



The Bradley Distinguished Professor of International Security Studies

January 2, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT: IRAQ TRIP OBSERVATIONS
SATURDAY, 26 DECEMBER 2003 – FRIDAY, 2 JANUARY 2004

1. GENERAL:

- a.** Visited Iraq and traveled to all U.S. Divisions and the Polish International Division. Received Brigade and Battalion detailed feedback. Had Seminar with young soldiers.
- b.** Received excellent briefings from LTG Rick Sanchez and JTF 7 Staff -- as well as from Ambassador Bremer and selected CPA officials.
- c.** Had excellent JTF7 Engineer update on: economic reconstruction, oil industry start-up, electrical generation recovery progress, and Iraqi ammunition cleanup and security operations.
- d.** Received excellent update on building the New Iraqi Army.
- e.** Took part in an excellent session with an Iraqi Provincial Governing Council.
- f.** Received very impressive briefing in Kuwait at General Officer Level concerning U.S. Logistics Commanders on the surge effort with the second rotation.
- g.** Went to Fort Hood, Texas and gave briefing to all III Corps Brigade and Battalion commanders deploying to Iraq on Rotation 2. Joined Governor Rick Perry in farewell ceremony to III Corps "Casing the Colors."

2. THE BOTTOM LINE:

During 36 years in uniform and four combat tours, I have never been more impressed by a military operation. The courage, integrity, cleverness, and morale of our Army forces in particular are simply magnificent. Their tactics and leadership are achieving their purpose to build Iraq: security forces and confidence for recovery in political, economic, and security areas.

- a.** This is a Brigade and Battalion Commander's war. They are the best we have ever produced. Terrific values and character. Great self-confidence. Enormous technical competence. These leaders work well in a de-centralized environment with mission orders. Very soldier oriented. Physically and morally strong. We have been doing something right for the past 15 years to have produced and retained these superb commanders.

b. The tactical intelligence system at Division level and below is the best we have ever produced. At Division level and below, the G2 community took a Byzantine society (with a spoken and written language that we do not grasp) and figured it out. They have unraveled the enemy infrastructure to a surprising degree. They are running informant networks at Brigade level and below (which are hampered by a Cold War Regulation.) They have integrated special ops, HUMINT, SIGINT, and USAF collectors. This Division tactical intelligence system is an superb accomplishment which is the most effective tool of this phase of the conflict.

c. Nation building is being carried out with extraordinary effectiveness. The creativity of the Division level leadership is simply awesome in: jump-starting the economy, dealing with unemployment, building an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, building an Iraqi local Police, building an Iraqi Border Patrol, appointing local political bodies and coaching them in the rudiments of democracy, opening a free media TV/radio/print, creating the beginnings of equal opportunity for women, starting up the school system, opening the health care system, and jump starting public sanitation. It is incredible what has been accomplished by Battalion and Company Grade Officers and NCOs with limited CERP funding from the CPA.

d. In my considered judgment-- soldier discipline and morale is the best in the history of our Armed Forces. Very positive mindset among our troops that absolutely includes our magnificent National Guard and Reserve troops. Our troops have enormous pride in what they have accomplished. They look good. They are careful of their safety and OPSEC. Service in Iraq is actually very severe...the hostility of surrounding populations, isolation, and physical danger is constant in the air and on the ground. There are no safe areas. (Very impressive efforts by commanders at all levels to care for soldiers: cots, showers, contract food, home R&R, email, home phone calls, terrific medical care and preventive medicine)

3. OBSERVATIONS:

a. The Iraqi National Government:

There is no organized national government with communications and political connections down to Province level. There will be no effective government on 1 July 2004. The Police have been created by US Army division commanders who remain the only coordinating and training mechanism. These Army Divisions lack the budgetary authority for the Iraqi Police which was retained by the CPA.

It is hard to imagine an Iraqi national government with any serious control or legitimacy existing by 1 July 2004. The enormous power that Coalition Division Commanders now provide at local level may well be thrown into disarray by a premature and naïve transfer of authority prior to the US Presidential election.

We should be extremely cautious about believing that Iraqi security forces, in the short term, can replace Coalition elements. These forces are barely equipped, untrained, politically unreliable, and hollow (numbers present for duty may be grossly inflated for reasons of corruption). This in no way argues against rapidly creating the best Iraqi security forces we can organize. It is the only logical way ahead.

b. SOFA:

In my judgment, the ongoing U.S. successful military effort will be made ineffective by the creation of a SOFA document that is: restrictive, detailed, delineates only that which is permitted, and which enumerates Coalition limited authorities. We need a document, which states the clear principles that Coalition forces are to support. There should be no constraints on Coalition military actions except those commonly accepted international rules of law which affect an occupying military power—a military power that still retains wartime authority.

c. Public Diplomacy:

We have classified all the good news. The local and national, military and political strategies to achieve our purpose should be published in a White Paper---not classified. The enormous achievements of ammunition cleanup, as well as local and national economic improvement should be packaged and credibly sold as real outcomes to the Iraqis—as well as to the international audience.

We need compelling, attractive, independent, and US funded TV/radio/and print media run by Iraqis. We are losing the audience with stodgy propaganda and clumsy PR. Nobody in the world does media better than the US. Our purpose is noble. We are spending a fortune to rebuild Iraq. The Iraqis are joyful that we removed the tyrant. They do not want us to leave.

However, the country is rife with stupid rumors and deliberate misinformation. The three factions (Sunni, Shia, Kurd) are each fearful of their future in the new Iraq, struggling for their own internal leadership, deeply resentful of a foreign/infidel presence, and thirsting for a sense of security and pride. We need a “Communications Czar.” We ought to contract the entire operation to a U.S. Advertising/PR firm.

d. Iraqi Security Forces:

The JTF coalition military forces should be charged with total responsibility for creating these new Iraqi security forces. They should get the budgetary authority along with the responsibility. We should try to internationalize the effort under UN oversight. This is the “Center of Gravity” of the war. No one else, save the U.S. Armed Forces, can or will do it. We have been down this road before.

e. Sustaining the War:

CENTCOM probably now has enough forces in country to achieve our purpose. The ongoing rotation draws us down by another 30,000 troops. In the North, we drop from 37,000 troops and 250 aircraft to 6,000 troops and 10 aircraft. There may be serious problems in the Fall. (Oil, Kirkuk, Kurds, ethnic cleansing, Sunni retaliation, etc.).

Given the situation in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, and Venezuela -- we are now in a period of enormous strategic risk. In the next 90 days-- 8 of our 10 US Army divisions are moving. US Marine Forces fortunately will join the JTF. This ongoing rotation will be 40% Reserve Component. The logistics effort will be 68% Reserve Component. These forces are all being reconfigured for low intensity conflict in Iraq. However, the next crisis may put the U.S. Armed Forces in a situation of terrible danger.

4. IRAQ – THE CONTEXT:

a. The People:

- The hospitality of Islam
- Smart, secular, hard workers
- Enormous personal courage – fatalism
- Extreme poverty
- Personal honor and dignity mean more than life
- Fear and distrust – every man is an island

b. The Economy:

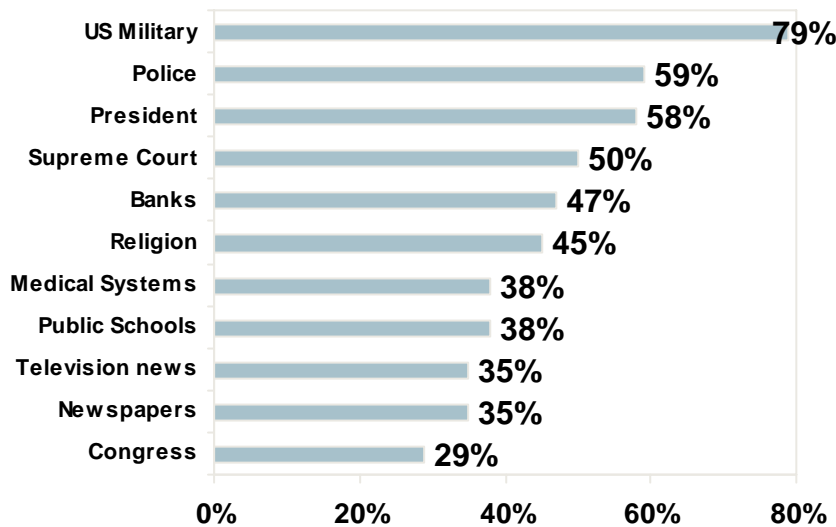
- Devastated by looting
- State owned – no profit incentive
- No leadership except in Kurdish areas
- Absolute corruption
- Infrastructure collapsing in a time warp of UN economic isolation

c. The Government and Institutions:

- There is no national nor regional government
- Police exist only inside a Province
- Civil Defense Corps are companies which belong to US Army Brigade Commanders
- Border Patrol are companies which belong to Division Commanders
- There are three battalions in the Army

5. MILITARY TOPS CONFIDENCE POLLS:

According to a June 2002 Gallup Poll, the 79% of those polled have more confidence in the U.S. military than the President, Congress, and other institutions.



6. SUMMARY:

- a.** We have the military power and the resources to achieve our purpose. Failure in Iraq or Afghanistan will carry with it risks of enormous damage to U.S. foreign policy.
- b.** CENTCOM needs a guarantee of adequate forces to achieve the articulated strategy in the coming three years.
- c.** Finally the U.S. must go all out to secure UN political intervention as the principle sponsor of transition. The UN must be persuaded to accept trusteeship of Iraq with the U.S. as its servant mechanism.

Barry McCaffrey
General, USA (Retired)