



Adjunct Professor of International Affairs

July 1, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Subject: Trip Report - Kuwait and Iraq
Saturday, 4 June through Saturday, 11 June 2005

1. PURPOSE:

This memo provides feedback reference visit 4-11 June 2005 by General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA (Ret.) to Kuwait and Iraq.

2. SOURCES:

- a. **General George Casey, Commander, MNF-I** – one-on-one discussions and Staff Briefings.
- b. **LTG JR Vines, Commander MNC-I** – one-on-one discussions and Staff Briefings.
- c. **LTG Dave Petraus, Commander, Multinational Security Transition Command** – one-on-one discussions/briefings.
- d. **LTG Robin Brims, (UK Army), Deputy Commanding General of MNF-I** - one-on-one discussions.
- e. **Charge d’Affairs James Jeffrey** - office call one-on-one with U.S. Embassy Iraq.
- f. **MG Tim Donovan (USMC), Chief of Staff, MNF-I** – one-on-one discussions.
- g. **MG Steve Johnson (USMC), Acting Commanding General, II MEF** – one-on-one discussion and staff briefing.
- h. **BG Peter Palmer and BG John Defreitas** - MNF-I Operations and Intel Briefings.
- i. **MG Rusty Findley (USAF) and Colonel Bill Hix** - MNF-I Campaign Action Plan Brief.
- j. **BG Tom Bostick** - Army Corps Engineers. Gulf Region Division Brief.
- k. **MG William Webster, Commanding General, Multi-National Division Baghdad** – General Officer Briefing and 3rd ID Battle Staff briefing.
- l. **2nd Brigade 3rd ID Commander and Staff Briefing**. Baghdad security operations.
- m. **Ambassador Ahraf Oazi and UN Iraq Delegation** - Lunch Meeting with Special Representative to the Secretary General of the UN in Iraq.
- n. **MG Robert Heine, Acting Director IRMO (US Embassy Reconstruction Program officer)** – one-on-one discussion/briefings.

- o. MG Hank Stratman** - Political-Military-Economic Brief, US Embassy.
- p. MG Eldon Bargewell, Joint Contracting** - one-on-one discussions.
- q.** Field Visit. US Marine Infantry Battalion. Fallujah.
- r.** Field Visit. US Army Mechanized Infantry Battalion. Vicinity Tikrit.
- s.** Briefing Iraqi Army Brigade Commander. Fallujah.
- t.** Briefing by U.S. Army Embedded Training Team. Fallujah ISF Army brigade.
- u.** Briefing USMC Embedded Trainer. Fallujah Police.
- v.** Briefing U.S. Army Captain. Embedded Training Team. ISF Army Infantry Battalion—Vicinity Tikrit.
- w.** Briefing Iraqi Army Colonel. ISF Training Center. Vicinity Tikrit.
- x.** Lunch discussions. Iraqi Army Battalion XO, S3, SGM. Vicinity Tikrit.
- y.** Live Fire Demo/Briefing. Iraqi Army Commando Battalion.
- z.** Demo/Briefing Iraqi Police ERU (Emergency Response Unit). Baghdad.
- aa.** Field Sensing Session. US Army combat division. Fifteen U.S. Army Company Grade Officers.
- bb.** Field Sensing Session. US Army combat Battalion. Junior Enlisted Soldiers.
- cc.** Field Sensing Sessions. U.S. Army/Navy/Air Force/Marine Senior NCO's.
- dd.** Discussion Sessions. Two U.S. Contractor Teams (Logistics and Security) -- Senior Leadership

3. THE BOTTOM LINE---OBSERVATIONS FROM OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM: JUNE 2005:

1st – US Military Forces in Iraq are superb. Our Army-Marine ground combat units with supporting Air and Naval Power are characterized by quality military leadership, solid discipline, high morale, and enormous individual and unit courage. Unit effectiveness is as good as we can get. This is the most competent and battle wise force in our nation's history. They are also beautifully cared for by the chain-of-command --and they know it. (Food, A/C sleeping areas, medical care, mental health care, home leave, phone/e-mail contact with families, personal equipment, individual and unit training, targeted economic incentives in the battle area, visibility of tactical leadership, home station care for their families, access to news information, etc).

2nd – The point of the US war effort is to create legitimate and competent Iraqi national, provincial, and municipal governance. We are at a turning point in the coming six months. The momentum is now clearly with the Iraqi Government and the Coalition Security Forces. The Sunnis are coming into the political process. They will vote in December. Unlike the Balkans—the Iraqis want this to succeed. Foreign fighters are an enormously lethal threat to the Iraqi civilian population, the ISF, and Coalition Forces in that order. However, they will be an increasing political disaster for the insurgency. Over time they are actually adding to the credibility of the emerging Iraqi government. We should expect to see a dwindling number of competent, suicide capable Jihadist. Those who come to Iraq--will be rapidly killed in Iraq. The picture by next summer will be unfavorable to recruiting foreigners to die in Iraq while attacking fellow Arabs.

- The initial US/UK OIF intervention took down a criminal regime and left a nation without an operational State.

- The transitional Bremer-appointed Iraqi government created a weak state of warring factions.
- The January 2005 Iraqi elections created the beginnings of legitimacy and have fostered a supportive political base to create the new Iraqi Security Forces.
- The August Iraqi Constitutional Referendum and the December-January election and formation of a new government will build the prototype for the evolution of an effective, law-based Iraqi State with a reliable Security Force.
- January thru September 2006 will be the peak period of the insurgency --and the bottom rung of the new Iraq. The positive trend lines following the January 2006 elections (if they continue) will likely permit the withdrawal of substantial US combat forces by late summer of 2006. With 250,000 Iraqi Security Forces successfully operating in support of a government which includes substantial Sunni participation--the energy will start rapidly draining out of the insurgency.

3rd – The Iraqi Security Forces are now a real and hugely significant factor. LTG Dave Petraeus has done a brilliant job with his supporting trainers.

- 169,000 Army and Police exist in various stages of readiness. They have uniforms, automatic weapons, body armor, some radios, some armor, light trucks, and battalion-level organization. At least 60,000 are courageous Patriots who are actively fighting. By next summer--250,000 Iraqi troops and 10 division HQS will be the dominant security factor in Iraq.
- However, much remains to be done. There is no maintenance or logistics system. There is no national command and control. Corruption is a threat factor of greater long-range danger than the armed insurgency. The Insurgents have widely infiltrated the ISF. The ISF desperately needs more effective, long-term NCO and Officer training.
- Finally, the ISF absolutely must have enough helicopter air mobility (120+ Black Hawk UH 60's) -- and a substantial number of armored vehicles to lower casualties and give them a competitive edge over the insurgents they will fight. (2000 up-armor Humvee's, 500 ASV's, and 2000 M113A3's with add-on armor package)

4. TOP CENTCOM VULNERABILITIES:

1st – Premature drawdown of U.S. ground forces driven by dwindling U.S. domestic political support and the progressive deterioration of Army and Marine manpower. (In particular, the expected melt-down of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve in the coming 36 months)

2nd – Alienation of the U.S. Congress or the American people caused by Iraqi public ingratitude and corruption.

3rd – Political ineptitude of Shia civil leadership that freezes out the Sunnis and creates a civil war during our drawdown.

4th – “The other shoe” – a war with North Korea, Venezuela, Syria, Iran, or Cuba that draws away U.S. military forces and political energy.

5th – The loss or constraint of our logistics support bases in Kuwait. Clearly we need constant diplomatic attention and care to this vital Ally. If Kuwait became unstable or severely alienated to US Military objectives in the region—then our posture in Iraq would be placed in immediate fatal peril.

6th – Open intervention by Iranian intelligence or military forces to support rogue Shia Iraqi insurgency. (Assassination of Sustani—armed rebellion by Sadr)

7th – Continued under-manning and too rapid turnover in State Department inter-agency representation in Iraq.

8th – Lack of continuity in CENTCOM strategic and operational senior leadership. The CENTCOM military leadership we now have is a collective national treasure.

- General Abizaid's value to the War effort based on his credibility to US Military Forces --and ability to communicate and relate to the Iraqi emergent leadership-- cannot be overstated.
- The combination of a three-star tactical Headquarters (LTG John Vines is the most experienced and effective operational battle leader we have produced in a generation) – and an in-country four-star strategic commander (Gen George Casey) has improved the situation from the overwhelmed, under-resourced Bremer-Sanchez ad hoc arrangement.
- LTG Dave Petraeus has done a superb job building the ISF. Relationships are everything in this campaign. We need to lock in our senior team for the coming 24 months.
- Suggest that the three key US/Coalition military HQS of Casey-Petraeus-Vines need to stop unit rotation and go to individual replacement rotation.
- The very senior U.S. military leadership needs their families based in a Kuwait compound with periodic visits authorized. (We did this with General Abrams and his senior leaders during the final phase of Vietnam.)

5. THE ENEMY THREAT:

1st – The Iraqi Insurgency threat is enormously more complex than Vietnam.

- There we faced a single opposing ideology; known enemy leaders; a template enemy organizational structure; an external sanctuary which was vital to the insurgency to bring in fighters, ammunition, resources; and relative security in urban areas under Allied/Vietnamese Government control.
- Iraq is much tougher. The enemy forces in this struggle are principally Sunni irredentists-- but there is also a substantial criminal class determined to murder, rob, kidnap and create chaos.
- We also face a small but violent foreign Jihadist terrorist element. These terrorists do not depend on foreign sanctuary. They can arm themselves with the incredible mass of munitions and weapons scattered from one end of Iraq to the other.
- Finally, Iraq is encircled by six bordering nations -- all of whom harbor ill-will for the struggling democratic Iraqi state.

2nd – On the positive side of the ledger:

- High Sunni voting turnout and political participation in December will likely set the conditions for the down hill slide of the insurgency.
- The insurgency can no longer mass against Coalition forces with units greater than squad level -- they all get killed in short order by very aggressive US/UK combat Forces. The insurgents have been forced to principally target the weak links-- the Iraqi Police and innocent civilians. This will be a counter-productive strategy in the mid-term. It has been forced on them by the effective counter-insurgency operations and information operations of Coalition forces.

- Insurgents now have a reduced capability to attack Coalition forces by direct fire: 80% (+) of the attacks are carried out with standoff weapons or suicide bombings (mortars, rockets, IEDs).
- Suicide IED attack is enormously effective. However, it will soon likely become a fragile tool. The Jihadists will begin to run short of human bombs. Most are killed or die while carrying out missions which are marginally effective. This must be a prime enemy vulnerability for Coalition information warfare operations.
- We must continue to level with the American people. We still have a five year fight facing us in Iraq.

3rd – The Fallujah Situation:

- The city has huge symbolic importance throughout Mideast.
- Unrealistic expectations were raised on how rapidly the Coalition could rebuild.
- The City appears to be an angry disaster. Money doesn't rebuild infrastructure – bulldozers and workers and cement do. The Coalition needs an Iraqi/Coalition effort principally executed by military engineers -- and thousands of Iraqi workers--to re-build the City. We need a “Pierre L’Enfant” of Fallujah.
- Police stations are planned but barely started. The train station is mined and the trains do not function. Roads must be paved. We need to eliminate major signs of US caused war damage, etc.

6. COALITION PUBLIC DIPLOMACY POLICY IS A DISASTER:

1st – The US media is putting the second team in Iraq with some exceptions. Unfortunately, the situation is extremely dangerous for journalists. The working conditions for a reporter are terrible. They cannot travel independently of US military forces without risking abduction or death. In some cases, the press has degraded to reporting based on secondary sources, press briefings which they do not believe, and alarmist video of the aftermath of suicide bombings obtained from Iraqi employees of unknown reliability.

2nd – Our unbelievably competent, articulate, objective, and courageous Battalion, Brigade, and Division Commanders are not on TV. These commanders represent an Army-Marine Corps which is rated as the most trusted institution in America by every poll.

3rd – We are not aggressively providing support (transportation, security, food, return of film to an upload site, etc) to reporters to allow them to follow the course of the war.

4th – Military leaders on the ground are talking to people they trust instead of talking to all reporters who command the attention of the American people. (We need to educate and support AP, Reuters, Gannet, Hearst, the Washington Post, the New York Times, etc.)

7. SUMMARY:

- This is the darkness before dawn in the efforts to construct a viable Iraqi state. The enterprise was badly launched --but we are now well organized and beginning to develop successful momentum. The future outcomes are largely a function of the degree to which Iraqi men and women will overcome fear and step forward to seize the leadership opportunity to create a new future.
- We face some very difficult days in the coming 2-5 years. In my judgment, if we retain the support of the American people --we can achieve our objectives of creating a law-based Iraqi state which will be an influencing example on the entire region.

- A successful outcome would potentially usher in a very dramatically changed environment throughout the Middle East and signal in this region the end of an era of incompetent and corrupt government which fosters frustration and violence on the part of much of the population.
- It was an honor and a very encouraging experience to visit CENTCOM Forces in Iraq and Kuwait and see the progress achieved by the bravery and dedication of our military forces.

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