city. At that time the MiTT teams, the ASTs, were very smart and tough, and they work too hard with us. We get benefits from them. [12:02]

When we started moving to Fallujah from Taji, we arrived in an area in Baghdad called Shohola. I was the leader of the convoy, in front of the convoy, with the battalion commander. I felt that somebody was going to ambush us because the situation in Baghdad was not good. And also we found some concrete barriers that insurgents or somebody put in the city, They wanted to stop the convoy.

²⁵ He added a platoon from his earlier statement.

When we passed this area, the enemy shot at us, and we shot the enemy. And also, we wanted to save our convoy on this ambush, so we drove fast. The problem was that one soldier, unfortunately, used to work with the insurgents. He put the truck in the street. They want to stop the convoy, and he is scared.

BILL K. He put the truck in the roadway and left.

MAJ ABED. Exactly. He used to work with the insurgents, maybe for the militia for Muqtada al-Sadr at the time. He was Shi'a, and many people from the new Iraqi Army work with them [the militia] and pass them information. The driver put his truck in the road, and they stop the convoy. [14:02]

BILL K. It's interesting that as you were going to Fallujah you were attacked by Muqtada al-Sadr, his insurgents. What was the relationship between Muqtada al-Sadr and the insurgents in Fallujah?

MAJ ABED. There is no relation between the militia and the insurgents in Fallujah. Muqtada al-Sadr ordered the attack on the convoy because there is some problems between him and the Coalition forces.

BILL K. So it was independent of the...

MAJ ABED. Yes.

BILL K. ... of the operation in Fallujah?

MAJ ABED. The Iraqi people never believe that this new system, new rules, that the Coalition forces are bringing to the Iraqi Army, the new Iraqi Army. Most of them work with Muqtada al-Sadr, and they hate the new Iraqi Army, and they want to attack them, they want to stop them. And when the soldier stopped his truck in the middle of the street, the convoy divided into two parts. There was no communication between the front of the convoy and the back of the convoy.

BILL K. How many vehicles in the convoy?

MAJ ABED. About 25.

BILL K. What types of vehicles?

MAJ ABED. Cargo Hyundai and pickup Nissan. It's not suitable to move military from Taji to Fallujah in those types of vehicles because they are civilian, not military vehicles.

At that time, when they attacked us, all the soldiers dismounted, and they surrounded all this area to protect the convoy. But because most of the soldiers—about [90%] were...Shi'a—some refused to attack the insurgents. That is the problem. Somebody doesn't want to fight or to shoot against the Sadr militia. This is a great mistake because this is a Shi'a army and because Muqtada al-Sadr is a Shi'a, they refused to shoot them.

BILL K. That's amazing. [18:05]

MAJ ABED. I spent about 6 hours in this attack, this ambush, but I remembered a good thing. Some militia wanted to attack the Americans soldiers, and they want to kidnap him or attack him or shoot him, but the soldiers protected him and saved him from the insurgents, from this militia.²⁶

BILL K. Who was in the vehicle with you?

MAJ ABED. The battalion commander.

BILL K. Who were the American advisors in your convoy?

MAJ ABED. Major Rick Davis and Major Lane.²⁷

BILL K. Were you in the lead vehicle? [MAJ Abed said that he was.] And where were Major Davis and Major Lane?

MAJ ABED. Some of the MiTT team was in the front, in the middle, some of them in the back.

BILL K. Did the insurgents approach you about the American advisors? [20:05]

MAJ ABED. No.

BILL K. You said that the insurgents wanted the convoy to give them up. Did you talk to the insurgents?

MAJ ABED. I never saw this event, but heard about it because the convoy is divided in two parts. But I heard from some officers who witnessed this. Everybody knew that the insurgents they wanted to kill or capture some ASTs, and the Iraqi soldiers protected them.

²⁶ Major Abed said, "him," rather than "them" but later he indicates that the insurgents wanted all of the advisors.

²⁷ It sounds like Major Abed is saying "Lynn" or "Lee," but I believe it's supposed to be "Lane."

BILL K. Is there anyone here in the battalion today that witnessed this? I've heard that story, too, and if there is someone here that witnessed the event, I would like to talk to them.

MAJ ABED. The problem is that many Iraqis refused to call the Sadr militia the insurgents. It's more different from the Fallujah insurgents and the rest of Iraq; it's more different.

BILL K. That's a good point that a lot of people didn't call Muqtada's militia insurgents—they simply called them Muqtada's militia—so did you have an opportunity to talk to Muqtada's militia about the convoy?

MAJ ABED. We [the convoy] had some negotiation between the Muqtada al-Sadr militia at that time when they stopped the convoy. They told us that we were not supposed to move to Fallujah.

BILL K. So you talked to them?

MAJ ABED. They said, "Our brothers are there [in Fallujah]. We like the Iraqi Army, but that's not fair to move to kill and attack the innocent people." They stopped the convoy, and there was some negotiation, and they let the convoy move after they get a promise from them that we would not move to Fallujah.²⁸

BILL K. So you talked to some of the members of Muqtada's militia about not moving the convoy? [23:23]

MAJ ABED. Yes, because there is negotiation from Muqtada militia who said there are Muslims there, and we are supposed to stop moving there.

BILL K. So what did you do next? [24:10]

MAJ ABED. I remember not very well some of the ASTs, they shoot this militia; they kill them. They wanted to move straight to Fallujah. No militia could stop them and they killed many of them.

Some from the Coalition forces and Iraqi soldiers were wounded. The advisors still wanted to move to Fallujah.

²⁸ The interpreter keeps moving in and out of "third" person rather than "first" person. I'm trying to establish whether Major Abed was talking and negotiating with the militia.

That's very bad when the militia attacked us when we had many wounded. It was not fair to try and move again. We were supposed to go back and get more training and reorganize ourselves.

The MiTT team met all the soldiers at that time. There is a good meeting, and they said, "Do you want to join us, because we must move to Fallujah?" Half of our unit, 2nd Battalion, refused to move to Fallujah. And they took the rifles and weapons and equipment, and they put them in the jail and punished them. Unfortunately, the operation of moving to Fallujah, we failed; we did not move.

This story, I want to tell you something. I remember this. For those who refused to move to Fallujah, the Coalition forces put them in a jail-like place, and after that, they took all the equipment, also the civilian uniform. They put them in their underwear clothes, and put them outside in Taji.

The Coalition forces let them go in their underwear clothes. Everyone, all Iraqis, insurgents, militia, know they work with the Coalition forces. Anybody who recaptured them would kill them. I remember very well, half of the 2nd Battalion, the Coalition forces let go in their underwear. [29:20]

And when they moved from Taji—you know that the villagers there and most of the areas is filled with the insurgents, around Taji—and they [the villagers] asked, "Why are you in your underwear clothes?" And they said, "Because, we refused to move to Fallujah to fight Iraqis." And the villager said, "Come with us." The civilians gave them clothes and everything.

BILL K. And they joined the insurgency? [24:03, tape 2]

MAJ ABED. Maybe. I am not sure.

BILL K. What type of equipment did you have when you went to Fallujah the first time?
Did you have body armor?

MAJ ABED. It's the same, no more different.

BILL K. So you had those things. You had the helmet and body armor in Fallujah I?

MAJ ABED. Yes.

BILL K. I was just curious if you had the right individual equipment. You remained with the battalion? You stayed with the battalion?

MAJ ABED. After what happened, when half the battalion quit, there were many changes that happened in the battalion.

BILL K. What happened?

MAJ ABED. General Eaton visited us and talked to the officers. General Eaton talked to the officers in Taji. General Eaton wanted to bring peace to the soldiers when they didn't succeed to move to Fallujah. He wanted to talk [to] them and retrain them. And he knows that there is some mistake in the leadership. At that time, the battalion commander changed because he was irresponsible. They changed all the commanders of the battalion—the company commander, the battalion commander—all the commanders were changing because of General Eaton. [26:38]

During the meeting with General Eaton, the officers, the battalion officers, told the general, there is a great mistake from the leadership; they had no idea what was going on.

BILL K. General Eaton knew that they moved them too quickly.

MAJ ABED. The new Iraqi Army was not built and trained to do the mission, and it was a hard mission.

BILL K. It was a hard mission. After Fallujah, what were some of the changes besides the change of leadership? Did they change how they trained?

MAJ ABED. About the training, there is no change; the same training we are getting is no different. The Coalition forces and the MiTT teams give the authority [to the Iraqi officers] to fire anybody, any soldiers who do not respect the rules. In the Iraqi Army, especially the soldiers, there is more difference between the Jundi and the officers. The American or Coalition forces need to treat them [Iraqi soldiers] different; they are different forces. If they [the Coalition forces] respect them and treat them easily, they [the Iraqi soldiers] use this relationship. We need to be hard to treat these soldiers. That's up to the tradition or culture of the soldiers.

BILL K. Did that change? You indicated that the Coalition needed to change the way they treated the soldiers, is that right? So did that change? [29:34]

MAJ ABED. Everything has changed after the first Fallujah. For example, they put the rules for the Iraqi Army. We are officers. [Before Fallujah] we were not allowed to punish any soldier. But after Fallujah everything changed.

BILL K. So, before Fallujah, the officers weren't allowed to punish the soldiers, but after Fallujah they were.

MAJ ABED. The Jundi were protected by the Coalition forces and MiTT teams. They did not allow the officers to do any of this, but after that they were.

BILL K. The officers got the authority to do that.

MAJ ABED. I am talking about the MiTT team, before Major Lane and Major Davis there was Major Robin, but after that Major Davis and Major Lane, they do great things. When we complained to Major Robin at that time about the rules, he did not take care of us. They want to punish the soldiers, and he said, "Don't let them." But Davis and Major Lane, they do great things for the 2nd Battalion for the Iraqi Army.

Major Davis and Major Lane got us in position, and after one night they moved to Fallujah. There is no preparation for them to know what is going on with the battalion. And after 1 day, there have been many changes in the battalion. Any bad soldiers, they don't respect the rules, and we put them in jail or they punish them. The rules are very important for the Army. An Army with no rules, we cannot run it like that. [v:38:40]

BILL K. After Fallujah, the next operation was Najaf? Did they go to Najaf? [33:21]

MAJ ABED. Yes.

BILL K. How was your training before you went to Najaf?

MAJ ABED. The training was very good. We prepared for Najaf missions very well.

BILL K. What were the missions that you were trained to do in Najaf?

MAJ ABED. We had good training for inside the city, inside the building, to clear the buildings.

BILL K. OK, so for clearing buildings?

MAJ ABED. Yes.

BILL K. What was your position in the battalion? You were the S3 when you went to Fallujah. What was your position when you went to Najaf?

MAJ ABED. Deputy Company Commander.

BILL K. How many people did you take to Najaf?

MAJ ABED. About all of the battalion, about 500.

BILL K. Five hundred. How many companies?

MAJ ABED. Four companies.

BILL K. Four companies. What did they do when they got to Najaf? [35:26]

MAJ ABED. There is a plan. There are some bad guys from Sadr militia occupying and sharing the big mosque [Imam Ali mosque]. And they want us to attack the mosque and capture the insurgents or the militia. My company was supposed to attack the main gate of the Imam Ali, and we climb to the roof and control the area. Because the negotiations happen between the Sadr militia and the Iraqi Army, there is no more fight. They released the mosque in Najaf, and they moved to his [Sadr's] office for negotiations.

BILL K. Since you did not do the assault on the Imam Ali, what missions did you do in Najaf?

MAJ ABED. We are put around Najaf at checkpoints in the road and searched the buildings and houses.

BILL K. What Coalition unit did you work with?

MAJ ABED. 2-7 Army CAV.

BILL K. Were you in Najaf [asking LTC Wisam]? And who were you with?

LTC WISAM. I was the XO for the 2nd Battalion.

BILL K. Would you please state your name and current position?

LTC WISAM. LTC Wisam Abad Razak, G2, 1st Brigade.

BILL K. When did you join 2nd Battalion?

LTC WISAM. I joined the new Iraqi Army, the 1st Battalion, first in 13 August 2003. Because the 1st Battalion did not need more officers, I was put in another group. Because there is no position, I took care of training the soldiers. They gave me a month leave or vacation to rest, and after that I spent 3 months in Jordan for training. At the end of April 2004, I joined the 2nd Battalion as a major in the position of XO.

BILL K. So, where was the 2nd Battalion stationed? Were they then stationed in Taji after Fallujah?

LTC WISAM. After the 1st Fallujah, there were many changes that happened.

BILL K. What changes did he see in the 2nd Battalion after Fallujah I? [41:46; V:48:03]

LTC WISAM. I heard from the old officer from the 2nd Battalion when I joined as XO. I heard that before the 1st Fallujah, the soldiers controlled everything. Soldiers never respect the rules; everything is very different back there.

BILL K. That's terrible.

LTC WISAM. The Coalition forces put orders 22 and 23. That would be like the rules for the new Iraqi Army to punish anybody in the new Iraqi Army who never respects the rules. Major Lane, he is a great man. 2nd Battalion at that time, Major Lane, they are good ASTs. For example, Major Lane would complain about the bad soldiers who never respect the rules. He gave them a chance, and if they do not respect, he fires them. It was a good change that happened to this battalion.

BILL K. They were given control.

LTC WISAM. After that, the team came to train them to fight in the building.

BILL K. I should have probably asked this first. What did you [speaking to both Major Abed and LTC Wisam] do before joining the new Iraqi Army?

LTC WISAM. I worked as a driver. But because of the wars, they kill drivers and get his vehicle, so I quit and moved to the Internet office, the café, with my brother. When they start to accept volunteers in the new Iraqi Army I submitted my name. [v:51:15]

MAJ ABED. I joined to protect and serve our country. I was a driver also, a taxi driver.

We are in a bad situation with the work with the new Iraqi Army—you know the bad guy is also working with the Iraqi Army. I put my life and my family in duress; that's a risk. But we believe in our country, and we believe in and protect us and our country.

BILL K. When did you know you were going into Fallujah the second time?

LTC WISAM. I want to continue about the 2nd Battalion. After Taji we moved to Ferrin Huggin, south of Baghdad, Doura. We moved the 2nd Battalion there, and we provided security for Doura. It is a dangerous area. More insurgents live there.

Doura is a dangerous area for the 2nd Battalion. The people fear a stranger when they come—the Iraqi uniform, and the Iraqi Army moving in the street. There is a checkpoint, and we are searching the houses in this area. This is a dangerous area. We continue searching south of Baghdad, then we heard about the move to Najaf. All the

Coalition forces at that time ask to work together with the 2nd Battalion; they respect them.

BILL K. You just mentioned that you moved to south of Baghdad before Najaf. So when did you move out of Taji into the new place south of Baghdad, Ferrin Huggins? [49:26; V:55:25]

LTC WISAM. June 2004.

BILL K. Ah, then you went to Najaf. When did you find out about going to Fallujah II?

LTC WISAM. In fact, from Najaf, we are working for a while in the south of Baghdad, before moving to Fallujah. We moved some of the forces to Taji so we can train in the building to search the building, clear the building, and occupy the building. They got a good solid training.

BILL K. In Taji they did that?

LTC WISAM. Yes, we go back to Taji. We spent all day and night getting training in Taji to prepare for the mission.

BILL K. So that's room clearing and building clearing?

LTC WISAM. This puts us in good training to prepare for second Fallujah.

BILL K. Is this the first time they had trained hard in building clearing?

MAJ ABED. The second time. Also we were here to train before moving to Ferrin Huggin. We are searching south of Baghdad. Also, south of Baghdad in Doura, there is an ambush from insurgents. They attack us and they do bad things.

LTC WISAM. On the 2nd November 2004 we moved into Fallujah.

BILL K. What Coalition unit did you work with in Ferrin Huggins south of Baghdad?

LTC WISAM. [The] 4th Brigade.

BILL K. OK, so on the 2nd of November you moved into the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp [EFIC], and what did you do there? Did you train at the EFIC?

MAJ ABED. We stayed in this camp 3 days.

BILL K. And what was your position on 2 November?

LTC WISAM. I was Battalion XO.

BILL K. What was your position?

MAJ ABED. Deputy Company Commander.

BILL K. So you trained on 2 November, you moved into EFIC, you spent 3 days. And what Coalition Force were you attached to?

MAJ ABED. There is a difference in this war. They separated the companies from the battalion. For example, my company was with 1/8 Marines. The battalion commander was LtCol Brandle.

BILL K. Col Brandle is now in Virginia.

LTC WISAM. Let me tell you about the MiTT team. I will not forget them. The ASTs, the very best, in Najaf were Major Miller, and the others. I served with them until the end of Fallujah. Major Miller, he did a great job with the 2nd Battalion. Also there was a sergeant for the ASTs for the 2nd Battalion. Sergeant Cornell.

BILL K. That's right. Sergeant Cornell was killed in Fallujah.

MAJ CASTRO. [The] 1/8 was under Col Tucker and RCT 7. How did you meet Col Shupp?

LTC WISAM. I will explain for you, because I worked with all of them.

BILL K. Oh, you worked with all of them, OK.

LTC WISAM. There are three battalions, 1st, 2nd, and 4th Battalions, now 3rd Battalion. They divided our units, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Battalions were with RCT-7, and the 1st Battalion worked with Col Shupp, RCT-1.²⁹

BILL K. Now I understand. [3:51; V2:04:20]

LTC WISAM. There is another Captain AST advisor, Captain Simms. They covered his hand with the bandage and said he supposed to move to the clinic or something. He said, "No, I will continue to fight." Captain Simms, he is a great man, for leading, fighting the insurgents.

MAJ CASTRO. And he lost his finger.

LTC WISAM. Very tough guy!

²⁹ Actually, from the 1st IIF Brigade, the 1st and 4th Battalion (now the 3rd Battalion) worked with RCT-1 and the 2nd worked with RCT-7.

I care about the MiTT teams, the ASTs, they are great teams. They help at work. I was talking with Major Miller at that time, and I said [kidding], "You will never see your family, be careful!" He is a very tough guy, he moves fast and fights the insurgents all the time.

BILL K. Let me go back to Fallujah now. So what was your mission? You were linked up with 1/8 Marines.... When did you go into Fallujah, in what sequence? [V:2:07:22]

LTC WISAM. I never remembered that because I stayed behind in the assembly area to provide the logistics for the battalion. I remember the 1st Brigade moved from the train station with Col Shupp, LTC De Oliveira, and General Tariq [commander of 1st Brigade]. We spent time at the train station and the cemetery all the night, and after that, 3rd Battalion arrived. [The] 3rd and 1st Battalions we moved in after the train station to Jolan, with Col Shupp and Colonel De Oliveira, searching all this area [pointing to the northwest area of Fallujah].

BILL K. So then at the time you were with the RCT-1 with Col Shupp?



Figure C-15-2. 2nd Battalion Area of Operations

They are attacking from the houses where they shoot and sniper from. Our Jundi climbed to the roof and they want to go inside the house, but unfortunately the insurgents shoot them and kill them in this operation. [11:59]

MAJ CASTRO. That's good, so you search?

LTC WISAM. Searching, the 2nd Battalion. On the first day there is no resistance from the enemy. There is no enemy there; we think it will be easy. At first we are feeling there is no enemy there. We are searching quickly this area, but the mistake [we make], we are moving too quickly searching the city. We are supposed to be searching slow [13:40]

There is a sniper shooting from the houses to the school, and they push the squad. The lieutenant leading the squad, Lt Hydal, unfortunately, Lt Hydal is killed during the

LTC WISAM. I was with the 2nd Battalion in the military area. I'm just telling you where everyone was.

BILL K. OK, so you're telling me what they did and not necessarily what you did.

BILL K. [Map rustling, laying the map out]. The train station is up here [refer to page A-6].

LTC WISAM. Here is the railway station [north of Figure C-15-2], and there is the 2nd Battalion They had all this area. They are searching all this area [Figure C-15-2, enclosed black line]. There is no more shooting from the enemy from this area. Starting from 6 in the evening until 9 in the morning, we are still headquartered in this school.

Lieutenant Hydal, they kill. They move quickly into this area. The insurgents, we stopped their attack.

operation. Also there is another sergeant, Ali Saddam, also SSG Cornell from the MiTT team; they are killed during this attack. And also we are feeling there is enemy real near and they want to attack us.

They [the enemy] are very smart officers. Like a movie, when Hydal tried to enter the houses, the enemy surprised him and captured [him] and wanted to take his rifle. Hydal didn't want to be attacked there, that is very smart. Hydal got the enemy rifle. The enemy he shot, and they killed him.³⁰

2nd Battalion was searching this area. All this area [19:07] On the second day they start searching the additional area [outlined in blue]. We worked to clear this area for a week.

MAJ CASTRO. When you came in this day, when they were moving quickly, were you following 1/3 Marines?

LTC WISAM. The Army [2-2 Infantry; LTC Newell is the battalion commander]. We held and searched this area [the blue and black outlines areas]. The 2nd Brigade then relieved 1st Brigade. On the last hour when we were relieved by 2nd Brigade, we lost a good captain, CPT Hydal. First day Lt. Hydal; last day, CPT Hydal.

BILL K. So you were through here?

LTC WISAM. Together with 1/8 Marines.³¹

BILL K. With 1-8 through here, with what company?

MAJ ABED. 1st Company.

BILL K. So you were with 1st Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade; got it! [25:53]

LTC WISAM. Next, we went down in this area [further south].

BILL K. How far?

LTC WISAM. In the garage there. There is a garage there and a motor pool. A week after that they moved us.

³⁰ This is really confusing. Did Hydal get killed or was he wounded? LTC Wisam also speaks of someone getting wounded, losing his eye, still being in the 2nd Battalion, but no one will take care of him. The purpose of providing this information is to reflect the type of interpreter support they are receiving at the brigade level.

³¹ The 1/8 Marines were west of Figure C-15-2. See map on p.A-6. The 1/8 Marines were oriented on Hydras Mosque and the Government Center.

BILL K. Down here?

LTC WISAM. Yes.

BILL K. So down through here.

LTC WISAM. They start to search this area, a very dangerous area,

BILL K. Hi Nesal?

LTC WISAM. Yes. The enemy is moving easily from this area to other areas.

BILL K. An Iraq unit raised the flag at the government center? I am just curious what unit raised the flag at the Iraqi Government Center. [27:57]

BILL K. If it wasn't you, was it the Shawniis?

LTC WISAM. The brigade headquarters...you know Tariq, they put the flag up. First the American flag and then the Iraqi flag.

BILL K. Oh, is that right?

LTC WISAM. Yes. General Tariq put the Iraqi flag there.

BILL K. Did they find many caches?

MAJ ABED. Many caches they captured and foreigner insurgents—Syrians and Saudis. And also, for example, when we were searching the area, we came back again, we found insurgents in there. They were moving easily.

BILL K. They were moving through those areas. Hard to keep track of them.

LTC WISAM. During the night they were moving from house to house. This industrial area, they found many IED factories and many back ways to hide.

BILL K. Get your weapons [car horn can be heard in the background, then gunshots. Interview ends abruptly]. [End audio file 00:29:54]

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Transcript 16. Interview with Command and Staff of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces (IIF) Division

1. On 16 January the Team met with members of the command and staff of the 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division, at their headquarters at the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp (EFIC). The EFIC was set up to train and house the Iraqi forces in preparation for Al Fajr. LtCol Lystad, Chief of the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Iraqi Security Force (ISF) cell, escorted us into the EFIC and introduced us to the base commander, Col Lentz, and the Chief of the 2nd Brigade MiTT, Col Chene, USMC. Col Chene arranged for us to interview three Iraqi officers and the MiTT's main interpreter.



Figure C-16-1. From left, Col Lentz, LTC Akrum, COL Raid, and LTC Katheer

2. The 2nd Bde, 1st IIF Division, entered Fallujah on 3 December and rip'd (relief-in-place) with the 1st Brigade, who deployed to Mosul. They worked for Col Shupp, RCT-1, and cleared, stabilized, and helped repopulate areas north of Fran (MSR Michigan). Their units deployed in three sectors 2, 1, 3. Referring to Col Shupp's interview, he felt that 2nd Brigade was better than the 1st Brigade.³²

3. The interview is on DV 4 and 5. In addition, they outlined on the Fallujah map their movement and areas of responsibility during Fallujah. The following is a transcript of the discussions. Mr. Johnnie from the MEF and Mr. CNN served as the interpreters.

BILL K. The Iraqi forces have made tremendous development in the last 1 to 2 years, and you were the front-runners in that development. That's why I've come to talk to you,

³² I can see why Col Shupp thought so highly of the 2nd Brigade. Just in the little time I spent with them, I was impressed. They showed passion in what they do, a detailed understanding of what they and their units did, and depth to the contributions they made.

specifically to talk about 2004 events. We want to learn what the Coalition has done right and wrong in helping you develop. First of all, I'd like to know who each of you are, so if you could provide your names, your positions, and background for the tape.

LTC AKRUM. LTC Akrum, LTC, Executive Officer, or Deputy Commander, 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division. I served with the old Iraqi Army. I've been serving the military for 24 years. I used to be a pilot first. I flew MIG-21s. I joined the new Iraqi Army in February 2004.

BILL K. I flew helicopters.

LTC AKRUM. I don't like helicopters.

COL LENTZ. He doesn't like flying with me. I take him everywhere, and they always seem to break down.

LTC AKRUM. After I finished the war with Iran, I switched to artillery. I stayed in that position until the fall of Baghdad. I joined the new Iraq Army in February 2004. Until now, I've been working with the same division, same brigade.

COL LENTZ. He was actually one of three original officers that started the new brigade, the XO, the general, and Major Popic, correct?

COL RAID. COL Raid [phonetic: Rod] Jasem Aedan. Date of birth 1956, from Southern Iraq, Basrah province. I joined the military in 1986. I have been in the military for 20 years. I used to be Special Forces in the old Iraqi military. I worked in the old Iraqi military until the fall of Baghdad. I joined the new Iraqi military in 2004. I worked in the quick-reaction forces. Currently, I am the Battalion Commander for the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Division. [2/2/1]

BILL K. And how long have you been with the division?

COL RAID. Since it was created in February 2004. [07:42]

LTC KATHEER. I am LTC Katheer Abd-Al Rahman. Date of birth 1968, from Diayala Province. I was in the old Iraqi military. I was to be a colonel in the old Iraqi military, until the fall of Baghdad. I joined the new Iraqi forces military on July 3rd, 2004, in the position of 1st Battalion Commander [1/2/1].

BILL K. OK, good. Please, go on.

MR. CNN. I am Mr. CNN. I would rather not provide my name for security reasons. So please call me CNN. I'm the interpreter for the 2nd Brigade and was one of the interpreters during Al Fajr. [V:10:28]

BILL K. So Mr. CNN, that's great, thank you. Can you provide some background information, or would you rather not?

MR. CNN. I started to work with the Coalition forces since 2003 with the CPA, with Mr. Paul Bremer in Baghdad, and after that I transferred to training the Iraqi Army, the new Iraqi Army in 2004. Starting with these guys on the first day, we laid foundation for the brigade. After that, I transferred to Fallujah to work with them and also to support them. I am the senior interpreter here in Fallujah and have been in Fallujah from July 2004 up to this time.

BILL K. Where was the brigade originally located?

COL LENTZ. They started in Taji.

BILL K. In 2004 we are looking at Fallujah I, Najaf, Samara, and Fallujah II. Was anyone involved in Fallujah I in March and April of 2004? [12:56]

COL LENTZ. No. The actual brigade moved down here I want to say in the July time frame, 2004.

BILL K. OK. I thought potentially someone had been involved in Fallujah I. Now I'll focus on Fallujah II.

They moved from Taji to here?

COL LENTZ. Yes, to here. Then their first combat action or at least big coalition push was Al Fajr.

BILL K. When did you prepare for Al Fajr?

LTC AKRUM. During the first Battle of Fallujah, only American forces joined that battle, with some specific Iraqi forces.

At that time we were in Al Maniyah under training. When we were in Al Maniyah, they asked us to help at that time in the Najaf battle.

After [second] Fallujah battle was done, they asked us to move to Fallujah. There was a 1st Division in here, that came here before we got here. We joined with the 1st Brigade during Al Fajr, and after that they turned over this issue to the Iraqi side. We took care of Fallujah.

On the 3rd of December 2004, we took over this mission. We joined with RCT1, the 1st Regiment Combat Team. Up to this time, during the time in Fallujah, there were no civilians in Fallujah. Fallujah was very empty of people. Our work in Fallujah was to search the houses looking for weapons.

Our area of operations, between us and the Marines, we took the north side of Fallujah. Each battalion has a specific AO, area of operation—1st Battalion took a sector, northeast Fallujah; 2nd Battalion took Jolan Park.

[We pulled out the map] The Main Street in Fallujah we called Michigan. It divided Fallujah into two parts. We entered Fallujah from this side [the north side]. Our 1st Battalion is located in the Askari sector [northeast]. The 2nd Battalion took Jolan Park [northwest]. The 3rd Battalion took [between 1st and 2nd Battalions].

Our brigade headquarters is here with RCT1 [near the Government Center]. The 4th Brigade was sharing the southern part of Fallujah.

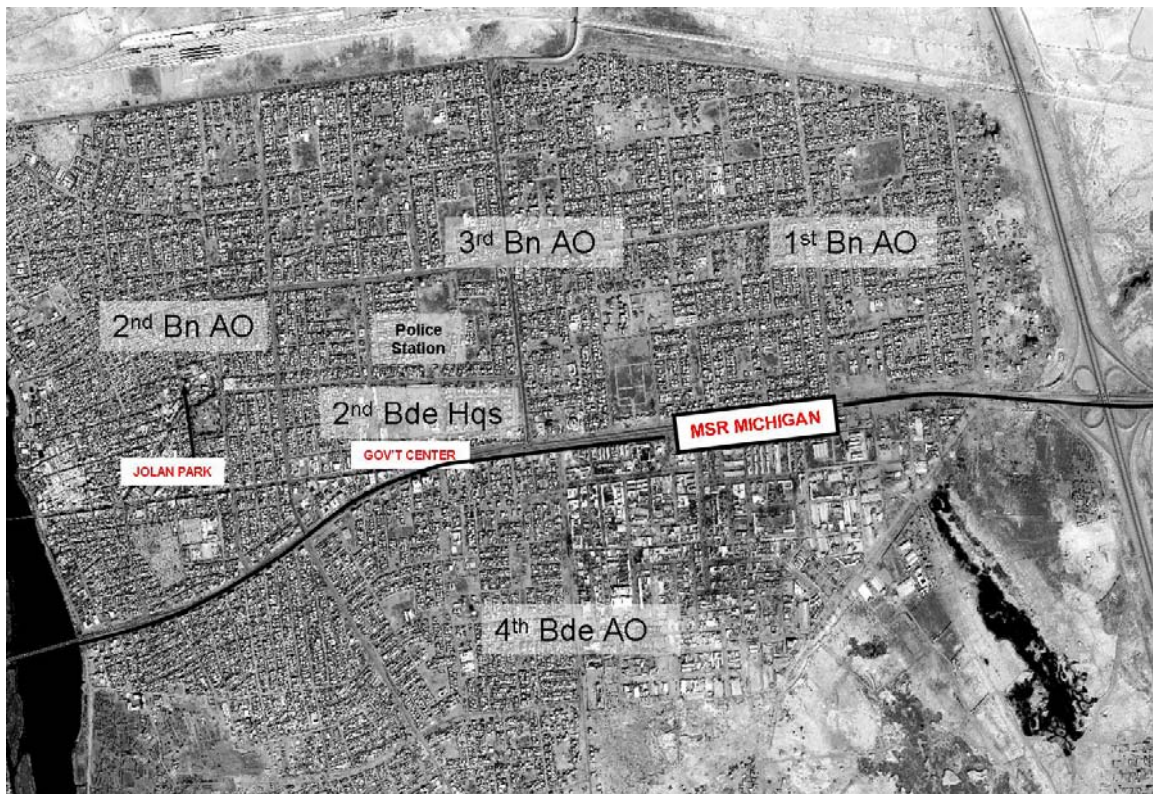


Figure C-16-2. 2nd IIF Brigade Area of Operations

Fallujah is very crowded with buildings, and our job the first time was searching the whole area, looking for weapons and the caches. We worked with the Marines

together for the first time with RCT1, searching this area. Replanning, with the Marines together side by side, we completely secured Fallujah from the insurgents the first time. [V:20:26]³³

BILL K. So let me go back, because this is really good. [On] 3 December is when 1st Brigade moved out and 2nd Brigade moved into this area. You came in from the north, you occupied it, [and] 2, 3, and 1 and you conducted clearing operations.

MR. CNN. Correct.

BILL K. And your mission was to clear houses in these areas in coordination with RCT1, and your headquarters was located at the mayor—or government center in this location. [They agreed.]. [22:00]

LTC AKRUM. After Fallujah was secured, they sent the 3rd Battalion to Habaniyah, and later RCT1 turned over to RCT8.

BILL K. When did they make the change?

COL LENTZ. March of 2005.

BILL K. Got it. OK.

LTC AKRUM. We were the first guys to receive the civilians when they came to Fallujah the first time. When the civilians came to Fallujah, they came according to their sector. According to their neighborhood, [as an example,] the Jolan sector was allowed in.

MAJ CASTRO. They were brought back in a specific order so it was all labeled out?

LTC AKRUM. Correct.

BILL K. When did the public order brigades come?

LTC AKRUM. [When the] public order brigades first came, we worked with them in April 2005 to 19 October. Actually, they came just for the headquarters, just the brigade headquarters for the MOD. We supported them when they came here the first time in Fallujah by supporting logistic issues. We gave them the central police station for Fallujah.

³³ Video and audio times are very close, within 5 seconds.

Also we did joint patrolling with the Marines from about April 2005 to October 19th, after the first elections. [25:11]

BILL K. OK, so you stayed there until 19 October. Was Fallujah the first major operation that the brigade was in?

LTC AKRUM. This is a big major operation for the 2nd Brigade, the first one, the first operation for them. They cleaned up the unsecured Fallujah. After the 1st Brigade was done with Fallujah and the insurgents, it was our mission to clean up caches and weapons. We found many weapons buried under the buildings, and we found a lot of buildings where they put bombs inside the buildings. There were so many bodies in the street [that were killed] by the insurgents.

Actually, this is the first instance for our brigade to clean Fallujah. We didn't have any experience in dealing with this.

BILL K. So the mission was initially to clear buildings, look for weapons caches, and help repopulate Fallujah as the civilians came back into the area. [27:42]

LTC AKRUM. That is correct.

BILL K. How well did you feel trained and equipped to do those missions?

LTC AKRUM. Actually, this training came from our experience with the Marines in Taji the first time. After that we moved to the Numiniyah training area in the south of Iraq. Our soldiers participated in specific training with the Marines in Kirkush, northern Iraq. The first support, first supply, we got just our uniforms and our weapons, AK-47s.

BILL K. Do you remember when that was? Do you have the time frames?

LTC AKRUM. July 2004. One specific training, the battalions moved from the headquarters, from their base, to outside, living 2 days in the desert. We then lived in unfinished buildings for many days. They took advantage of the unfinished buildings to train.

BILL K. What was the time frame? You talked about Taji, Numiniyah, and Kirkush. What was the time frame that you were in those various areas?

LTC AKRUM. May 2004 in Taji, July we moved to Numiniyah, July 8th the Iraqi military got trained in Numiniyah. They started training the new military units April

the 15th, 2004, which is like 5 months training. That was in Al Numiniyah. The training was about shooting.

BILL K. Individual training?

LTC AKRUM. Yes.

BILL K. What were some of the lessons when you were in Al Fajr? What were some of the things you learned that you were able to use later on? [32:20]

LTC AKRUM. You know, Fallujah is the focus for the insurgents in Iraq. Fallujah is the first location for the insurgents in Iraq, so we call this the Operation for Iraq, not for just Fallujah.

We consider Fallujah a big challenge for the Coalition forces and the Iraqi Army because this is a big challenge between the Iraqi Army and Coalition forces against the insurgents and against the terrorists here in Iraq.

When we found big caches, for example, if you distribute these bombs and vehicles, a suicide bomber, or anything, to all Iraq, we are going to cover all of Iraq by finding big caches in Fallujah. [Fallujah was supporting the insurgents throughout Iraq and not just in Fallujah.] So we were victorious for the entire Iraq and not just for Fallujah.

And the enemy used new tactics to attack us. They used mortars inside the industrial area, in factories area, to attack the Coalition forces

BILL K. When you finished in Fallujah, what did you learn that you were able to use later on?

LTC AKRUM. The big lesson we learned from Fallujah battles—we are supposed to keep chasing the insurgents. We don't stop at the one step, we don't need to stop when we capture Fallujah, we need to keep going and looking for the insurgents.

BILL K. What were some of the major changes that you made in how you were organized or in how you operated as a result of Fallujah? [35:49]

LTC AKRUM. Actually, we got big lessons from that, we got huge experience, practical experience, because the previous time we just learned by the paper [from books, reading] where we were, but when we came to Fallujah the first time, we got practical experience.

COL LENTZ. The question was, did you change your MTOE [Modified Table of Organization and Equipment] as a result of lessons from Al Fajr? I don't think the answer is yes, but would you change some of your structure from the brigade down to the battalion?

LTC AKRUM. Yes, we learned some big challenges. When we were foot patrolling, we didn't care about the high buildings with the snipers, but now we learned that you are supposed to be careful near the high buildings.

Being here the first time, we had the officers leading the patrolling, but we learned from the Marines [that] you are supposed to depend on the NCOs to lead the battalions.

COL LENTZ. Also, XO, maybe there was some advantages or disadvantages to your communications or your weapons systems or some of those types of things?

LTC AKRUM. Actually, we had a shortage and disadvantage in communications, because it was not secure enough. But we just received a couple days ago a big technology advantage with the Harris radio. This is secure so we can receive or deliver messages to headquarters.

Also, the cell phones are more secure from Motorola. We got Motorola. We got the cell phones more secure along with the radios.

MAJ CASTRO. Have you seen an increase since Al Fajr of more Iraqis wanting to join the Army, join your forces?

LTC AKRUM. Yes, they want to join the Iraqi Army. That is the desire, but they are afraid of the insurgents. When the committee came to Fallujah to see how many guys will join the new Iraqi Army, they received a lot of people, much more from the specific number they finally got to enlist. But at the same time, they are afraid the insurgents will attack their families.

COL LENTZ. If I could explain that just a little bit more—when they are here with their entire unit, there are no issues, but when they go home, which they do every month, they don't have anyone out there to protect them. So they are very cautious, take their uniforms off, leave their ID cards, those types of things, and that is the fear really, when they go home. And they have to go home because there is no banking system; they have to take the money home to their families.

MAJ CASTRO. There's pretty much been the same pattern now for a year.

COL LENTZ. They do have some problems still. It's just a struggling democracy, with MOD and some things regarding pay and promotions and some things which they are getting better with now, some of those issues. There were some desertions, but for the most part they have stayed pretty stable for the last 3 months.

BILL K. During 2004, what could the coalition have done better to assist you in developing yourself as a unit? [42:09]

LTC AKRUM. As for what the Coalition forces did, everything was good, like support by fires. If we have an accident, like IED or group of military was injured, the Coalition forces were helping us right away. Everything was the best.

BILL K. How would you rate your unit's morale before Al Fajr, during, and immediately after Al Fajr?

LTC AKRUM. Very good, everything was fine. We were competing for morale. The first time the Jundi soldiers came to Fallujah, they were afraid of Fallujah. They were concerned about Fallujah, but when they confronted Fallujah, they got more morale for them, and we got right now very good morale.

COL RAID. What is happening right now, the Iraqi Army is understanding that the insurgents are not against the occupier. They are against the children; they are killing the children; they are killing the innocent adults; they want to destroy this country. That's why the Iraqi Army is here. He understood that he has to fight against these people [insurgents]; he has to finish this; he is encouraged to do anything just to destroy that [insurgent] force. That is what's happening right now. So if I tell any Iraqi military soldier that we have something over there that is starting, you will see like a lot of Army guys say, "We are going, we are going to go there, we are going to finish that."

BILL K. That really is a good information operations part of that. I have some IO questions, and that really is a good part of it.

COL LENTZ. These guys are, particularly Col Raid, out in the AO quite a bit. They didn't tell you this; they are very modest. These two battalion commanders actually have their own battlespace within the city and report directly to the brigade.

BILL K. Can each one of you talk about [your] battlespace and how they deal with the people in [your] battlespace? [47:52]

LTC KATHEER. When we came here to Fallujah, we joined with the Marines. For my battalion, I am the 1st Battalion. I join with the 3/5 Marines battalion. For my level at the battalion, I participated with the companies India, Kilo, and Bravo.

COL LENTZ. They were working with a coalition partner, OPCON [operational control] to that partner. Usually a company.

BILL K. When did this start?

LTC KATHEER. [On] 22 December 2004. When we came here to Fallujah the first time, our mission was a foot patrol, one squad of Marines and one squad of Iraqis. After this stage, one squad from the Iraqis and three or four guys from the Marines. Then the squad takes care of themselves; there is no American with them. The patrols were led by [an] Iraqi officer with some of soldiers. After that, they transfer to the NCOs to lead the squad because these guys, they got a lot from their patrolling. At the same time, we got a lot of experience from the Marines.

Also, the MiTT team, the advisor teams with us, the AST teams, they provide us more benefits. And these guys are the connection between us and the Coalition forces. Also, they got a lot from them their experience.

We started working the missions with the Marines as a squad. After that, we started to work as a battalion. We found many caches, many weapons; we found and captured a lot of insurgents.

Then we join with the Marines, one company from the Marines and three companies from our battalion. Then the Marines make a cordon for the area, and we search the area. Right now, in the last month, we are independent about our operations. Right now, we are cordon and searching a whole area, and the Marines are working in another sector.

We still coordinate the [support] issue between us and the Marines—if we need any support or need to fly by helicopter, we have the support from the Marines. Right now our battalion is capable of conducting an operation by themselves. But at the same time, we have shortages. We have basic weapons, but we don't have support fires. The Iraqi Army up to this time doesn't have support fires. We are working right now with AK-47s and PKs. The Iraqi government [MOD] is supposed to support us in helicopters, supplies, and artillery. But right now the Coalition forces support us with these capabilities, but we need to be more independent in operations in the future.

BILL K. You talked about your battlespace now. What was your area of operations during Fallujah, during Al Fajr? [54:42]

LTC KATHEER. After Al Fajr we were in the same area. From time to time the brigade told us to move from that sector to another sector.

COL LENTZ. He is essentially in the northeast [1st Battalion], and the 2nd Battalion is in the northwest. The 3rd Battalion is in Ramadi right now.

LTC KATHEER. Our sector got bigger then. Hotel California Henry, right? So right about here. [Col Lentz is drawing on the map. They moved their area west and 2nd Battalion east to Phase Line Henry, essentially dividing up 3rd Battalion's area since they were in Ramadi]. [56:20]

Also I've got one company working in Amariyah. I've got one company in Ar Ramadi in Al Anbar province for 45 days, and one from our company is supporting an operation we call Al Panzer. At the same time, my AO got bigger. This is coordinated between us and the Coalition forces. Right now we got a new FOB for my location. It is in a new location outside of Fallujah. So we are working from the first time we came to Fallujah [in December 2004] up to this time.

BILL K. What is your relationship with the residents in this area? Are they very receptive?

LTC KATHEER. Fallujah's majority is like a tribe; they are living as one tribe. They belong to the Saddam regime. We are here 1 year. We have a good relationship between the Iraqi Army [and the residents], but some of them they do not like the Iraqi Army here in Fallujah.

BILL K. What else do we [the Coalition] need to do?

COL LENTZ. You just opened Pandora's box.

LTC KATHEER. We are supposed to turn over this issue [Fallujah] to the police. The Iraqi police, they are going to control a lot of Fallujah, and we are to support them.

BILL K. How are the Iraqi police doing? [59:47]

COL LENTZ. OK. The truth.

COL RAID. They are not 100% reliable. They need more training. They are at least a year, probably a year behind the Iraqi Army, in regards to how well they can work. We need more police officers, too.

BILL K. I want to hear your story. Where was your unit [2nd Battalion]?

COL RAID. I concentrated on Jolan Park.

MR. CNN. COL Raid is running for office because he is very politically correct today.

Col Raid has an interesting story. They kiss the ground he walks on. Col Raid walks around and everyone bows.

COL RAID. As I mentioned before, we came to Fallujah 3 December 2004. We are the first battalion from the 2nd Brigade that came to Fallujah. I was working with the Marines, 3/5. I was working with the Lima Company. Commander is Captain Matanga. My area of responsibility is from Henry to Fran [essentially the northwest corner of Fallujah, above Michigan and west of the government center]. We started to work with these guys as [Iraqi] platoons with the Marines. Our mission was to find caches in Fallujah and to kill insurgents.

A big mistake happened at the first Battle of Fallujah. Some of the families didn't go outside of Fallujah when the Army came to the city. Actually, the river in Fallujah, there is no one in occupation from the Iraqi military in the river [pointing to the river west of Fallujah as it wraps around the peninsula], in the effort between Fallujah and here [pointing west of river].

Many insurgents were sneaking from this area [west of Fallujah]. When the insurgents came to Fallujah the first time, they mixed with the families and dropped their weapons, and there was no one recognize them.

We found a lot of caches in Fallujah. The insurgents took a mosque in Fallujah as a secure area for them. Actually, this was planned by the insurgents to take the mosque as a secure area. I'm a military guy. Somebody attacks me or charges me from the mosque, I'm supposed to fire back.

Actually, the insurgents get benefits from this mission because if we attack the mosque, that becomes a big issue for the media, for the Iraqi Army to attack the mosques, for religion issues.

Also, because the river is very close to Fallujah, some of the insurgents run away from Fallujah to El As Ragia.

BILL K. When you say El As Ragia, where is that? [1:07:05]

COL RAID. Outside of Fallujah [pointing to the northwest of Fallujah]. Then we developed our operation at Al Saliriyah. This is the north quadrant. We covered the El As Ragia. [V2:05:33]

Our mission is changing to help the Fallujah residents, find weapons caches, capture and kill insurgents. The families resident to Fallujah came to Fallujah 17 February,³⁴ the first ECP [entry control point] to receive civilians. This is ECP3 [pointing to northwest corner].

Then we opened ECP4 [new bridge].

During this time, my responsibility was to receive the people, the residents. They came according to their neighborhood; the first area was here [western Fallujah north of Michigan and south of Jolan]. After that was Jolan.

We helped the people when they came to Fallujah the first time. Also, the Iraqi Army and the Coalition forces cleaned up the streets from the bodies, from the destroyed buildings. Also, many local workers cleaned up the street from the bodies and destroyed [buildings]. We gave the people of Fallujah food, blankets, and anything that they wanted.

And the residents came here the first time, they were very happy because they thanked us and they said, "You saved us from the insurgents." The Iraqi forces and Coalition forces got a very secure ECP. Additionally, no one is allowed to come to Fallujah unless they have this ID card.

The Iraqi police, when they were first established in Fallujah, had many problems. Right now we see an increase of enemy activity in Fallujah by the IEDs in the road, and we are attacked by hand grenades when we are patrolling the streets.

Our sources of information tell us that there is much cooperation between Iraqi police and the insurgents. Maybe he works with them, or maybe he helps them. Maybe the insurgents have pressure on the Iraqi police, or maybe they are afraid of the insurgents because of their families.

Also, we don't agree about the selection of the Iraqi police to be here in Fallujah at this time. Because of information we got from our intelligence, they [insurgents]

³⁴ According to other transcripts (e.g., MG Medhi), civilians started entering Fallujah on 23 December. This is the second time 17 February was mentioned as a start date for civilians entering Fallujah.

control the Iraqi police during Al Fajr operation. There is no one higher in the Iraqi police, and before joining the Iraqi Police, the person was told to get permission from Abdullah Janabi. This guy is from Al Qaim.

BILL K. Is this the same Janabi?

MR. CNN. Yes. He is the same guy.

COL RAID. Equipment. Right now we depend 100% [on] all the Coalition forces to supply our equipment. After this time we got our wounded people, our wounded soldiers, transferred to the American hospitals. Even the minor or serious injured, they got turned over to the Coalition forces, because we don't have an Iraqi hospital responsible to the Iraqi military.

We got better training. The Marines help us train. We got the advantage from the Marines experience. Up to this moment, many of us train with the Marines, the NCOs, the officers, the soldiers. The percentage of officers in the new Iraqi Army from the old Iraqi Army is 25%.

As I mentioned before, the Iraqi Army up to this time has a shortage of equipment. Because the major support came from the Marines, for example, for the fuel, we received the fuel from the Marines for our people. Even for armor, for our armor vehicles, this program came from coalition forces. We don't have maintenance to fix our radios or vehicles.

BILL K. You mentioned weapons, but then you mentioned communications equipment, too. [1:17:35; v2:15:04]

MR. CNN. Yes, we don't have the capability to fix our communications equipment.

BILL K. I just want to go back for a second, when you talk about Janabi, and you talked about [his] signing off on police joining the force, when did that happen? Is that still going on?

COL RAID. Negative.

BILL K. When did that happen? Because I haven't heard anything from Janabi in a long time.

COL RAID. That was before the operations. Abdullah Janabi was here in Fallujah before and during Al Fajr. After the 2nd Fallujah he run away.

BILL K. So back to the Iraqi police. It sounds like you still have problems with the Iraqi police, is that right?

COL LENTZ. Right now, General Salah, who all these gentlemen know—

BILL K. In fact, I am supposed to see him Tuesday.

COL LENTZ. I have great respect for him. He is in a difficult position of not being from Fallujah, but they are trying to draw from Fallujah, the brothers of Fallujah to be the IPs [Iraqi Police]. The issue then becomes, whose cousin and whose brother? But how do you balance that?

I've discussed with them what I consider the Belfast solution, where the IRA really no longer exists. When they developed the police there, it was from Belfast, and they had this same exact issue. It was 20 years ago, it was very much the Brits, the Brit Army and the Royal Marines. That was their battleground for everyone, but until they got that police force structured and working, and then infiltrating, someone else had to do the job. These guys [Iraqi Army] are the ones that are infiltrating inside the insurgency cells and finding the intelligence, and when the IPs start doing that, then the cooperation level, the trust levels, will increase.

BILL K. What did I miss? What haven't I asked that you think is really important to tell me? [1:20:22]

COL RAID. The first police officers that they got in Fallujah didn't come through the Interior, the MOI. Nobody knows where they came from; nobody knows anything about them. It was a big mistake. [They were not from Fallujah.] And now I'm 100% sure if they ask the police officers in the town of Fallujah, if they ask them to go to Baghdad [because] we'll make police station over there, nobody is going to leave Fallujah.

BILL K. And that's because?

COL RAID. Because he [the policeman] wants to control Fallujah because he is from Fallujah. He is not ready to serve anywhere except Fallujah.

BILL K. OK, what else? Tony, do you have something?

LTC AKRUM. First of all, thanks for your visit, we appreciate that; and the second thing I wanted you to ask me was, "What are the challenges that you guys have?"

BILL K. What are the challenges that you guys have? [I don't understand the question.]

LTC AKRUM. Right now we need intelligence in the city to figure out who is the insurgent, who is the good guy, who is innocent. We don't want to hurt any innocents. We want to find out who is the bad guy to get him right away. That's a hard thing to do, and we really need that.

BILL K. And you can do that better certainly than the Coalition can do it.

LTC AKRUM. We have a group of ...spies; they [their recon and surveillance element] give us information about them.

BILL K. What else? I am honored to talk to you. Your brigade and your division have led the Iraqi Army in its development. You are very courageous, and I appreciate you taking the time to talk to me. Again, I am very honored. Thank you. [End file 01:25:30]

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