

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH DANIEL MAGUIRE, SENIOR INTELLIGENCE ADVISOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE IRAQI MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND MINISTRY OF INTERIOR INTELLIGENCE TRANSITION TEAM VIA TELECONFERENCE FROM IRAQ SUBJECT: INTELLIGENCE TRANSITION TEAM PROGRESS MODERATOR: CHARLES J. "JACK" HOLT, CHIEF, NEW MEDIA OPERATIONS, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS TIME: 10:30 A.M. EST DATE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2007

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MR. HOLT: Mr. Dan Maguire, we welcome you to the Blogger's Roundtable this morning. And the floor is yours, sir, so whenever you're ready.

MR. MAGUIRE: Okay. Let me just open up with a short statement and then hopefully it will give you a little framework from which you might be able to ask some questions. I'm Dan Maguire. I'm a member of the senior executive service, Department of Defense. I am currently the Senior Intelligence Advisor and the Director of the Multinational Security Transition Command Intelligence Transition Team. As you probably know, MNSTC-I, as the acronym goes, is responsible in the larger sense for training, manning, equipping of the Iraqi security forces. I've got a slice of that mission responsibility in that I focus on the intelligence components within the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of the Interior. I've got a joint team made up of all the services and I do have a few other defense civilians, approximately 80 personnel.

We work with three primary organizations. Within the Ministry of Defense the director general of intelligence and security, DGIS, which is comparative to our Defense Intelligence Agency. The Joint Headquarters M2, which I would equate to our Joint Staff Director of Intelligence or J2. And on the Ministry of Interior side, the National Information and Investigation Agency, which is probably most analgous to our Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In addition to that, we do have some advisory and mentoring responsibilities for the military and intelligence academy which is at Taji, where entry level intelligence training is provided. So with that, I'm prepared to field questions and answer whatever you might ask.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir, thank you very much. And somebody else joined us online. Who's there?

Q Jarred Fishman.

MR. HOLT: Okay, Jarred. Okay. And I'd like to remind you guys as you ask your questions to please identify yourself and your publication. And Andrew, you were first online, so why don't we start with you.

Q Thanks. Dan, Andrew Lubin from U.S. Cavalry ON Point. I appreciate you taking the time to speak with us today. Looking at the bio here

that Mr. Holt sent, it talks about intelligence fusion analysis capability, imagery analysis, etcetera. Can the Iraqis run this when we're gone?

MR. MAGUIRE: I'm sorry, could you say the last part of that? I got the part about the imagery analysis but I didn't get the last part.

Q Okay. Can the Iraqis run all this when we're gone?

MR. MAGUIRE: Well, that's what we're about, to be honest with you. Our effort is focused on two things, primarily. It's building the capacity within the intelligence institutions and once that's done, much of which it is done now, improving their performance. I believe that, you know -- again, I hate to put a time frame on anything. But I would say by this time next year, that from an intelligence agency standpoint in Defense and MOI, that they would be likely self-sufficient to the extent that within the capability they have, both technical and human, that they can, in fact, collect, analyze and disseminate information to provide support to the Iraqi ground forces.

Q Okay, great. Thank you.

MR. HOLT: And Richard.

Q Yes, thank you for talking with us today. I'm trying to form a question here. You know, I'm going to pass for a minute and come back to me at the end.

MR. HOLT: Okay, will do. And Christian.

Q Thank you for joining us here. A question -- you know, it occurs to me that the Iraq -- I'm sorry, this is Christian Lowe of Military.com. The Iraqi intelligence services, you know, have this vicious legacy. Can you describe to us, you know, sort of what institutional mechanisms you're putting into place that they can't revert to some of those techniques that they might have used during the Saddam Hussein era? I think there's probably a fear out there that this, you know, becomes sort of like the School of the Americas or something like that. How can you ensure to the public that you're not creating another instrument of oppression?

MR. MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think that's certainly a very fair question. In our efforts to build the intelligence institutions our focus here, like I said, is first on building capacity and organizational structure. And so in terms of building the organizational structures our focus has primarily been on developing the tools to collect and analyze, and at the same time taking away or not allowing the tools of suppression to be part of the intelligence institutions.

Detention facilities, for example, were generally underneath the intelligence apparatus. And so, the intelligence guys would get the information, go out and arrest the folks and put them in jail. So what we have built into the structure and into the draft law is that the intelligence institutions do not have any arrest powers and do not have the authority to run any detention facilities or prisons. Now they do have a role in the collection of intelligence and they do have a role in conducting both tactical interrogations out -- you know, when they come on a target -- and at the same time doing that in their penal institution.

But that part of it is, at this point, very well controlled in terms of both the type of training they get and the oversight that is provided by the coalition, with the intent that as the coalition withdraws that they continue to follow those same procedures. Now I can't say there's a guarantee. But I think that as we have developed and worked with them over the years now, and we see both the leadership that they have and the manner in which they're conducting the business, that we have a high degree of insurance that they're not going to fall back to their old ways. Q Okay. And another quick follow-up. Do you do mentoring as well?

MR. MAGUIRE: Yes, we do as a matter of fact.

Q So in that capacity, can you describe for us any intelligence successes that you've seen these guys fulfill? Basically, like you know, a mission that they did or someone that they nabbed that they used the instruments and the training that you gave them and came up with a win.

MR. MAGUIRE: Oh sure. I mean, there are situations on a weekly basis that we could use and cite as examples. I'll use Baghdad as a primary example. As you know, the Baghdad security plan, Fard al- Qanun, has been ongoing now for months. On the MOD side, the Baghdad provincial office is the primary focal point for collection, analysis and developing target packages.

We have gone from submitting probably less than a dozen targets on a weekly basis, of which none were actionable, to most recently being able to submit anywhere between 50 and 60 targets on a weekly basis, probably 90 percent of which are actionable. And by that I mean that they have sufficient granularity in terms of the details of the who, what, when, where and why that either a coalition element or an Iraqi military or police element can go out and actually conduct the activity, conduct the arrest or seize a target or dig up the cash or whatever it might be. So we have success stories on a weekly basis.

I would say that we've just looked at some statistics.

On average the target approval to target success rate for the institutions that we advise is about 29 to 30 percent on a weekly basis. That is about equivalent to what the coalition force does in terms of the U.S. collection and targeting and U.S. unilateral activities. So they are right now on par in terms of going after targets and having success on that with the rest of the coalition forces.

Q And is that end-to-end? I mean, did they develop those targets and then give those targets to Iraqi security forces or to U.S. forces or both?

MR. MAGUIRE: It's both. Primarily, the statistics I cited were for an Iraqi-run program where they're at the front end, they did the collection, they did the analysis, they did the development of the target package, they submitted it for approval both for command and legal approval and review. It was then passed to either the 6th or the 9th Division here in Baghdad for action -- they actioned it, they hit the target and they came away with a success.

In some cases, depending on the nature of the target, it might go to Coalition Forces. You know, if it's a high-profile or very sensitive target and it might be considered to be outside of the technical means of the Iraqi forces at a certain point, then it might go to Coalition Forces, and that has happened as well. But the success story is really from the front end to the back end, and a complete cycle, is Iraqi-run and Iraqi executed.

Q Great. Thanks.

MR. HOLT: And Jarred?

Q Yes, sir. Thank you.

Jarred Fishman with the Air Force Pundit. My question is with the training that they're getting in counterintelligence, how good are the Iraqis becoming in -- you know, if you can relate to something in the last few months of progress -- at being able to find the threat within either the MOI or the MOD, because obviously one of the problems is making sure there's not the infiltration from Mahdi Army or from Sunni al Qaeda-linked extremist groups. So as far as policing the police, how good of a job are they able to do? MR. MAGUIRE: Yeah, that's another good question.

There's certainly a lot of press, if you will, on militia infiltration within the Ministry of Interior. The NIIA, the National Information Investigation Agency, as an element of the Ministry of Interior and the one that I focus on and work with most closely, is headed up by a Sunni Kurd. And he, through his personal leadership and the recruitment of his staff, has put balance into the organization.

So in that regard, the hiring process is one where you don't have 100 percent assurance it's focused on trying to hire folks with the right background and skills or education, and at the same time they institute a vetting process which is background checks and questioning and so forth to ensure to the extent they can, that they're not bringing a militia member in.

Now, we also augment that by using coalition resources to assist in doing database searches and background checks through our resources.

And in certain situations where we have people working in very sensitive areas and -- you know, let's say, in human -- in an assortment area, we'll also do counterintelligence polygraphs, which gives us a little bit higher degree of assurance that the individuals working in those areas are, in fact, loyal and do not present a security risk.

They have a good talent for counterintelligence, owing, in large part, to their experiences under Saddam. And it's institutionally not where I think it ought to be in terms of its maturity right, but we recognize that it's a gap, and we're working very closely with them to develop good, operational security and vetting procedures so that they can, to the degree possible, have personnel that are, in fact, going to provide security for the information that they're processing.

Q And just as a follow-up, could you expand that to kind of -- (inaudible) -- what's the ability to then check the bona fides within the greater -- either the Iraqi army or the national police or the local police forces, not just the people that are being hired for the intelligence positions, but what's their ability to then go and root out the corruption or the bad elements within the larger society?

MR. MAGUIRE: Well, the -- I don't have direct involvement in weeding out infiltrators and corruption inside of the larger context of the security forces and the ministries directly. And I say we -- I guess we do as a byproduct of the fact that we are -- we're hopefully training the Iraqi services

to conduct good counterintelligence and provide good oversight to their operational activities.

But it is a high level of interest -- a point of interest to the coalition forces and the Iraqi senior elements to include the prime minister himself to try and ferret out the individuals that -- you know, that are either JAM affiliated or -- I'm sorry, militia affiliated or might be undertaking corrupt acts.

And so you have an entire system of oversight across the ministries that is -- that is in place to look at those things. I really can't attest to how efficient that is because, again, it's outside of my purview right now.

MR. HOLT: Okay. And Richard, did you --

Q Yes, I've got my question now.

MR. HOLT: Okay. All right.

Q This is Richard Lowry. I'm writing for op-for.com. I wonder if you can tell me if you are still collecting intelligence that shows evidence of the Iranians are still trying to influence the situation in Iraq. Are you getting evidence of smuggling and infiltration still?

MR. MAGUIRE: There is -- in an unclassified context, there is still evidence of the implements of war, so to speak, EFPs, if you will, and other items being present in Iraq. But to go beyond that, I think I would probably be getting into the classified realm.

I think it would suffice to say that there is sufficient evidence which has, in fact, been presented to the Iraqi officials that the Iranian influence continues at some level, albeit much, much less than over the last month or so. But to the degree to which that continues actively, I really can't address.

Q And why aren't we showing these items to the world and this intelligence to the world as part of our information operations to counteract their meddling in Iraqi affairs?

MR. MAGUIRE: Well, I believe that has been done. I'm -- I recall seeing a number of briefings where the cache, for instance -- the large cache of EFPs and C4-like explosives was discovered probably a few weeks ago; that was in the press and in the media. So I do believe that has been done. Again, I'm not in that area, but, you know, I know that I've seen it on the media itself and in an unclassified reporting as well.

Again, there's -- obviously, there's classified information that relates to that, but I know that it has been presented to the Iraqi government and, in fact, has been in the public domain through media broadcasts.

Q Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay. And did someone else join us? Q Marc Danziger from Winds of Change.

MR. HOLT: Okay, Marc, have you got a question -- I know you're coming in late. But do you --

Q Actually, I did. You mentioned earlier that when you received actionable intelligence that you ran it by command and legal, and that sort of perked my ears a little bit. And I'm curious about what the legal review process looks like on the ground in Iraq.

MR. MAGUIRE: Yeah. Well, there's a couple of parts to it. Again, I will address my knowledgeability of it on the periphery because I don't -- I'm not involved in the legal process only to the extent that we ensure that our targets, in fact, do go into the targeting board.

We have coalition lawyers who are assigned to the Joint Target Working Group in the Baghdad Operations Command whose role it is to take -- to look at the evidence and then coordinate with the Iraqi judges to ensure that it meets the legal standard for an arrest warrant. That would then allow the security forces or the police to go out and arrest the individual.

The command review follows after that, which is essentially looking at the operational aspects of whether or not you want to expend resources against a particular target in terms of time and space. Or, you may want to have a target and say let's wait a week, this is not an important one, I need to put my resources somewhere else. And they're also looking at the balance aspects from a sectarian standpoint.

That command review is done by an Iraqi three-star general and a coalition general, usually the assistant division commander, who both look at those and then once that review has been done the target is approved for action and it's passed to the Iraqi or the coalition element to take action on.

Q If I can follow up, sort of a clarification and a question? The clarification is, so coalition legal resources then basically ensure that the Iraqi legal process is plugged into whatever decisions you make? Is that the basic --

MR. MAGUIRE: Yeah, it's a collaboration. That's correct. I mean, it's oversight on both parts, coalition and on the Iraqi side.

Q And if you're saying that the ultimate targeting decisions are made at a star level, what's the cycle time for a decision (on that ??)?

MR. MAGUIRE: It depends on the nature of the target. We have both time sensitive and deliberate targets. Time sensitive targets would be, as an example, somebody calls in and says I have five guys out on a corner and they pulled a truck up and it looks like they've got mortars and are putting mortar tubes out. That would be a time sensitive target that you would then pass to probably the local police precinct to go out and take a look at.

Targeting an individual, for instance, would probably more than likely be a deliberate target unless there's information that says it's a fleeting activity. And when we found someone who's a high profile terrorist and we know he's in this building and our source tells us that he's leaving in -- he's only going to be there for a couple hours. Well again, the determination about going after the individual will be made based on who he is and whether or not we already have information that that is somebody that you are interested in targeting and in fact would be legal if you went out and did the arrest or did the apprehension.

But again, the two basic criteria would be time sensitive and deliberate. Time sensitive can be done, you know, again in a fairly short order. A lot of it -- I would say that most of the time sensitive things, the call-ins from the tip line -- and that gets passed to the police and the local police or the checkpoints will go out and take a look at it. In many cases they have success. They -- you know, they'll nab guys that are out there. Probably one good example is if they put mortar tubes up.

Q Thank you very much.

MR. HOLT: All right. Anyone else? Anybody I missed?

Q Hey Jack, I've got a question if you don't mind.

MR. HOLT: Okay, sure.

Q Sir, this is Fred Baker, American Forces Press Service. The Iraqi security forces vary in their capabilities from, you know, fully capable in the fighting arena to the not so capable in the logistics arena. How would you rate their intelligence gathering capabilities and what are any hurdles or a timeline for getting them to a fully capable or independent operational level?

MR. MAGUIRE: Yeah, let me address this from a tactical on up. I think that one of the obstacles that we face is education of the Iraqi security forces in the intelligence field in the sense of bringing in folks who have sufficient education to be effective in both understanding and applying the intelligence training that we provide to them up at Taji (ph). The second part of it is that owing to, I think, historical experiences the intelligence organizations within the divisions are often times not looked upon as we would look at intelligence organizations, that is the people that go out and collect information so that the commander can go and hit a target.

Many commanders view the tactical intelligence organizations in a division as being there to spy on the commanders, because that's their experience or their knowledgeability from the Saddam era days. We are working very hard to rectify that by direct interface with division commanders, by recruiting and putting in place G-2s at each of those division levels and working closely with them so that the commander and the G-2 build a bond and a trust so that they can, in fact, utilize the resources effectively. At the tactical area, they are pretty good at what they do in terms of low-level sources and getting tactical information to go after targets. They are very limited in technical capability in terms of signal intelligence, for instance, and we're working on assisting them and getting some low-level intercept capability that would apply against the target set that they're confronting out there.

At the operational and strategic level, I think that the M-2, which is their joint staff J-2, and his staff are a very, very competent group of individuals. We have a new M-2 that's only been in place now for about a month and a half, who is a former officer in the Saddam era, was an instructor at their National War College equivalent institution, a very, very balanced individual, very knowledgeable, very, very good at leading and mentoring his staff. And they are really starting to get it and put it together, and it's a matter of being able to task out the collection requirements, bring the information in and analyze it.

At that level, our biggest challenge is having trained analysts and having the tools to do better analysis; and tools meaning the analytical tools that would be computer based. So we have -- we're probably at about 80 percent of getting the computer systems and the secure computer systems and communications in place. We're a little bit further behind in terms of getting them the software in Arabic that they can use to do analytical -- you know, for the analytical tools, if you will, the analyst's tool kit for link analysis and things like that. But that can ramp up very rapidly.

So they are hiring the right folks. They're hiring the people with the right education at the operational level and they are, in fact, ramping up very rapidly in their ability to analyze and disseminate information. At the higher level strategically, I think their biggest challenge is that they really don't have any resources external to the country that they can rely on to give them what we would expect in our intelligence community, a strategic view of what's going on around them.

And at the same time, they're focused on the tactical versus strategic even though there's strategic implications. And I think that that's going to be one of the biggest challenges that they will face is how to develop that strategic capability both internally and externally. But I'll be honest, I think that this time next year they will be perfectly capable of collecting against a target and executing that target probably in most of the provinces.

MR. HOLT: Okay, sir. Anybody else, a follow-up question?

Q Yeah I have a follow-up, Jack. This is Christian Lowe from Military.com. Two quick follow-ups. First, when you gave us the statistics earlier of 50 to 60 targets, 90 percent actionable, approval to success 29 to 30 percent, were you talking in Baghdad alone or nationwide?

MR. MAGUIRE: No, that's just Baghdad.

Q Okay. And then my second follow-up is could you expand a little bit on what you were saying earlier in this last question about -- say I'm an Iraqi, how do I join the intelligence service? How do you -- are they walk-ups? Are they recruited through the police services? How does that work?

MR. MAGUIRE: Yeah, right now for the DGIS for instance in the MOD, they are recruiting from two areas, from the public which is largely word of mouth and also going to the former professors and academicians in the college-level institutions here to get recommendations for individuals that may want to join. So a lot of it is word of mouth. A lot of it is also looking to the armed forces and to former military and former intelligence officers and going out -- kind of an outreach to them and saying, you know, would you like to come back in -- come into the intelligence service? That's pretty much how they're doing it right now.

Q Okay, thanks.

MR. HOLT: Okay. All right.

Q Can I have a follow-up?

MR. HOLT: Okay, sure.

Q Yeah. Sir, Andrew Lubin again, U.S. Cavalry ONPoint. Can you talk to us a bit about border interdiction of the Syrian then. A lot of the foreign fighters are coming in from that end. What are you doing -- what's Iraqi intel doing to interdict them?

MR. MAGUIRE: The -- up in that area, I think I -- and I don't know if it was this -- it was your group or not -- but I may repeat myself -- I do apologize.

The collection focus at the tactical level is largely based on a system that we would use where the division commander that covers that area and that battlespace will task his requirements, and they will use their organic resources, albeit limited, to go out and focus on that effort. So I believe up in that area it's the 2nd Iraqi Division at al-Qissi has some responsibility for the border area. And so they're going to work their local sources to both identify and interdict foreigners coming across the border. At the front end of that, our counterpart organization in MNSTC- I, the Civilian Police Advisory and Assistance Team, has worked with all of the border crossings to enhance both the technology and the personnel presence at those areas, primarily to ensure that at the legitimate border crossings, people are tracked, people are catalogued and you know who they are coming across. And that has been, I think, very effective in rooting out foreign fighters to come in.

Now, you can come across the border in a lot of places, and so it really goes back to the amount of troops that those divisions have to get out there and to look at those high-profile avenues of approach that are not coming through the main border areas.

The second element of that is what DGIS, Directorate General of Intelligence Security, does out in that provincial office, because, again, they are an operational strategic-level collection element, and they themselves will have sources and operations that are focused on primarily the interdiction of those -- of foreigners, some of whom may be foreign fighters coming in, because at some point, they're going to be coming down one of these MSRs.

And so the checkpoint operations, the human source operations at the operational level and the front end of it is the border ports of entry and the operations that the tactical divisions are conducting in the villages around that area would be the areas where you would have the most success in collecting and interdicting the foreign fighters.

Q Great. Thank you.

MR. HOLT: All right sir.

And we're just about out of time here, sir. Do you have any closing thoughts, final comments for us?

MR. MAGUIRE: I guess all I would -- in a final comment, I would say that I believe that the Iraqi intelligence services were slow to start up largely because of the effort that -- where we focused on primarily arming the police and getting them trained and getting the soldiers out on the street. But it is clearly recognized now that intelligence as a strategic enabler is one of the most important elements, along with logistics, to allow the security forces to sustain themselves.

And I believe the efforts that we're undertaking today and in the future are going to hold the Iraqis in very good stead in terms of being able to sustain military and police operations effectively if, in fact, the coalition were to remove both the intelligence enablers that we have and our combat forces from the provincial areas.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much for joining us for the Bloggers' Roundtable today. And, hopefully, we can speak again in the future.

MR. MAGUIRE: Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

MR. HOLT: You bet, sir. Thank you.

Q Thank you.

Q Great. Appreciate it. Thank you.

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