

Participants:

Col. Wayne Grigsby

Kim Kagan

Kimberly Kagan: Hello, Col. Grigsby, this is Kim Kagan from the Institute for the Study of War.

Col. Wayne Grigsby: Yes, ma'am. How are you doing? Good to hear you again.

Kagan: It's good to talk with you. Thank you so much for joining us today, to tell to us about the developments in Sledgehammer's area of operation.

Grigsby: Ok, ma'am.

Kagan: I am really pleased to have you today and to talk with you about the changes that you've seen in, in the area of 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, since you arrived as part of the surge early in the spring. Can you begin by telling us what the mission was when you arrived in the spring?

Grigsby: Yes ma'am. Our mission was to interdict accelerants, from moving freely in the area of Operation Hammer, and from entering Baghdad from the east. And what we figured out, what we figured out the determination of accelerants. Accelerants by the Webster's Dictionary is a good definition; but the way we determine it now, it's really Sunni extremists, Shi'a extremists, and Persian influence, and all the weapons systems and everything, and bombs, and explosives that they use, that brings harm to the good people of Iraq and Coalition Forces.

Kagan: And can you tell me a bit more about the enemy situation in 3-3's area when you arrived. In fact, can you begin by describing the area of operation that you work in?

Grigsby: Yes, ma'am. Right now, and back in 7 April, we came out here and General Odierno put us in the exact right location, being the third brigade of the surge. They put us on the eastern portion, eastern side of Baghdad, across the Diyala and Tigris Rivers, in a place called the Mad'ain Qadaa. Mad'ain Qadaa is about the size of the Washington D.C. Beltway; and it has about 1.2 million people in there. About 70 percent of them are Shi'a, and 30 percent of them are Sunni, that live within the Mad'ain Qadaa. And the population centers that you have in the Mad'ain Qadaa is Nahrawan in the north, which the majority of it is Shi'a and it makes up the Nahrawan nahia. Then, as you go down to Jisr Diyala, which a majority of that is Shi'a, the town of Jisr

Diyala; then as you go down to Salman Pak, down on Route Wild, with a majority of that town is Sunni, and then across on Route Detroit and al-Wehda, a majority of that town is Shi'a. So you can see we have a mix of Sunni and Shi'a, the great people of Iraq, live in the Mad'ain Qadaa; like I said, 1.2 million. And the majority of the Qadaa, as you know, is agrarian, so its farm. So water is probably the most important resource for these people, and it continues to be.

Now, as far as the enemy is concerned, before we went out here, we only had maybe one or two companies, that every other day would come out the Mad'ain Qadaa and they lived in Rustamiyah, which is west of the Tigris River and they came across the Rusty Bridge. And they would come across and then all the extremists would get on their cell phones and say here come the good guys, drop your stuff and wave, and be nice. That no longer happens here in the Mad'ain Qadaa. As of April 7<sup>th</sup>, when we came out and planted our colors at FOB Hammer, and now we live out in six different patrol bases; about 1,000 soldiers live out with the people in six different patrol bases. And that's done a lot of things. The first thing it's done is that it proved to the good citizens of the Mad'ain Qadaa that we are going to stay, and that we are here to help. And it also scared the crap out of the extremists because we are living right there with them as well. And we can jump out any time and kill or capture them. And we don't drive to work in AO Hammer; we don't commute; we walk to work, because we're out there with the six patrol bases.

Now, as the threat goes, again, before we came out here the Sunni extremists, which a majority of their areas, ma'am, is down the Tigris River, on the east and west side of the Tigris River, down to Salman Pak, you know you've got Arab Jabour on the west side of the river where 2-3 is; then you have 3-3, and the majority of the Sunnis are on the eastern side of the Tigris River, around Salman Pak. And then as you go down Salman Pak, you go down to places called Durai'ya, Qanas, and al-Laj, down there in what we call the fish bowl, a majority of that is Sunni, Sunni extremists, excuse me. And then the rest, all the way up to my northern border, and there you have your Shi'a extremists, which you have some Shi'a extremists in Wehda, some Shi'a extremists within Jisr Diyala, and Shi'a extremists within Nahrawan. So those two are still there. And then, we still see signs of Persian influence, as you know, with the EFPs, the rockets, and the RPG-7s. We just found an RPG-7 about two or three days ago. Now, because of all the operations that we've conducted, and we've just finished with an operation called Marne Anvil. And most recently, we just got our 1-10 Field Artillery back from conducting security operations in Bucca, we established within, about 40 days ago, we started Marne Anvil, and it's ended up with a patrol base sitting in Nahrawan, Patrol Base Salie, sitting right in the middle of Nahrawan, collocated with the IP station and a JSS. And prior to that, we killed or captured six to seven of the Shi'a

extremists that were basically the bullies of the town, and now we're starting to control Nahrawan in the north as well. So that's kind of where we stand right now, on both what our area of operation looks like, what it started out and what it looks like now, and then what the threat looks like as well.

Kagan: Can you describe a little bit how the enemy was moving through your area when you arrived? Were the problems the population centers themselves, or was the problem an enemy transiting through from one place to another, throughout your area of operations.

Grigsby: Yes, it was both. I would tell you that it was both, that out in our area of operations, and what I truly believe, is that it was a fight of who was going to provide the essential services to the people. And so, because perhaps some of the Sunni extremists and Shi'a extremists were performing a bit better than the local government was within the Mad'ain Qadaa, the people, the extremists were able to hide within the population, because they were showing or providing the essential services. And then, because of the al-Kut highway, al-Kut highway which we call ASR Detroit, that goes all the way to Iran, that was a real big artery that could feed right in across the Jisr Diyala, Rustamiyah Bridge, and allow for the Persian influence—EFPs, rockets, RPG-7s—to be smuggled into Baghdad. And I think that's the real reason why General Odierno put us here, being the third brigade of the surge. He saw that the eastern portion, across the river of Baghdad, there was nobody over there checking ID cards, no one's fault, he just didn't have the forces. Well, when he got the great Hammer Brigade, and he even took a battalion from us, initially two battalions from us, we got one back, we're still short one battalion. He put us at the front door of Baghdad, to check ID cards. And we have disrupted that capability and we're starting to control certain population centers even more because of the increase of the concerned citizens groups, and everything that is coming together to allow us to continue to get at the enemy.

And also, just one other piece, ma'am, along the Tigris River, with the Sunni piece, and I think I mentioned to you this one time before. I have a pretty good relationship with the Mad'ain Qadaa emir. He has lived in the Mad'ain his entire life. And I asked him, "Hey, on the Tigris and Diyala Rivers, is there much fishing going on around there, because we see a lot of boats." And he goes, "Hey, since I've been here, no one fishes in that river. If they're in boats, it's Sunni extremists smuggling stuff in." So we've destroyed up to 160 boats, up to this point and we've really paralyzed their capability, the Sunni extremists' capability to continue to resupply and move accelerants or explosives back and forth across the river.

Kagan: When you talk about these enemy groups—Sunni extremists, Shi'a extremists, and Persian-influenced groups—moving into Baghdad from the eastern portion of your area, what kinds of activities were they undertaking when you arrived in theater?

Grigsby: Well, the only thing we can say, all I can talk about was in my battle space. And when I leave here this time, it will be 37 months that I've been; so I may know a little bit about what I am talking about. So, within AO Hammer, because there was no one out here and then we immediately came out here and then spread out, the extremists they won't vote, they took maybe three to four weeks to realize a. are we staying, and b. are we going to interrupt their capability to do what they wanted to do. And during that point of time, we didn't see much activity. But it did start to increase about a month of getting here, and they started taking us on. And they started taking us on in areas where we were disrupting their capability to move stuff. (I.e. ASR Detroit, i.e. Route Wild, i.e. crossing points on the Tigris River). And the way they would try to do that, is they would use rockets against us; they would use EFPs, which is the Shi'a extremist threat; and they would use deep-buried IEDs, which is the Sunni extremist threat. And those are things that they would use against us. And back then, as you remember, attacks in Baghdad were very, very high. Now, after eight months, this morning, I think, the number of attacks in Baghdad were eight. The number of attacks in our area of operation, for all of MND-Center, was like six. So we've had an impact, and I think what, the way they tried to get at us, was were we were interrupting or interdicting their capability to resupply stuff into Baghdad is where they took us on. And of course, when they take us on, we get the best of them anyways. And now that we have been here eight or nine months, and you understand counterinsurgency, it's all about human beings and relationships, we have now built strong relationships with sheikhs, tribal leaders, and the government. And now they are trusting us more, and with this outstanding concerned citizens group, we are now getting local, national tips; caches getting turned in. It's really moving in a very, very good direction. Still, tough times ahead, you know there are still people out there who want to kill Coalition Forces. And we always have got to be ready for that, but it's moving in a positive direction.

Kagan: Before we talk about concerned local citizens' groups, I would really like to hear a little bit more about the summer offensives. And how they changed the nature of your area, as 3-2 came in and took a piece of the Tigris River across the way, can you tell us how the Corps offensive, Phantom Thunder, changed the nature of your area of operations.

Grigsby: Yeah, no problem, ma'am. And, I tell you, I had General Odierno up in Salie the other day, and me and him were talking and he said, "Grigs, probably the best decision I ever made was the recommendation to bring in 3<sup>rd</sup> ID and make them Multi-National Division-Center." It was able to take a Division command and control headquarters and put on another problem. And the other problem being the belts, the belts outside of Baghdad. And he says, "Strategically and operationally, that was probably the best decision that I've made since I've been in command of Multi-National Corps-Iraq." And I couldn't agree with him more, because it allowed the Division to build the summer offensive operations that allowed us to get to areas of sanctuary, where the enemy was doing what it wanted to do. Let me give you some examples. 2-3 got in here in about the early beginning of June. And 2-3's area of operations just happens to be on my western shoulder, and they're across the river in Arab Jabour to the west. Well the boss started this operation called operation Marne Torch, on June 15, which was basically 2-3 and 3-3 and the aviation brigade, all attacking from south and north along the Tigris River, to kill or capture insurgents that were having sanctuary there before. And because we were applying pressure on both sides, ma'am, the Sunni extremists could not go back and forth across the river. They were stuck. They could either stay there and be killed or captured, or they could move out. And a majority of them moved south and to the west, as two brigades of their combat power with air force, air aviation brigade, indirect fires, mortars, a very kinetic-type operation, went from north to south to kill or capture them. And that really just took away that sanctuary, Arab Jabour and the sanctuary I had along the river going down towards Salman Pak. That took a lot of that away from them, and then Terry Ferrell on the other side, put a couple patrol bases on the northern portion of his area to stay there. I already had Patrol Bases Cache and Cahill on the eastern side, and we were already there. So now we've been able to control that area, even more now with concerned citizens. But that was that operation that I worked with Terry with, Operation Marne Torch, and that worked out well.

Kagan: After Marne Torch, after the Tigris crossings, I suppose, in your area were stabilized, what did you do? How did you exploit that opportunity and that success?

Grigsby: From Marne Torch?

Kagan: From Marne Torch.

Grigsby: What did we do? Ok. Ma'am, what we did was, then I focused a lot of my disrupting operations in Salman Pak and in the fish bowl, because that's where we think we pushed down the Sunni extremists, down to that area. So we did almost like, almost 15 air assaults down into these areas,

where we kill or captured, it turned out, up to this day, we've killed or captured 125 insurgents, and we've detained about 472. And the majority of that was done after Marne Torch I and then I started to expand farther down into the fish bowl and down to Salman Pak. I wasn't able to stay there and control, but I was able to get down in there and disrupt the safe havens that they had down in Salman Pak and down in the fish bowl. Simultaneously, we were conducting operations in Jisr Diyala, as well, because I reshaped the battle space, and I put a battalion squadron in Jisr Diyala. And at that same time, were simultaneously killing or capturing the Shi'a extremists that were threatening the good people of Iraq as well. Because the difference in my battle space, is I have Sunni and Shi'a extremists. So when I attack, I have to attack and balance, I just can't go after one, you know, I've got to do it and balance and really go after whoever's a bad person, whoever's the enemy against the good people of the Mad'ain Qadaa, not worrying about whether its Sunni or Shi'a extremists. And then we also did something called Operation New Jersey Turnpike, which was getting at the Persian influence. And that's where we have built eleven different battle positions along Route Wild, and along Route Detroit. And what that is, we built these eleven battle positions, and we've trained the National Police to secure these battle positions, and to properly search personnel and vehicles. So that get's at the interdiction of the Persian influence along ASR Detroit and along Route Wild. And all that was encompassed in what we called Operation New Jersey Turnpike. And that really allowed us to expand farther south to disrupt, but also to secure our interior lines a heck of a lot more, because I think after my combat patrol was hit with an EFP, and we had a couple soldiers killed. I lost two soldiers on that one, and then we had a couple soldiers killed in a deep-buried IED in the north. What we did is we relooked our routes, and we blackened (what black means is no one can use those routes, no Coalition Forces can use those routes, only if we have a deliberate route clearance team on them), we blackened a bunch of routes. So now, in the Hammer Brigade, we follow a minimal same amount of routes that we use on a daily basis. And that has allowed the efficiency of the EFPs and deep-buried IEDs to go down tremendously. They still try to hit us with them, but they go down tremendously. All that part of New Jersey Turnpike has allowed us to have a little bit more security in the interior of our lines. Because, as I said, we're missing one battalion yet we have the battle space of the Washington D.C. beltway, so it's pretty big.

Kagan: While those operations were going on that gave you freedom of movement, you talked about others to secure Jisr Diyala. Can you tell us more about why it was so important to establish a position in Jisr Diyala and how you went about establishing yourselves in that population center?

Grigsby: Yeah, great. Well, I would just tell you, I mean it's Counterinsurgency 101. And we're doing a case study right now, and I'll gladly send that to you, I'm gonna look at it tomorrow night or the next night. We are doing a case study on Nahrawan, how we, you know, clear, control and build, how we're doing that. And that's kind of what we're still working in Jisr Diyala. First of all, Jisr Diyala is a Shi'a town, and it was infiltrated with Shi'a extremists. It's the closest town to Baghdad and when we got here, the Mad'ain government was working in Jisr Diyala. And also, it kind of controls the Jisr Diyala Bridge and the Rustamiyah Bridge, two crossing points to go in there. And very quickly, I saw that I needed to get a squadron, a battalion commander, in Jisr Diyala, to play man-to-man with the Shi'a extremists in there, because I saw that as a key piece of terrain. He who owns it has a marked advantage. So, we went in there and did several battalion-level operations, after our Intel build, to kill or capture the bullies and the bad people in there that were coercing the people within Jisr Diyala. And as we were doing that, we also built another patrol base, called COP Cache North and South, which is about two minutes from Jisr Diyala. And then, most recently, to get to the control piece, as we now had built and are working a Joint Security Site, inside of Jisr Diyala, working with the National Police, and the Jisr Diyala IPs, and the Coalition Forces. Also, because you understand counterinsurgency is just not about security, John Kolasheski has built strong relationships with the Jisr Diyala nahia. He's helped them develop themselves governmentally, by training the nahia council, by working with them with their budget, by getting the governor of Baghdad to come down and visit them, by getting Lt. General Abud, the Iraq commander, to come down and visit them. So they are getting looked at more that way. Economics, in our entire operation, we've already spent over 26 million dollars, 53 percent of that on water, but that also puts pressure on the insurgents, because we're also helping the government provide essential services to the people of Jisr Diyala. Under the transition piece, John Kolasheski, the squadron commander, has done several IP recruiting. Right now, he has 109 recruits that are getting ready to go to school to be IPs. And out of his concerned citizens, he would transition 250 of the concerned citizens to IPs. And so they will also start building security within Jisr Diyala as well. And then under information operations, we're building a radio station in Jisr Diyala, so the government can speak to the people of Jisr Diyala and we'll just continue to work that piece. So really, it's a counterinsurgency, it's a counterinsurgency by the numbers. You read the manual, and that's kind of the way we've gone into different towns, and that's the way we've gone into Jisr Diyala as well.

Kagan: When you say that Shi'a extremists were ((pause)) present in Jisr Diyala and they were intimidating the population, can you clarify what you mean by that? What were they doing and

why was it that you been able to get the government to function without the, without the extremists?

Grigsby: Well, first of all, it's going back to providing the essential services to the people. And if people don't have jobs, they will go to an extremist who will pay them 100 dollars or 200 dollars to fire an RPG, to set up an IED, et cetera. And that's what was going on, and the people were scared, and they didn't know what to do, and so when we came in and started giving a presence, started standing up and working with the nahia council, started providing a little bit more water, cleaning up some streets, doing some quick wins, some basic stuff that gave some credibility to JISR Diyala nahia council. The people saw that no kidding, the nahia council cares about me, the nahia council will do things to help me with my essential services; they will help me get jobs. That combined with the concerned citizens groups going in place as well, and then us doing very deliberate intel-driven operations against HVIs, or high-value targets. And oh, by the way, we've captured 24 top ten HVIs since we've been here, a lot of them coming out of JISR Diyala. The combination of all that working together, has given faith back to the people. That the nahia council and the government at least is trying and will help them get better. And that has basically applied pressure on the extremists, and the extremist is having a difficult time building any momentum in there. There are still some extremists in there; there are still bad people in there, we haven't gotten everybody. But we think we are at a tipping point right now in JISR Diyala, and we have momentum. Especially with this concerned citizens' group, the momentum it's building is huge. This concerned citizens group, you know see concerned citizens, National Police working together. We have a combined concerned citizens and National Police checkpoint just west of JISR Diyala; just north, I have a concerned citizens' group that's made up of both Sunni and Shi'a, one Sunni sheikh and two Shi'a sheikhs working together with concerned citizens. So all that is just applying pressure on the insurgent in many different ways, and he just can't get his feet underneath of them.

Kagan: Was the situation in Nahrawan similar to the one that you found in JISR Diyala, or is the problem set in Nahrawan different?

Grigsby: The problems were similar, but there wasn't much violence in Nahrawan. What Nahrawan was in my words, was a vacation spot for Shi'a extremists to go in there, and conceal themselves, and rest and plan for future operations, because we never had a violent act inside of Nahrawan. The violent acts happened outside of Nahrawan. So, from an amateur's standpoint, Nahrawan looked good to go, no issues, no violence, huwah, get it done. But what happened is, is we started seeing

some intel, and they made a couple of mistakes, especially with the rockets, leaving a videotape in the guy's house that we grabbed for the rockets, and it started pulling us into Nahrawan, because intel drives everything over here. So then in the intel-build from Marne Anvil, we went in and killed or captured five or six thugs, and this, let me give you a vignette. They call it a Shi'a extremist battalion in Nahrawan, that's what the bad guys call it. We took down two or three in a row, battalion commanders out of Nahrawan, and then no one wanted to be the battalion commander of Nahrawan anymore, because once they put their name on the slate, two or three days later they were sitting in my DHA. That's the kind of intel we were getting, and so we went in there; took out five or six guys; got 1-10 back. 1-10 went in working with a National Police company, did a bunch of operations for about 30 days, but also went in and helped with governance and economics and transition. And at the end state, after 38 days, we had a patrol base in Nahrawan collocated with the IP station and the Joint Security Site and no longer were the bullies of Nahrawan still in there bullying the people. So, and you know we brought in water projects, we improved roads, we're cleaning up the street, the markets are getting better. I just walked downtown all day yesterday with Lt. General Abud, and tomorrow I am going to be walking downtown with General McCaffrey in Nahrawan. So, if you go back to counterinsurgency, it was a perfect...we're in the hold, hold getting ready to slip to build, as far as Nahrawan is concerned. And you know the location of Nahrawan, that's pretty important; so the Shi'a extremists can't go in there anymore, and hide and plan. I mean, I've read some intel traffic where quote-unquote the JAM headquarters wants to move out of Nahrawan because a. the Coalition Forces have put a patrol base in here, and b. they cannot get any more traction in Nahrawan. So things are going pretty good in Nahrawan.

Kagan: How do the improvements in Nahrawan and Jisr Diyala relate to one another? Has having the second patrol base in Nahrawan improved the situation in Jisr Diyala or are those areas fairly separate in the benefits they have received from these ongoing operations?

Grigsby: Well, that is a great question. I think the Shi'a extremists in the Mad'ain Qadaa are tied, so I think Nahrawan and Jisr Diyala, they could be tied just [because] they know each other. We know the previous commander up in Nahrawan, Haidar Younis, and the previous commander in Jisr Diyala, Injar Haidar (ph), were both Shi'a extremists. They didn't like each, they kind of worked independently, but they would talk. If I am a Shi'a extremist and now I see Jisr Diyala and Nahrawan, being occupied, not occupied, but being liberated by coalition forces, IPs, and National Police working together, I'd be worried. I'd be worried from a Shi'a extremist perspective. That combined with the concerned citizens, I'd be really worried. Just to highlight,

first time ever, last Saturday, we had up here at Hammer, we had twenty-four sheikhs, Sunni and Shi'a, the leaders of...the support council of Mad'ain Qadaa, we had the two national police brigade commanders, we had the Mad'ain Qadaa civil leader, and we had coalition forces, all together, talking about concerned citizens and talking about securing the Mad'ain Qadaa. If I am an insurgent sitting out there, ma'am, if I am a Shi'a extremist sitting out there, game's over. Not only do you have leaders that want you out, the concerned citizens, you have people that now want you out. You know as well as I do that the insurgents count on people not getting their stuff together; they count on the individual not getting their stuff together with everybody, and that is how they break in, and that is how they can hide within the populace. Now that people have their stuff together with the concerned citizens in each neighborhood, they are saying, "We don't want you guys around here anymore." So you asked me, "Are [Patrol Base] Salie and Nahrawan tied?" Sure [they are]. From that perspective, they are tied...I mean it is building a lot of momentum here.

Kagan: Can you tell me where then, or how in addition, the Shi'a extremists were...let me back up...were the Shi'a extremists in those areas themselves relying on the supply of weapons along the Al-Kut highway, Route Detroit, or were they actually operating separately from the Persian influence?

Grigsby: I think both...I think some of them were using the Persian influence. [...] We had reports that they would send several to Iran to do training, we call them Iranian surrogates, I guess. They would go over to Iran, they would get training on the EFP [Explosively-Formed Penetrator], get re-training on the rockets, get[...] training on the RPG-7s [Rocket-Propelled Grenade], and then come back and train other people within the Mad'ain Qadaa to conduct operations. [...]Some of the Shi'a extremists that maybe didn't have enough money or maybe didn't have the contacts were just doing things against the good people of Iraq and coalition forces that threatened their way of getting money, or threatened their way of getting the essential services to people. Some probably had contacts over in Iran, [and they] were using the supply train that was coming up, through the Al-Kut highway, getting training over there, and some of them were just trying to survive.

Kagan: Did you see support emanating from eastern Baghdad as well, or were Shi'a extremist activities in Baghdad largely confined to that battle space?

Grigsby: No, we've seen, for example, and I know you heard about this, the forty-six, or the thirty-six rockets, that we caught pointed at [FOB] Hammer. We know that somebody, some guy, I think we caught him, Yasir Salam, used to be called the rocket man, he came out of Baghdad to train,

and then to implant these rockets and set them up to fire on [FOB] Hammer. So there was coordination across the river with the Shi'a extremists in Baghdad; we saw coordination going back and forth.

Kagan: Do you see that now in your area?

Grigsby: Not as much. Not as much, ma'am. I'm telling you the attacks in Baghdad and the attacks in our area have gone down drastically. They were never that high in our area. A better word for me to say is "efficiency." The efficiency of the attacks has gone down. We were hit by an EFP yesterday, it looked like it was put in quickly, not the right aim point, it missed the vehicle completely. And also ma'am, like I said, our reach into Baghdad is...I think we have [had] like 7 HVIs [High-Value Individuals] that other brigades have caught in Baghdad, four of seven, I don't know the exact number, so I will be humble, four HVIs that other brigades have caught because they go over there to get sanctuary, because they know if they are hanging out over her in AO [Area of Operations] Hammer, it is just a matter of time.

Kagan: Can you discuss, a little bit more, the challenges along the northern portion of your AO?

Grigsby: Yeah. That is good. That is great. That is very good. That is a great question and I definitely can. Just north of our area, just south of now Jon Lehr and the Stryker Brigade out of Diyala...my buddy Jon Lehr is now commanding the Stryker Brigade up there...we think, in talking to the locals in Nahrawan, we think there is a little bit of a sanctuary up there for the Sunni extremists. We think there are two Sunni tribes closing in on a Shi'a tribe up in there, and some times they will come down and actually attack the Shi'a, the good Shi'a, that live in Nahrawan. We think there [are] some bad things going [on] in there. I've conducted some disrupting operations up in there. I've gone north to the boundary a couple times on air assaults, killed and captured some bad guys. I've put some attack aviation up there and artillery when I have some detailed intel that allows me to do that, but I do not have the forces, Iraqi security forces or coalition forces, to actually stick them and stay on the terrain. So we do know that there is some sanctuary up there, and we think some Sunni extremists are controlling some land up in there. I've talked to Jon Lehr, we...both went and talked to Secretary Gates and he sees it the same way, but he [Jon Lehr] has the same issue. He can't get a lot of his force down south to take care of that problem.

Kagan: [...]Did the operations in Diyala province earlier this summer and in the fall push Sunni into that sanctuary or were they operating from there before those operations?

Grigsby: Ma'am, I couldn't answer that, not my area of operations. John Kolasheski [Lt. Col. – 3/1 Cavalry], who had Nahrawan during that time frame, he didn't see an increased threat from the north in Nahrawan, but he did state, [based on] talking to the people in Nahrawan, [that the] summer offensive up there in the north, was getting at some of those bad guys, and that is all hearsay from talking to the locals.

Kagan: How was the Mad'ain Qadaa government functioning when you arrived? Was it able to provide governance and services at all to [the] people?

Grigsby: Yes, ma'am. I think it was functioning very well. As a matter of fact, I was up here with Gen. Batiste in OIF II [Operation Iraqi Freedom II], and we tried to get a provincial government going. We had to show them what a meeting is [and] what an agenda is. We are talking fundamentals. We didn't have to do [that] with this group. They had a great mayor; they have a chairman of the Mad'ain Council, that was functioning. The Nahrawan nahia [has] a nahia council [and it is] functioning. [...]The Jisr Diyala council is functioning. The problem they had was Salman Pak, and they still have [this] problem. Salman Pak is the government seat. In the old days, [it was a] very famous [city]. It is the government seat for the Mad'ain Qadaa. What happened is [that] after Saddam Hussein was taken out of power, they moved it to Jisr Diyala where the Shi'a now hold the government, but they didn't legally give slots to [the] Salman Pak nahia, and pay those slots so that Salman Pak could have a say within the government of Mad'ain. Most recently, we discussed that with the governor. He is going to allow for eleven slots, and he is going to start paying the nahia council in Salman Pak so they can start...doing their own thing and having a say for the Sunnis that live in Salman Pak. We [also] have a government center that is getting ready to get built, and the government will eventually, we hope, go back down there and hold their seat where it is supposed to be at. These guys had a budget; these guys had folks to increase the water, so they could meet the farming season [demand]. They were very well [organized], very good, and now we've recently received our EPRT [Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team], so we are going to help them even more. But we were impressed.

Kagan: Why do you think that the Mad'ain Qadaa was so well-organized and functioning when you arrived?

Grigsby: Because there was no one out here to help them. They had to figure it out. It is a forcing mechanism. Really...they had it figured out. They were making things happen. When we got out here, we recognized that and we didn't want to screw things up for them. So we helped them, because the true reason we are here is to support and assist, not to lead. So we were able to get

into support and assist mode immediately with them with these projects, fifty-two percent of them being water, and help them take it to the next level, and show the people that the Mad'ain government can provide essential services to the people, which you know puts pressure on the insurgents.

KAGAN: Does the government in Mad'ain Qadaa have a good relationship with the government in Baghdad? Do they find that they get the resources that they need from the center in order to make their projects happen?

Grigsby: You just outlined what we thought our mission was. [It] was to help them with the connections back to the provincial government. It is getting better. Just a couple weeks ago we had the governor come out to the asphalt factory in Nahrawan. He went to a concerned citizens' location in Qarguliyah north of Jisr Diyala. It is getting better. We had the deputy governor out here yesterday in Nahrawan with Lt. Gen. Abud. We have had several ministers that are now starting to come [out] and help the people out. I don't think it was very good prior to us getting here but that is what we focused on, because the government was already functioning in the Mad'ain Qadaa. We were able to help them go to the next level, which is building a strong relationship [with] and getting resources from the Baghdad government. And it is working.

Kagan: When did you begin engaging with tribal leaders in your area of operations?

Grigsby: Great. Great. This is good. We always saw when we came here - there is a lot of experience of the soldiers and leaders in the Hammer Brigade - we know in the country it is all about tribal [relationships]. It is not the mukhtars and the religious leaders. It is the tribal leaders and the sheikhs. [That really started] from west to east, as the concerned citizens start[ed] moving from Anbar, started moving east, and made it to the Mad'ain Qadaa. The sheikhs started coming out of the woodwork, and then they wanted to talk. They saw that we were here to stay, and they saw that we weren't occupiers but that we were liberat[ors], and they saw that, and they believed it, and they started trusting us. Last week, for the first time, Hammer Six was able to address the twenty-four leader sheikhs of the Mad'ain Qadaa. We have been trying to do this forever, since I first got here, so it has taken us seven or eight months to get there. [...] Now we are there, and we are talking to the sheikhs, and we all know they are the informal power, especially out in the country.

Kagan: Why did it take so long for the twenty-four sheikhs to decide to sit down with you together and talk about the issues of the Qadaa and of their populations?

Grigsby: It always takes longer in Iraq, ma'am. Really. I don't know. It just takes longer. I mean, one reason is [that] before, there [were] no coalition forces out here in Mad'ain Qadaa. Whenever someone would come out, they would come out and train at Besmaya for a couple weeks, and then leave. They may have thought [that] we weren't here to stay, that we were just another transient unit.

Kagan: Was [any] inter-tribal competition present in the Qadaa when you arrived or were the tribes cooperating or were they simply not necessarily competing with one another but not in violent conflict?

Grigsby: See I don't think they are competing. They aren't in violent conflict. You put three people in the same room, natural human being instinct, they are going to work against each other to get the most. You know how that works. I think that will always go on. There isn't violent conflict. As a matter of fact, those two Shi'a sheiks and the one Sunni sheikh that are working together up in the north; they are working together. These twenty-four sheikhs, they have arguments. That is the Iraqi way. They are argumentative people. I mean they do argue. But for me to sit in there, this past week, and listen to them yell and scream at each other... I am smiling, because you know what, it is dialogue. They are working together. I took pictures of that, and I'm getting it out, in the IO [Information Operations] campaign, just to inform the insurgents that, "Hey buddy, game is over for you guys. They are all working together pal, it is just a matter of time, you just get your butts out of the Mad'ain Qadaa because it is just a matter of time, because now we have got everyone working together."

Kagan: Was there a degree of distrust between sectarian groups or between tribes when you began this process, or was there more distrust of coalition forces?

Grigsby: Good question. I don't know if I, I mean, I can give you my opinion. I think early on, when the coalition forces came out here, they didn't know if we were staying. It might have been distrust against us initially. After we showed them that we are not going to just stay back in one FOB [Forward Operating Base], we are going to live with the people, we are going to help you provide services, you know the old COIN doctrine, have a bunch of quick wins in your pocket as soon as you get here, we had that, we played that correct, to show the people that we cared. We went out and talked to people. We did human terrain mapping. We got out and talked to individuals and shook their hands and started building that trust, but that took two or three months.

Kagan: How did the CLC movements, the concerned local citizens movements, really get going? Did the tribal leaders have to induce the population to participate? Was there an area where the CLC movement really got going and became a model for other areas in the Qadaa?

Grigsby: I just went down there today, as a matter of fact. We are very lucky. I went back down to the place where the birth of the concerned citizens in Mad'ain Qadaa started, a place called Tuwaytha. It was a Sheikh Qais that started this force. He is a Sunni, [a] former Iraqi Army colonel. He is a sheikh, [and] he built a strong relationship with one of our great company commanders, a kid named Brian Gilbert. He heard about what...happened over in Anbar Province. It came over from west to east, he started it. Once that started and it started getting around, through sheikhs talking, it started getting around through our SOI [unknown] engagements at my level, the battalion commanders and company commanders. We started having more sheikhs coming to the table, saying, "I want to take care of the security of this neighborhood and the security of this infrastructure." It just spread. If you know our area of operations, from our northern boundary along the Diyala and the Tigris, from our northern boundary down to just south of Cahill and now Bali, along a route along the Tigris River, we have concerned citizens' checkpoints all the way down that far. We have 3,904 concerned citizens with over 78 checkpoints established within the Mad'ain Qadaa. They are working with the National Police and working with the IPs, which is incredible. It all started with Sheikh Qais. It started with the human relationship, getting to know one another. He asked about it, and once he asked about it, I came down, had a meeting with Sheikh Qais, we talked about it, and from that point on it has just blossomed.

Kagan: The concerned local citizens are both Sunni and Shi'a?

Grigsby: Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am. About half and half. We have a couple [groups] where they are in the same concerned citizens group.

Kagan: Of those 3,900 some-odd concerned local citizens, roughly what percentage actually want to join the Iraqi Security Forces?

Grigsby: Oh, a lot. What we are seeing right now, what we are seeing right now, it is about thirty to forty percent that would join the Iraqi Security Forces. [That is] what our feeling is. But we continue to encourage [this]. The one idea we have is there is a concerned citizens group in Saba'a Nisaan, which is off of Butler Range Road which feeds into AO Hammer. [There are] about 220 concerned citizens, all Shi'a. That very easily one day could be a concerned local citizens group

headquarters [and] the next day we could turn it into an IP [Iraqi Police] substation, and they could become IPs. That is kind of the way we are working. That is what I briefed to Lt. Gen. Abud yesterday. That is what we are working towards. Corps [Multi-National Corps – Iraq] and the Lt. Gen. and the Iraqi government has put out certain control measures for the concerned citizens, which include getting them to enroll into the Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi Police or Iraqi Army. We are working towards that. We are also working towards developing more jobs, the old civil works battalions, jobs for those that may not go into the concerned citizens [groups], but have jobs with trades that they can go into so that they can continue to provide for their families.

Kagan: In your interactions with Gen. Abud and also with the Iraqi central government, have you found those institutions responsive to the idea of adding more Iraqi Police and more Iraqi Security Forces in Mad'ain Qadaa?

Grigsby: I can't talk about the higher-ups. All I can talk about is the Mad'ain Qadaa and my work with the Iraqi Security Forces here, and all of them want to increase the capability of the Iraqi Police and the National Police, but it does take time. We have had two recruiting drives, and have some concerned citizens that, a total of 459, that want to go to [become] IPs, get the IP training. We only have 900 IPs in the area now, so a 50% increase would definitely help us out, but it does take time to get that through... the paper work and the approval, but we are working it. Lt. Gen. Abud and Brig. Gen. Adnan, the Mad'ain Qadaa IP chief, [are] very aggressive, [they] do recruiting drives, and [they] want to increase their capability.

Kagan: As you look at the Mad'ain Qadaa, what are the greatest challenges that you think that you face over the next several months?

Grigsby: Great. Yes. We need more Iraqi Security Forces in the Mad'ain Qadaa. Period. That is what we need. And I have made that known to everybody. As you well know, you understand the military, the Hammer Brigade is a shaping effort of the shaping effort. The main effort is in Baghdad. I work for 3<sup>rd</sup> ID [Infantry Division]; I am the shaping effort of the shaping effort. Well, the same attitude with the Iraqi Security Forces. We have two National Police brigades, 900 policemen; we need in [AO] Hammer more Iraqi Security Forces to allow me to get down to control Salman Pak and then move down to the fishbowl and control Durai'ya, Kanas, al-Laj, where we know, right now, Sunni extremists are still able to move. If I had more Iraqi Security Forces, I could get down in there, and get her done. What I am using right now, I am continuing to work with the sheikhs to increase the amount of concerned citizens. They sign the pledge. They want to be part of the team. They will identify where the caches are and where everything is. We will continue to move

south with them to support and assist the National Police and the concerned citizens, and then the concerned citizens will stay behind, build checkpoints, and control that area. That is what we are working. The increased amount of Iraqi Security Forces is what we need. Number Two, because the security level is down to a low level right now, we need to really hit hard the capacity build[ing] [and] governance and economics... We just recently got Mr. Pat White, State Department EPRT rep, we have a USAID [United States Agency for International Development][representative], we have a BVA [unknown], and we are getting a [Department of] Agriculture [representative]. Timing is everything, and it is right. These guys really need to kick in, since security is down to its lowest level. We can really kick in and make some great gains on the governance and economic lines of operation as well.

Kagan: Do you continue to see a threat from Iran in your area of operations?

Grigsby: When we captured the rockets, when we captured the RPG-7, when we get hit by EFPs, we are making the assumption that that stuff is coming from Iran. Those things are continuing, but we are not making the assumption, we look it up, we research the rockets and RPG-7s. [They] did come from Iran. The copper plates, I am assuming, came from Iran. We just had an EFP the other day. It is still happening, but they are not as efficient. That is the big thing that I see happening right now. We never had many attacks in our area, but the attacks previously were a lot more efficient than they are now. They are not as efficient. It is continuing to happen.

Kagan: When you talk about the Sunni extremists in your area, drifting south towards Salman Pak and into the fishbowl, who are they? What is it that they want and how is it that they function?

Grigsby: I think I am not supposed to say this. We say Sunni extremists or Shi'a extremists. I think some of them are Al-Qaeda. [They are] foreign fighters. They come in, they don't care about Iraq, they just want to come in and spread whatever they want to spread. Some of them may be JAI [al-Jaysh al-Islami – The Islamic Army], the Iraqi form of the Sunni extremists. The JAI, what they want, the JAI, they just want essential services, they want to be able to have water, they want to be able to have power, they want to be able to have jobs, so that they can bring their families up better. Right now, they don't see the Mad'ain Qadaa government providing these services for them down in this area. The reason the Mad'ain government can't get down in that area is because the security level isn't down to a level where we can bring in things to help them out. It is really a chicken and the egg [problem][...]. That is why the increased amount of concerned citizens and increased amount of Iraqi security forces will allow us to get down in this area and then secure [it] a little bit better. We bring in the essential services and I think JAI will say, "I

don't want any part of JAI, okay, the Mad'ain government is helping us out, I want to be part of the Mad'ain government now. I'm not going to fight these guys. I am getting power. I am getting water. I am getting chow. I've got a job no. It is all good." The AQI [al-Qaeda in Iraq] portion of the Sunni extremists, they only understand one thing. And you know what that is.

Kagan: As you look at the area of operations, what are the most sweeping changes that you have seen over the past eight months in the area?

Grigsby: Okay. Number one is concerned citizens. Number one is concerned citizens. It is the people standing up and saying, "I don't want this violence anymore." We didn't have that when we first got here. We were nowhere near it.

Kagan: Do you see a continued role for U.S. forces as you increase the number of concerned local citizens and increase the number of Iraqi Police or National Police in the Mad'ain Qadaa?

Grigsby: [...]Because of my lack of Iraqi Security Forces right now, and what I think it is going to be in the near future, I feel, Grigsby's opinion, [...]that we need to put another brigade in here, the same way mine is, to continue to partner and work with these guys, to get these Iraqi Security Forces to a level where they can handle the security, and to bring in the increased amount of Iraqi Security Forces to allow them to control the security. If I had enough Iraqi Security Forces in here right now, [...]I could go all the way down to the fishbowl and Salman Pak and et cetera and clear that out and start controlling that area. It may be a different area, but right now, we definitely need another coalition force brigade to come in here and continue to work. As they are able to bring in and build and rebuild more IPs and more Iraqi Security Forces, [they need to] help them come in place and get their feet on the ground. And the EPRT.

Kagan: And is the idea that you think that another brigade should follow your deployment, or that you need another brigade working within the area of operations?

Grigsby: No, another brigade should follow my deployment.

Kagan: COL Grigsby, thank you so much for talking with the Institute for the Study of War today. We are really impressed by all that you have accomplished in your area of operations over the past eight months, and we really appreciate the insight that you have provided into the activities of 3/3. We do wish you the best of luck for the remainder of your deployment. We hope that we can talk to you again.

Grigsby: Anytime you want to talk to me. I have figured out my role as brigade commander. I have great battalion commanders and company commanders and platoon leaders. They don't need me down there. My role is to get the resources for those boys and then get the story out so that everyone knows how great [these] soldiers are performing. When we finish this case study, if you send me your e-mail, or I think I have your e-mail, I'll send you a copy of this case study for Nahrawan. I think that will help you tremendously, because Nahrawan is just a typical operation that we have done in numerous places in Area of Operations Hammer.

Kagan: I would be very grateful for that, and would really like to take a look at the case study. Thank you very much for joining us today.

Grigsby: Ok, ma'am. You guys have a great Christmas.

Kagan: You too.

Grigsby: Tell your husband I say hi.

Kagan: I will. Take care.