

Participants:

Col. David Sutherland

Kimberly Kagan

Kimberly Kagan: Colonel Sutherland this is Kimberly Kagan, President of the Institute for the Study of War in Washington D.C. I am very pleased to interview you today. You, David Sutherland, are the commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Greywolf, 1st Calvary Division which has been stationed in Diyala province since November 2006 and is scheduled to rotate out of Iraq in December 2007. Col. Sutherland will explain how Greywolf has improved security in Diyala province, during the Iraq-wide offensive undertaken by Coalition and Iraqi forces in the summer and fall of 2007. Welcome. Thank you for joining us.

Col. David Sutherland: Thank you Kim. I appreciate it. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about my soldiers' achievements and their achievements working with the Iraqi Security Forces to really empower the government of Diyala and the security forces here to improve constantly. The key is, that has been our goal: to enable the government of Diyala to provide services and security for their people.

Kagan: Can you elaborate on Greywolf's mission? What has the mission of your brigade been since June 2007?

Sutherland: Yeah, our mission has been to conduct counterinsurgency operations, coupled with, and as part of that, stability and reconstruction operations focused on defeating the terrorist and militia organizations that persistently existed in Diyala since our arrival. But, coupled with that was the need to empower and help support the government of Diyala to get their selves up and running. And to also get social order with the Iraqi security forces into Diyala, rule of law, domestic order those elements associated with it and we've been doing that, since, as you said, November. Our problem set is extremely different and extremely complex for a province in Iraq. Basically all the issues and conflicts that exist through all of Iraq are a microcosm in Diyala and they exist here. That's why Diyala is known as the 'little Iraq.'

Kagan: What sorts of enemies has Greywolf faced in Diyala?

Sutherland: We have been fighting al-Qaeda, predominantly. They are the most vicious elements we have been fighting – they are the elements that don't care if they kill innocent civilians from both sects, or all sects, I should say. They will just as quickly put a suicide born vehicle-borne IED in front of a hospital or a suicide bomber in front of a mosque and they don't care who they hurt as long as it helps them achieve their end of inciting sectarian violence. We've also been faced with Sunni rejectionists, former Baathists that really lost power when the regime fell and they want it back. We also are facing Iranian influence. Iran wants to establish a hegemony in Iraq and they want to do that in Diyala, for us, because of the lines of communications, the capabilities to influence Baghdad from proximity of the Iranian border. Shia domination through the use (inaudible)... the Shia have the power they don't want to lose it. So we have been engaged with Shia dominations as well. The last elements that doesn't fight us but provides resources is an elements called the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq which is a group of former Iranians that are in a compound inside Diyala that had access to munitions, intelligence, and money but are controlled by coalition forces inside that area. They fought for Saddam in the Iran-Iraq war and they have been a presence inside Diyala but they will side with any element that will provide or are counter to Iranian influence, either through the use of munitions, intelligence, or finances. But we have taken away all munitions; we've cleared those from the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq. So that's basically the five elements that we've been fighting against. The element that in a non-kinetic sense is Kurdish expansion and this is the Kurds green line that existed from the northern part of Diyala, from Khanaqin to Qarah Tappah now pushed down south towards Mandali. And the reason is is the Kurds want to gain control of their former homeland that in 1973 they were forced out of and the Arabs moved into under Saddam's instruction. And so a big element that has been creating tension is Kurdish expansion into these areas. And it's all about resources. The resources in Diyala are abundant: two rivers, one lake, oil fields, electric capability, crops, and agriculture make up the primary economic base of Diyala.

Kagan: The Kurdish expansion you said is aimed at resources. Can the same be said of the al-Qaeda, JAM, or Iranian presence in your area?

Sutherland: Yeah, I would say that the Sunni resurgence, the Baath, really what they are, they are Sunni-based nationalist organizations. They want, they lost political and economic power and they want it back. They rejected the elections, the outcome of the elections, although they didn't vote, and

they want is security, political power, um, they want to be in the lead for the province, and economic power and that's the Sunni rejectionists. As far as Iranian influence, they want military power; they want political power; economic, as well as religiously-based predominance. The Shia, Iraqi Shia domination, is security and political. Not so much the economic aspect, but it is part of their desire. Al-Qaeda, they want to secure a Wahhabist foot hold. They want to secure a Wahhabist foot hold in Diyala. In May of, or, I'm sorry, in April of 2006 Zarqawi was killed, well in April Zarqawi claimed Diyala as the capital of the caliphate. The Islamic State of Iraq declared Baqubah the provincial capital, the capital of the caliphate, inside what Zarqawi claimed. The capital of the Islamic State of Iraq was in Baqubah. In May of 2006, Zarqawi was killed in Hib Hib. And this is five miles from where I am sitting now. Al-Qaeda planted itself here. This is where they wanted their Caliphate. This is where they wanted the start of the Islamic State of Iraq to take place. And theirs is to secure that foot hold, their intent was to secure the foot hold here. They also had the desire of forcing coalition forces out of Iraq and start an ethnic civil war is what we have found.

Kagan: How did al-Qaeda establish itself among the population of Diyala and in particular in the city of Baqubah?

Sutherland: Yeah, al-Qaeda took advantage of sectarian difficulties I would say. It was created over a period of time, really from Zarqawi's death until about the November 2006 timeframe. What happened was services began to be shut off in Diyala from the Central Government and this was because of al-Qaeda's offensive operations. So the people did not see support from the central government. The other thing is that in August/September timeframe of 2006 Iraqi Security Forces, specifically the Iraqi Army, conducted an operation in Baqubah and detained about 500 individuals. They did wide-cast wide-sweep operations inside the city of Baqubah detaining every military-age male that was in the province, or in the city I should say, and what this did was created a perception of the Iraqi Security Forces as being sectarian. It was further compounded in Baqubah when during Holy Ramadan of 2006 the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police conducted another operation and detained about 400 other military aged men. There was no intelligence driving these operations. There was no evidence. They did wide-sweep wide-cast operations and detained close to in total 900 individuals. Of those 900 individuals, all but 2 were Sunni. So it gave the perception of the Iraqi Security Forces as a sectarian organization. In reality the Iraqi Security Forces were conducting operations based on the training that they had received under Saddam. Saddam's method was to go in, conduct these wide-sweep wide-cast operations, detain as many

people as possible, and then investigate them. In a democracy or in an environment like this, it created a perception of sectarian bias. So you had Sunnis turning to other organization for security against the Iraqi Security Forces. You had a perception of an ineffective government and an ineffective ((pause)) inclusion into the province of the sects. And the reason for that is because Diyala is a, the population is about 60% Sunni, about 34 %-35% Shia, and the remained are Kurds. Yet the Provincial Governor is Shia, the Provincial Director of Police at that time when we first got here was Shia, and the chief, or the Commander of the 5th Iraqi Army Division were Shia, or was Shia. Additionally, the basis of this perception of sectarian government was also in the provincial council. Again the Sunnis didn't vote in a provincial council. 21 of the provincial council members are Shia; 14 are Sunni; and 7 are Kurds. So you have a government that is not representative, so much, of the population. Additionally, the Iraqi Police at that time during our arrival were recruited, not from the neighborhoods, but from outside the neighborhoods. In fact the police chief at the time, Gassan al-Bawi, the provincial director of police, was recruiting from Baghdad. He had recruited about 300 individuals from the Wolf Brigade, which was a national police organization, very Shia organization, and he recruited them to assume rolls as policemen inside Baqubah. Again further fueling that perception of sectarianism. So the public perception of inequity, corruption of the ISF, the people were disgusted and disillusioned by the ISF based on the treatment of the people and the disrespect they showed to the people. And fear of where the Sunnis were being left out of the security and the political process, partly of their choosing, were the driving forces behind support for terrorists and specifically al-Qaeda. They turned to those terrorists networks for security, what they thought could provide them services, and representation.

Sutherland: Al-Qaeda was able to take control of this situation and drive a wedge between the people and the government, and drive a wedge between the people and the Iraqi Security Forces. And quite honestly, it was textbook insurgency. The tribal leaders, a large part of the social order of things in Diyala, were left out. And they were left out starting in about 2003, when it was announced that the tribal leaders have no place in the future of Diyala, or in the future of Iraq, I should say, the tribal leaders recognized that and they began losing power. So, a, a large portion of the social aspect in the province, the social leaders, were removed from the equation, again being able to provide opportunities for al-Qaeda, both in recruiting as well as taking advantage of the disgust, as I discussed earlier, the disgust that the people had towards the Iraqi Security Forces. So, that was our conditions at the time we arrived here and what we had to do was determine how, how to best fight this. And it came down to many different things; but one of the problems was, the other

problems, were that there was no local media. And the fact that there was no local media fueled unwarranted hysteria. So every time a rumor would be circulated that there were 500 insurgents amassing at one place, it would create just absolute pandemonium and the people would not come out of their houses. They would stay in. no one was on the streets, after say twelve noon every day in Baqubah. And in those isolated areas, say, the Diyala River Valley, people were afraid to take their produce to market, or to go to the market. When we had a suicide VBIED go into a market, in a town called Abu Saydah, which is predominantly a Shia town, the people instantly believed that VBIED came from the areas known as, villages known as Mukeisha abu Garmah and Qubbah, which are predominantly Sunni. And so that fueled more sectarian violence, and more, ((pause)) really suspicions. And they cut themselves off; Abu Saydah cut itself off from Mukeisha abu Garmah. And so there, they turned to al-Qaeda as well, but that was because we could not get the word out through the lack of local media, what the real situation was. Does all that make sense?

Kagan: It does make sense. And it sounds as though Diyala had faced a very difficult problem set. Can you talk about the ((pause)) what areas did al-Qaeda control in addition to Baqubah by the spring of 2007? Did al-Qaeda control Muqdadiyah? Did it control other villages in the Diyala River Valley?

Sutherland: Yeah, and understand that in this fight, how do you define control—they could control through fear, they could control through perception of fear, they could control through psychological means, as well as physical means. In April of 2006, again I'll go back to that to start from, specifically on Saddam Hussein's birthday, al-Qaeda conducted seven coordinated attacks inside the province. They attacked Udaim, on the northwestern side of the province; they attacked into Muqdadiyah; they attacked Balad Ruz, Kana'an, Khalis, Khan Bani Sa'ad, and Baqubah, those areas. And they didn't have to say, they had to create a perception. And, again, Zarqawi set up his headquarters in Hib Hib. They had control of a large part of the province. They would not live, per se, inside Baqubah, but rather would come into Baqubah from an area known as the Diyala River Valley, the DRV, and they would occupy safe houses inside Baqubah. Uh, and use that, the provincial capital, to discredit the Iraqi Security Forces and the government of Diyala, for outposts, if you will, inside Baqubah, because what they wanted to do was get the people to lose confidence in the government. They also used what, what would be, I would define as night letters, and they would deliver letters at night to government employees, telling them not to show up for work or they would be killed. And they basically, in the November 2006

timeframe, until February, shut down the government almost completely. In Balad Ruz, uh, the village of Balad Ruz, which is about 100,000 people, they did not control the inner city of Balad Ruz, what they did though was control the outer area, specifically south of Balad Ruz, an area known as Turki Village, Turki Tuluz, and Tuwillah. And a group known as the Council, hard-core, well-trained Wahhabists that were loyal to Saddam, Uday and Qusay, used to go to this area south of Balad Ruz and go hunting, and would basically spend their vacations there, so the people were really loyal to them. But what they also had there was supplies, lots of supplies. And when we went in, in January of 2007, into this area south of Balad Ruz, ah, we found, between December and January, over 40 caches to include 1500 Katyusha rockets, 52mm Katyusha rockets, ah, 1000 RPGs, and I can go on and on. Ah, they also had control of an area north of Mandali, that is part of the al-Nida tribe, and the al-Nida tribe actually were relocated to this area by Saddam, to protect the border between Iraq and Iran. Saddam paid them very well; he gave them lots of political favors and lots of contracts. So when Saddam fell, their livelihood went away, plus with the Kurdish expansion they see encroachment by the Kurds on what they perceive is their area, when in fact it's an area that Saddam moved them into when he displaced the Kurds. Uh, in Muqdadiyah, they would fight in Muqdadiyah, they had control of large portions of Muqdadiyah, but also the areas to the west of Muqdadiyah, south of Hamrin Lake, where they could control the lines of communications, the road networks running from Kirkuk to the northwest, to Khanaqin in the east, and then down to Baqubah and then Baghdad. The road networks were very important to them to support their fight inside Baghdad. They also had control of Udaim and to a certain extent, the areas south of Baqubah, uh, which is the Bani Sa'ad tribal area running along major road networks that run down south from the south corner of Baqubah to, ah, Salman Pak on the east side of Baghdad. All this to control road networks as well as control the people; but really their biggest thing was to discredit Iraqi Security Forces, Coalition Forces, and the government of Iraq.

Kagan: How did Greywolf begin to, uh, address these problems? Can you briefly describe the preliminary operations that you undertook, after clearing Turki Village in January 2007, to control the expansion of, uh, al-Qaeda, the Kurdish expansion, the Jaysh al-Mahdi, and Iranian influence?

Sutherland: Yeah. Ah, what we had to do, quite honestly was, the first thing we had to do was figure out the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces, we had to determine how, what we could rely on the Iraqi Army to do. The Iraqi Army is a year, uh, was at that time three years old. You develop a force through training; you develop a discipline, you develop leadership, you develop values

through training. What we quickly realized was you also developed systems, logistics systems, Command and Control systems. What we quickly realized was this new Iraqi Army was not trained, uh, so it is the first force, really in the world that is training in contact. We've trained forces in combat before, out of contact, we will pull them off the line and delay your fight, and train them, or refit, reorganize, but what we found was we had to get the Iraqi Army trained to a level where they could conduct continuous and sustained operations with our Coalition forces in the fight. We did this by partnering with them in every operation, started on the west side of Baqubah, um, two weeks after we got there in November. Once we got them to a level that we perceived that they could sustain themselves, conduct continuous operations, then that is when we really started beginning our offensive, persistent, aggressive operations. The other thing that we realized very quickly was al-Qaeda thought we owned the roads, therefore they believed they owned everything else. And, quite honestly, that was foreign to us and the Coalition Forces. They don't own anything. I am not gonna give them a thing. And so we began very quickly attacking into areas they perceived was their safe havens. We had to stop their efforts to inflict sectarian violence and increase sectarian violence. We had to stop their efforts to move supplies into Baghdad and into Baqubah. And so we began very persistent and aggressive operations to control the ((pause)) to stop their freedom of movement and to take away their perceived safe havens. So I directed the staff where we would do that first, how we would do it; and the first thing we had to take away was the supply base that was south of Balad Ruz in the Turki area, as you discussed. And then once they did that, um, we had a permanent presence established in Turki though a Joint Combat Outpost between the Iraqi Army and my Coalition Forces. And then we began attacking simultaneously in Baqubah, the Diyala River Valley, and the Muqdadiyah area, uh, completely attempting to take away any safe havens that they believed they had. Once we had the Iraqi security conditions set—just throwing more forces at the problem doesn't get us a solution—once we got the conditions set where the government was beginning to come back to work, they passed the first budget in three years, uh, and in February of this year, February-March timeframe, the Iraqi Army was participating in continuous, sustained operations, logistics were working. And we had the Iraqi, some changes made in the Iraqi Police. I went to my chain of command and we asked for another battalion. And we got in the March timeframe, the 5-20, the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry, which is a Stryker Battalion, added to us. Uh, they were predominantly focused inside Baqubah and they were able to make a difference in securing the east side of the city. But there were some missing...two things missing in this equation. First one was the people; we had still not driven a wedge between the terrorists and the insurgents. Therefore, with the insurgents, there was still support going to the people, uh, of al-Qaeda and other rogue militia. Uh, so there was

auxiliary support as well as base support going to al-Qaeda. The other thing we still didn't have media working very well, immature media, really taking place. In February, I met with a group of individuals that are now leading the concerned local citizens in Baqubah, but this was facilitated by, and in Diyala, facilitated by Sheik Ahmed al-Tamimi, who was the head of the Shia Endowment Foundation inside Diyala and everyone I met with, he facilitated this get-together with was Sunni and Sunni leaders. We also started reconciliation efforts in earnest, specifically with four, four of the paramount sheiks. And we got started, we stood up the independent radio, assisted in the stand-up of radio television network, which is the first independent radio television network in the Middle East. This provided us television, radio that reaches as far north as Tikrit into Iran and south into Fallujah; we have nothing to do with programming, it's all done by Iraqis and they tell the truth. They also talk about their common ground between the sects. And the effort with the tribal leaders being brought back into the security situation, the individuals that are now concerned local citizens began fighting back, the result was, in April timeframe, we were able to clear Burhiz, the southeast portion of Diyala, uh, Baqubah, and Tahrir. The concerned local citizens pointed out to us, in one operation, seventy caches, seven-zero caches inside Tahrir. They also pointed out to us over seven-zero, seventy, IEDs inside the city of Tahrir. So, we were able to drive a wedge now between the terrorists and the insurgents by getting the people to participate. We brought in, back in the social order of things, we were reenergizing media, we got projects started in the cities, the government was participating by passing the budget for reconstruction and for um, services. The Iraqi Security Forces were now participating and concerned local citizens were guarding their neighborhoods. Uh so, and then we continued our offensive operations because what that did, the people were turning against al-Qaeda, they started giving us more and more information. And May timeframe Colonel, the great Colonel, Steve Townshend, who commands 3rd Brigade, 2nd ID, and I, began talking, went to our chain-of-command and we were able to bring in, in the June timeframe, Steve's brigade into Baqubah. He focused on Baqubah; I focused outside Baqubah and we conducted Operation Arrowhead Ripper to clear Baqubah, once the conditions were set.

Kagan: How did the combat operations that Greywolf undertook in June and July, change the enemy situation, disposition, and goals, uh, that is to say, the enemy in Baqubah and the enemy in the Diyala River Valley?

Sutherland: Yeah, we were able to dominate because of the surge in forces, the increase in forces into Iraq. We were able to get 3rd Brigade, 2nd ID inside Baqubah to conduct Arrowhead Ripper. We dominated the city of Baqubah. With the forces that we had, we moved, um, 5,000 Iraqi Army, into, give or take, into the city of Baqubah, Iraqi Security Forces, I should say, into the city of Baqubah. We had a brigade of Strykers in the city of Baqubah, so we were able to dominate that terrain. That took away their safe haven. The people saw what Buhriz, Tahrir, neighborhoods inside Baqubah on the east side of Baqubah; we were able to get food into them, humanitarian assistance projects, jobs, so the people in the rest of the city, as we dominated it, said, decided that they wanted what Tahrir and Buhriz had. They saw that al-Qaeda was starving them, was preventing them from having electricity, was preventing them from having fresh drinking water—all these things that they had shut off, stopped their jobs, uh, we don't, Western world do not understand the power of humiliation. And that's what al-Qaeda was able to do to control the population. That stopped. Al-Qaeda no longer could control the population, they no longer could prevent from services from getting to the people. The people saw that there actually was a better way. The Iraqi Security Forces, because they were acting with respect and showing the people dignity, were now accepted by the population. Al-Qaeda lost all support inside the city of Baqubah, and therefore were forced out. Simultaneous, as we conducted our operations in the Diyala River Valley, much different terrain, uh, much, significantly different terrain, it's almost all palm groves, very dense palm groves. We were able to go in to the major cities in the Diyala River Valley that had been providing some level of support to al-Qaeda; and dominate those villages and the terrain associated with that, and kill or capture the members of al-Qaeda that had been using that as safe haven as well as an area for logistics support. We took away all of their logistics, and therefore, uh, and so we didn't necessarily have to defeat al-Qaeda in the Diyala River Valley; what we did was we took away any support and so their perceived safe havens went away. Uh, those that we didn't kill or capture had moved to, into, further north, into the Muqdadiyah area; and we began conducting operations inside Muqdadiyah. Simultaneous with this, we were able to then establish the services, uh, food, shipments, as well as the public distribution system of food. We were able to get electricity, drinking water, again all the things al-Qaeda cut out, into these areas. And the people saw that now they could have the same things that the city of Baqubah was getting, and again they turned off support. But what they really lost was any support either financially or intelligence from, ah, the people and vis-à-vis through that it was really the sheiks, the tribal leaders took control of their men, took control of their areas. We empowered them to do that, and the people followed the courage of their tribal leaders.

Kagan: Once Greywolf had cleared the Diyala River Valley, in the first set of offensive operations in June and July, um, it seems as though there were still enemy groups remaining. You mentioned that al-Qaeda elements moved northward through the Diyala River Valley. How did you make sure that these elements could not then establish themselves in the new safe havens that they were trying to occupy or, worse yet, re-infiltrate Baqubah and the cities you had cleared?

Sutherland: Yeah, well, again our resources, ah, the capabilities, what we did was establish a strategy based on the area. Um, and each area inside Diyala is different; each major city is different; each qadaa, each nahia is different. And what we determined was four elements, in some cases five, but it was kinetic operations, reconciliation between the tribes, the villages, the sects, um, establishment of concerned local citizens that would guard their neighborhoods and provide information, building ISF, Iraqi Security Force Capacity in those areas that did not have policemen or Iraqi army, and really the last one was reestablishment of services. In the Diyala River Valley, we determined it was first kinetic operations—go in, clear those areas. As you clear them, simultaneously, the hold factor became the reconciliation effort and depending what it, where it was, for instance it may be village on village reconciliation, it may be tribe on tribe, it may be sect on sect, but reconciliation specific to that area. The next one was the establishment of essential services, synchronization, food and water; and once we did that we needed to figure out who would guard those essential services. So we either established concerned local citizens networks, uh, the individuals we had checked backgrounds on, or we established a police force. In the Diyala River Valley, it was predominantly reestablishment of the police force that had been killed or run out by al-Qaeda in those areas.

Kagan: Can you describe the, Greywolf's participation in Operation Lightning Hammer I?

Sutherland: Yeah, Lightning Hammer I was an operation, we were the division main effort. It was an MND-N operation all across the four provinces of Multi-National Division-North. We were the main effort and we conducted an operation, what was called operation Pericles in the Diyala River Valley, were we cleared about thirteen different villages from the northern part of Baqubah up to and including little Abu Saydah, Sunni, Shia areas dotted them. I mean it is literally one area is Shia, next area is Sunni, next area Shia, next area Sunni. And we cleared those. Final operation was focused on an area known as, three villages, Mukeisha, Abu Garmah, and Qubbah. As one squadron was conducting those operations through air assaults, another squadron, 6-9 CAV, was clearing the Wojihyah to Kana'an corridor, where they fought about a company-size

element of al-Qaeda in that area, that had taken over the corridor between these two major cities. During that operation, we reduced, uh, 18 IEDs, killed or captured over 40 al-Qaeda members, uh, reduced three house-borne IEDs and six VBIEDs that were targeting, targeted as suicide VBIEDS for the city of Baqubah, we believe. We destroyed one al-Qaeda company-size element, about 60 individuals, 66 individuals, to include a command post, medical outpost for treatment, and discovered and destroyed ten caches that were also being used to resupply insurgents in and around the area; and then detained another 39 al-Qaeda suspects.

Kagan: In order to pursue al-Qaeda beyond these areas, uh, Multi-National Division-North undertook Operation Lightning Hammer II. Can you describe Greywolf's contribution to that operation?

Sutherland: Absolutely, and specifically Greywolf Hammer II, was focused on clearing Muqadiyah, a large city, very important to the province, but important to al-Qaeda for its lines of communications. Also, establish security operations, security outposts in the Diyala River Valley, and then holding and conducting essential service synchronization inside Muqda, or Baqubah, rather. And then the final part of it was to clear al-Qaeda elements south of Balad Ruz that had attempted to re-infiltrate back into the Turki area. During this operation, which for me continues in Muqadiyah, but really lasted about a week and a half, ten days, we were able to defeat al-Qaeda cells in Mudadiyah, reestablish the public distribution system of food inside the Muqadiyah qadaa, not just the city itself. So that now, all five qadaas in Diyala are receiving their public distribution of food, which they hadn't received in almost two years. We were able to reestablish fuel distribution into the province, which had not been coming, in either benzene, kerosene, liquid propane, gas, or diesel in any quantity, in over sixteen months. It is now coming into the province; in fact, supply is keeping up pretty much with demand. We detained or killed, detained about a two company al-Qaeda force that was in Diyala. And then we were able to reduce over 109 IEDs, uh, six house-borne IEDs, and three VBIEDs, and one suicide vest we found actually weighed 75 pounds and had quarter-inch ball-bearings in it. And we suspect that it was being targeted for a reconciliation meeting.

Kagan: During these operations, did al-Qaeda or the Jaysh al-Madhi attempt to re-infiltrate Baqubah or reestablish their supply lines?

Sutherland: Yeah, and they'll continue to try to do that. They will continue to make every effort to reestablish themselves. They're determined, ((unintelligible)) they're determined, and we

continue to attack them. We also continue to support the people. But where they have lost their support is with the average person inside Diyala. The people now are seeing the benefits of security and so what we have found as we've transitioned from security to development and reform—development of systems, development of jobs, works programs. The Diyala Electric Instit, uh, Industries, which in March of this year was only hiring two people, is now hiring over 800; and we anticipate in the next six months as many as 2,500 people will have jobs at the Diyala Electric Institute. This is a place that makes fiber optic cable, transformers for electric, electricity, and in fact, they have 120km of fiber optics that are waiting for Ministry of Communications to come and inspect. Those sorts of things are taking away the capabilities of al-Qaeda. Those sorts of things are providing to the people, and they are seeing the benefit. So there is no support for al-Qaeda. There is very little support for ((pause)) Sunni rejectionists; and Jaysh al-Mahdi, or rogue militia, is being turned on by their own people. They see, you know Jaysh al-Mahdi is a title, it's the rogue militia, those elements that will go in and clear or fill the vacuum after we've cleared an area; that we're concerned about. So we continue to attack them as well. But, again, they've lost support because they take away those services and the capabilities that, that quite honestly, the things that the people want.

Kagan: Are these services that the government is providing come from Diyala itself, or do these services come from Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq?

Sutherland: Yeah, it is a split. Electricity is controlled by the Ministry of Electric, fuel is controlled by the ministry of oil, PDS is controlled by the Ministry of Trade. Yet inside the province, there are director generals that control this. The DG of Health is extremely good, and he is making sure every hospital is supplied with medical supplies. Now, in fact, 90% of the hospitals and clinics we assess as fully capable in the province, the gas stations, fuel is being provided by the DG of oil, and of the 55 gas stations, government owned gas stations in Diyala. We now have 85% of them fully capable, in fact I think it is 90% as of yesterday that are fully capable. Inside, the government, with the passing of the budget, we have seen a ninety-nine billion Iraqi dinar provincial reconstruction plan that they have passed. Now the Reconstruction Operations Control Center under the government is a committee that is passing contracts and providing basically claims to the people whose houses were destroyed and paying people that were displaced, providing compensation for the displaced families to come back. As I said, the provincial council passed a budget for the first time in three years, of that, in March, they had only allocated 2% of

that budget, they have now allocated 61% and the remainder is in bids and contracts. The 2007 budget has been passed and it is in advertising and bidding, and this could not have happened without the work of the Provincial Reconstruction Team which is part of the Department of State that I work with very closely. So they are achieving weekly quorums in the provincial council which didn't happen, as I said, because of the night letter campaign and other things, so it is being provided by the provincial, the province itself. There are still areas that need help. The Ministry of Oil has got to provide a plan for liquid propane gas. They also have to provide a better distribution plan for the province; for instance, the canals in the province. I'm convinced the Iraqis could figure out how to get water to run up hill. They need to provide fuel to run the pumps at the canals, and with the canals, and they need to allocate for that, they also need to allocate fuel for the generators, at the hospitals. There are a few others things that need to take place from the ministries, but the biggest one right now is Ministry of Interior, and the appropriate hiring instructions for policemen into the province.

Kagan: Why is that important to the reconciliation efforts that are underway and to the attempts to hold the areas that you've cleared?

Sutherland: How is...the efforts by the province?

Kagan: The concerns that you have about the Ministry of the Interior and the police force – how do they relate to the reconciliation effort?

Sutherland: Yeah, the provincial director of police wants to hire policemen from the Concerned Local Citizens, he wants to hire policemen from the neighborhoods, the tribal leaders want their men to have jobs they want to participate in the security process. The Concerned Local Citizens are not paid to guard their neighborhoods. They want to be policemen. The province has an authorization of 6,000 additional policemen. They have been waiting for several weeks for the Ministry of the Interior to provide hiring instructions so the director of police for the province can hire these men to be policemen. Give them jobs. Help them secure, pay them to secure their neighborhood and enforce rule of law and domestic order. It is not happening. There is some friction, or some ((pause)) difficulty on getting hiring instructions for these CLCs, but what it does is, when it is passed, and when we do get those hiring instructions is that it generates jobs, it generates a perception as well as actual ((pause)) power by the tribal leaders to participate and a reason for them to participate.

Kagan: What is your assessment now of the degree to which Diyala province is a functioning province? What are the major problems that you see coming up on the horizon for Diyala and what are the major trends or solutions you see?

Sutherland: Yeah, that is, an ((unintelligible)) question. Right now, there is security. It is basically a wave of security that has taken place. There are still al-Qaeda elements within the province, there are still Jaysh al-Mahdi rogue militia elements within the province, there is still ongoing tribal conflict within the province, but the solution comes down to, in my opinion, right now, jobs – number one, canals with water flowing, agriculture, appropriate allocation of fuel, and capacity within the province, being assisted by the central government, continued emphasis on the Diyala electric industries. The last two are, getting the CLCs hired into the police force and part of the security process, and then continuing to work with the tribal leaders, within the province to control their men, to get them jobs, and to dispel rumors, and I would say, the last one that I neglected is the fact that IRTN – Independent Radio Television Network – is now going satellite capable, and will start transmitting here in the next couple and it will start with a state of the province address by the governor, umm, and that is huge because one of the problems we have had here is the government's ability to communicate with the people and tell them what's happening and how they are making a difference for the people. Satellite capability inside Diyala is now the primary means of communications from the government to the people, and so we will have satellite capability within the province for media and the government to use to get the word out.

Kagan: Sounds as though Greywolf has done an amazing job with improving the security situation and the provincial government within Diyala during the past year and I congratulate you on the extraordinary work that you and your soldiers have done. Do you think that this kind of progress that you have seen can continue, and do you think that some US forces need to be present in Diyala in order to continue the movement toward reconciliation and the provision of government services and the provision of security?

Sutherland: The level of violence, the increase in services, the efforts to get employment and jobs working will be determined by the people of Diyala. What I do is enable them. Right now as I said, there are still al-Qaeda elements out there that want to reinfiltate back in. I will destroy them, working with the Iraqi security forces. There are still rogue militia organizations that want

to control areas, for advancement of either secular or economic interests. I will destroy them, working with Iraqi security forces. There is corruption that is still existing in elements of the government that has to be attacked and we will attack that. The people will determine the outcome of this, I will be their enabler. I am absolutely in awe of my soldiers and airmen and Marines and seamen that are working with me. I am absolutely amazed at the places they will go and the things they will do. The kindness that they show to the people of Diyala enabled the courage of the people of Diyala. The courage of my soldiers and the values that they show improve the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces because they want to emulate it. The provincial reconstruction team that I work with from Department of State allows the government to be serious and honest, and what is important about that is the will of the government provides the hope of the people and what we do in Diyala with our coalition force presence and the Department of State presence and the efforts of the PRT is assist them in maintaining that will. In the long-run, the people will still be the ones that determine the outcome of this.

Kagan: Colonel Sutherland, thank you so much for joining me today and the Institute for the Study of War, and for talking with us about the achievements of Greywolf in Diyala. I really appreciate your time.

Sutherland: Thanks Kim.

Kagan: Thank you.

((End of Interview))