

INTERVIEW OF
MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL D. JONES
CONDUCTED BY
DR. KIM KAGAN, Institute for the Study of War
[Transcript produced from digital recording.]

DR. KAGAN: Hello. This is Kim Kagan with the Institute for the Study of War, and today I have with us General Mike Jones, recently returned as the Commander of the CPATT, Coalition Police Advisory --

MG JONES: Training Team.

DR. KAGAN: -- Training Team, in Iraq, where he spent one year mentoring and growing the Iraqi Police force. I am thrilled to have him with us today. Thank you so much for joining us.

MG JONES: Thanks, Kim. It's nice to be here with you.

DR. KAGAN: I really would like to hear from you the story of how the Iraqi Police and how the Ministry of Interior have changed over the one-year period that you served in Iraq, and to do that, I would like to go back and ask you about the conditions that you found when you first took your role as the Commanding General of CPATT.

What were the major problems that you faced and that the Iraqi Police faced, the National Police faced, and way back in June, July 2007?

MG JONES: Well, the first thing is the enforcement. As you recall, post the Samarra bombing, the level of violence in Iraq had increased markedly during that whole year period prior to the time that I arrived. So the level of violence was really extremely high, and of course, police forces by their nature are most vulnerable to that kind of violence. They are really not army-type forces, and so the resulting threats and intimidation of police forces, the casualties they were taking were all big challenges.

In addition to that, of course, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior forces had grown markedly over the past couple years, and so all the challenges that go with any institution that goes through rapid growth were present at the ministry, and of course, some of the forces were clearly part of the problem.

The National Police, as you had mentioned, had a history of operating in sectarian ways, or at least portions of the National Police, and obviously, they had to be changed if they were going to contribute in a positive way to making the environment more secure.

DR. KAGAN: How many National Police were there when you took over CPAT?

MG JONES: About 25,000 National Police.

DR. KAGAN: And how rapidly have they grown? What was the original number or the number the year before?

MG JONES: Well, I think they had probably grown about 8- or 9,000 in the previous year, but the biggest problem with the National Police wasn't necessarily growth.

Obviously, they had some of the associated problems with rapid expansion, but the bigger problem was behavior, and that is, in the previous year, they had some units that had operated in a sectarian way and had participated in operations that clearly were not law enforcement, that were clearly pursuant in a sectarian agenda.

DR. KAGAN: When you arrived, was there a priority mission to reduce the sectarianism and the sectarian behavior of the National Police forces that were engaged?

MG JONES: Well, when I arrived, they had already begun doing that. Minister Bolani and the Minister of Interior had taken this issue on as a very important one. They had appointed a new commander of the National Police about seven or eight months before I got there and had begun a reform program in order to change the character of the National Police, and so they had already gone through the first couple phases.

The first phase of their reform program was really to change out a lot of the senior leadership in the organization, and they basically cleaned out most of the senior leaders of the National Police, put in new leaders, also some of the forces, and then they had begun the second phase which was a training program in order to take these units, which if you look at their history had never really had any training, that they had been formed up without any kind of institutional training. It was just groups of people that had known each other, many of which had been in

the previous army, and they were operating in a fairly undisciplined way.

So they took them, sent them to training where one brigade at a time, they went through a training phase to both give them skills, also talk about the role of police and the rule of law, human rights, a whole lot of other issues, in order to try to change their behavior, and then deploy them back into sector where we saw pretty quick improvements in their performance.

Before we go on and talk about those improvements, can you discuss the origins of the National Police and what those units had been before they were incorporated into the Iraqi security forces?

MG JONES: Sure, sure. Well, actually, it goes back to my previous tour when I was there before, and it was really in the fall of 2004 that you saw the emergence of some interesting forces.

The first call I got was: "Hey, there are a bunch of people marching down here at the Baghdad Police College that say they're a unit. They're in various states of attire, and some of them have weapons. Most don't, et cetera, and we don't really know what's going on." So I went down and found them and found that they were a newly created Public Order Battalion.

Later, I then ran into another organization called the "Commando Battalion," and what had happened was the Ministry of Interior back then, in anticipation of the fact that they were going to be responsible for security for the elections that were upcoming in the beginning of 2005, had determined that the normal police would not be adequate for them to really be able to have security for the elections. So they decided they needed some higher end units, and one of which was called "Public Order Battalions." They created some of these, and the same thing, these Commando Battalions, a little bit more paramilitary-like organizations.

When I talked to the leaders of these units at the beginning, it was basically, "Well, they asked me to be a battalion commander. So I called some friends from the old army or other associates, and they called their friends, and so here we are," and so they basically just formed up and then were assigned missions to go out and start securing sectors and do other operations.

DR. KAGAN: When this kind of public order campaign began, if I recall correction, Minister Bolani was not Minister of the Interior.

MG JONES: Right, right.

DR. KAGAN: It was Bayan Jabr who is now Minister of Finance.

MG JONES: Right. Actually, it was before Bayan Jabr even --

DR. KAGAN: Really?

MG JONES: -- in the fall of 2004. Bayan Jabr came in the next year. So it was a significantly different environment. The level of violence was increasing, but clearly not what it became after the Samarra Mosque bombing, but it was still a significant level of violence, especially in Baghdad where these units were formed up and were deployed.

DR. KAGAN: When those units were engaged in 2005 in securing the elections and likewise in 2006 in securing public order in Baghdad, did they undergo any changes in their organization in that time?

MG JONES: Well, in 2004, 2005, basically I think the units pretty much stayed with the same organization, and they actually provided a level of security for that first election, which was in fact a major success story on the part of the Iraqi security forces. They helped secure polling places and the movement of people to polling places and so forth. So they actually performed what I think was a beneficial kind of role.

I left in spring of 2005. Subsequent to that, we did see changes that happened. In 2006, they were combined into this force called the "National Police" because you had a variety of different kinds of units out there with different names. All of them had different organizations in one way or another in a very loosely controlled organization.

So they combined them into this single organization called the "National Police" and got rid of the Public Order Battalion versus the Commando Battalion and other kinds of names that they had and somewhat standardized the kind of units into about 750-man battalions and that kind of thing.

However, also during that time, again, post-Samarra bombing, you saw increases in sectarian violence, and that is when some of these units started participating in the sectarian violence, not establishing public order, but contributing to the escalation of the sectarianism.

DR. KAGAN: Can you describe what were the characteristics of the units of the leaders that engaged in the sectarian violence? Was it actually unit behavior at the division level, at the brigade level, at the battalion level, or was it a problem with individuals within these units?

MG JONES: I think to some degree, a little bit of both. I mean, you had cases where in their off-duty time, you would have members of these organizations going out and participating in operations sectarian in nature.

In some cases, though, you had units that were out operating in a sectarian way. The 2nd Brigade of the 1st National Police Division is the one that was probably the most obvious in terms of their behavior, but there were others also that were out doing operations that were clearly sectarian, whether it was threat and intimidation in order to cause people to move out of their homes or those kinds of things, all the way up to and including violence against others, the Sunni population primarily. So you saw a mix of both, either of which is unacceptable, of course, but the one most concerning was clearly the unit behaviors that we saw.

DR. KAGAN: As the rebuilding program began, the program of reforming the National Police by training the units and also for policing the leaders, the program was underway for six or seven months before you took command at CPATF. What was the initial effect of replacing the leaders in the units? Were the units that had shown particularly clear sectarian programs in 2006 changed dramatically by the leadership change?

MG JONES: Well, I think it is kind of hard to underestimate the impact of the leadership changes that occurred.

If you look at just the numbers, both of the division commanders were replaced. They had nine brigades at that time. All nine brigade commanders were replaced. Of the 28 battalion commanders, they replaced

17 of them. So, if you just looked at it institutionally, you can imagine if the U.S. Army replaced all of utilities division commanders and all its brigade commanders and two-thirds of its battalion commanders, what kind of impact would that have on people understanding that the leadership was serious about change. So I think that is the first thing.

The second thing is it let people know that the kinds of behavior that had been going on was clearly unacceptable and that people would be held accountable for the behavior of their units, and so these new leaders came in.

Since that time, one of the brigade commanders of one of the brigades that came in and replaced the previous guy has since been fired because he wasn't performing and wasn't measuring up. That wasn't so much sectarianism as it was just the unit not performing well, and several more battalion commanders had been fired since then in order to put in leaders that were more capable.

So that has continued to go on where leaders are being held accountable for the performance of their units, which is a healthy thing. It is a very important thing. So I think the impact was huge.

In addition to that, over 1,300 individual policemen in those units were also fired, and then in addition to that, a whole lot that were moved to other units. That is kind of an Iraqi method of changing the dynamic in a unit is to take people who have been influenced by poor leaders and, when you bring in new leaders, taking some of those guys and moving them to other units where they kind of get a fresh start and get the opportunity to behave in a different sort of way than what they may have been in their previous unit. So there was a tremendous amount of change.

Now, that induces a little bit of turmoil, but part of that was that second phase that we have referred to as "rebluing," which was taking the whole unit down to Numaniyah, out of their sectors, into a new environment, and going through a fairly robust training program in order to kind of give that unit a fresh start under new leadership.

DR. KAGAN: Did those units then return to the sectors where they had been previously, or were they reassigned to different sectors?

MG JONES: Some did, and some didn't. It was really more a dynamic of in Baghdad, which is where most of the units were located, as you picked up and move a unit out, somebody else had to take over that sector. So, in some cases, based on the dynamics of units coming and going and sometimes army units filling that space, sometimes other National Police units, some units return back to at least a similar if not the same sector, and others went to a completely new place.

DR. KAGAN: What is the training program that the National Police went through at Numaniyah? What did they learn that they hadn't learned before?

MG JONES: It was a combination of several things. First of all, they went down and they got basic skills, how to shoot their weapons properly, just basic things that normally anybody would go through as part of their basic training before coming into a force. So they did that part of it, also a lot of policing kinds of things, things related to the rule of law, human rights, how do you do an arrest, just basic fundamental things that are associated with police operations, and then they did their first-ever collective training where they operated as units, which both has the effect of bonding the unit together, causing there to be more trust, more reliability amongst each other, and also giving them collective skills to be able to go out and do operations together in a fairly disciplined way.

DR. KAGAN: Who actually made the decision to replace the leadership within the National Police? Was that your decision, or was that Minister Bolani's decision?

MG JONES: That was clearly Minister Bolani's decision, and in terms of specifically who was replaced, it was General Hussein who was the new commander of the National Police. Hussein al-Awadi definitely made a lot of the recommendations to the minister about who should be removed, and he based that judgment on many things, some of which in that first assessment phase was survey information where teams went out to each unit, inspected those units, surveyed the units, and these were both coalition teams and Iraqi teams operating

independently who then got together and sort of put their results together to see did we see the same sorts of things.

Surprisingly, they were very similar results, regardless of which team looked at that unit.

DR. KAGAN: Which team, you mean Iraqi or American?

MG JONES: Iraqi or coalition. Both kind of came to the same conclusions in terms of which units had the weakest leadership and which units had the weakest performance.

DR. KAGAN: What motivated Minister Bolani to take these actions?

MG JONES: I don't really know. I haven't really talked about his motivations on this particular aspect too much, but it fits in with this overall effort at ministerial reform that he has been pursuing since he took over responsibility for the Ministry of Interior.

DR. KAGAN: When we say ministerial reform, I can think of many things that come to mind.

What are the priorities for ministerial reform within the Ministry of Interior?

MG JONES: Well, I think the first priority is to create what in my words I call a "culture of accountability."

If you look at the history of the Ministry of Interior, unlike the Ministry of Defense which basically when the coalition came in under CPA authority sort of wiped out the Ministry of Defense and we sort of built it over again, the Ministry of Interior and the other ministries are sort of left over from the old regime. They weren't kind of the "slate wiped clean and started over."

So they started with the bureaucratic culture from the days of the regime. That bureaucratic culture is one where people are not held accountable. It was designed for a regime protection, not for performance. It was designed where the leaders in the Minister of Interior and the other ministries were not accountable for the rule of law. They were sort of exempt from it.

So part of what the minister wanted to do was to change his culture to one where, number one, people are accountable for performance and, number two, where they are accountable for the rule of law, that they

not only enforce the law, but they are accountable themselves for the rule of law. So I think that is one of those big areas of reform that he wanted to do.

The second biggest area was to help the Ministry of Interior forces adjust to their role in this new environment, this new democratic society.

Previously in the days of the regime, Interior forces were not the primary forces responsible for interior security of the country. That was primarily army forces, and so in this new constitution, this democratic form of government, the military's role is to defend the country from external threats, and Interior's role is to be in charge of the interior security of the country. So they have to adapt their organization and their culture to become responsible for that, and that includes changing roles and missions of their forces and changing the forces themselves to be focused on enforcing the rule of law equally and universally.

DR. KAGAN: That seems to me a very difficult task for a new or growing force in a counter-insurgency environment, especially because the Iraqi army right now is engaged in some population security measures. How did the minister and how did the police try to resolve the frictions between what their intended mission was and is and what was actually going on, on the ground as they all engaged in the counter-insurgency fight?

MG JONES: Well, first of all, it is a monumental challenge. This is the kind of challenge that would be difficult for any institution to go through, especially one that is as large and growing as rapidly as the Minister of Interior, and to do it while in the middle of this level of violence in this insurgency that is going on is a huge challenge. And it has caused me to respect the way that the minister and the ministry has gone about it in a big way.

I think that the minister's approach was to kind of look at what were the most important things to get a handle on first and then to kind of work simultaneously in all the critical areas to try to gain some momentum. Obviously, the National Police reform was an important part of that. The institution of an internal investigative

capability called "Internal Affairs" was another very important part of that, and the empowering of that organization to investigate people inside the ministry, very, very important if you are going to get to this culture of accountability.

The implementation of a legal code. In the military, we have this Uniform Code of Military Justice that regulates our internal judicial system. Prior to this year, the Iraqis didn't have that for interior forces, and so basically, you had the normal court system was the only way to try to hold somebody accountable which, as you know, that court system is just barely developing and is really not very robust. So the incorporation of their legal code, setting up their court system, and beginning to try people is a very important part of this ministerial reform.

Then the combination of the changing of leadership and the professionalization of leadership is another very important part that the minister has I think done a pretty good job at trying to move people who were not performing well either out of the force or into positions where they were better suited and to replace them with more capable leaders and doing that in an environment that has all kinds of issues in terms of how you move people around.

There are tribal issues and political issues and all kinds of other dynamics at work that we tend to ignore because in military forces, you don't see much of that.

Interestingly, in police forces, even in our own country, there are county sheriffs who are elected officials, that are affiliated with political parties and all that kind of stuff, and so in Iraq, it is the same thing Local police tend to be influenced by political leadership, tribal ties, all kinds of other things that make this whole thing a lot more complicated.

DR. KAGAN: You had mentioned local police, and of course, the National Police in Iraq is only one component of the police force. Can you explain what the other component of the police force is, how the Iraqi Police differs from the National Police, and how it functions?

MG JONES: Right. Well, the Iraqi Police Service is one of the components of the Ministry of Interior, besides the National Police. They have a lot of other forces. They have the border forces and ports of

entry forces. They have just assumed control of the oil police and so forth. So there are a lot of different kinds of forces in interior forces.

The biggest component is this Iraqi Police Service, and it has a couple major types of police. First of all, it has what are called "Station Police," and these are really the majority. And these are the police that you see out in the normal police stations.

Then they have the Patrol Police which are intended to be mobile vehicle-mounted patrols out looking around in an area. They have Traffic Police, you know, the guys in the white shirts and blue pants that are out there directing traffic, and then in some places, you have Highway Patrol. In Baghdad, you have a River Patrol, kind of a rivering police force that monitors the river. So you have a variety of other kind of small organizations, but it is really quite bit.

It is 270,000 policemen today. The name that they are referred to for the basic policemen are called "Sherta," and then they have police officers who are graduates of the Baghdad Police Academy or former military officers who have become police officers.

DR. KAGAN: Does the Minister of Interior directly control the Iraqi Police, as well as the National Police?

MG JONES: Not really. Constitutionally, the way this works is that the provincial council is the one that elects whoever the provincial director of police is going to be, but like in all things in Iraq, it is not quite that simple.

The Minister of Interior normally receives a list of nominees of who they would like or who they think are the best candidates to be the provincial director of police. The Minister of Interior has the authority to take any candidate that he thinks is not suited off the list or add other candidates on the list that he thinks are well suited for the job. Then it goes back to the provincial council and is supposedly voted on by the provincial council.

Now, in reality, what I saw is there is a lot more give-and-take and discussion between the

provincial council and the Minister of Interior as they try to figure out who is the best person in order to be that provincial director of police, and then, of course, in Baghdad, it is a little bit different. The police chief in Baghdad is not the provincial director of police. He is just the chief of the Station Police, and he is elected by the council, but then the patrol chief is appointed by the Minister of Interior and is not subordinate to the police chief. He is a separate entity, and he works directly for the national level, unlike the Patrol Police in other provinces, and so it is a little different for Baghdad because it is the capital city, it is the most populous city and so forth. So it is a little bit different, but it is really a shared responsibility and very dynamic in terms of how they choose leaders.

DR. KAGAN: Since the various provincial councils in early 2007 were in various stages of being effective or ineffective, how did that change the way the provincial directors of police were able to use their police forces and control their police forces in their provinces? Could you give us even a few examples of the variety of provincial directors and the variety of the forces on the ground?

MG JONES: Well, I think you really saw the full spectrum of differences.

In the case of al-Anbar, for instance, really you had no effective police force. In early 2007, you couldn't get anybody to join the police force. The provincial council wasn't interested in anything that was associated with national control forces or anything else. So you really had no effective police force out there at the beginning of 2007.

Now, that rapidly changed as the dynamic in al-Anbar changed, and Sunni leadership took their roles very seriously in terms of governance and the importance of their relationship with the national government. You saw that change, and during the course of 2007, you saw the police forces in al-Anbar rapidly expand, and that, along with the improving security situation, also changed the role that the police were able to fulfill there.

In other provinces, for instance in Diyala or places like that where you still had very high levels of violence, where police forces really have a very hard time operating or being effective, you didn't see that kinds of growth of the police force in terms of either size or the majority of the force or the role that they were playing.

In Baghdad in 2007, you saw kind of in between those two, and that is continued growth of the police force, increased effectiveness, some controversy with the city council and dissatisfaction with the police chief, but managing to come to a suitable arrangement for him to continue to say on and do his job and that kind of business. So it just varied from province to province based on a variety of factors, not the last of which was violence, and another part was the seriousness of which the provincial councils could take on doing their duties.

DR. KAGAN: As the violence went down in some of the provinces, let us say just north, just south of Baghdad, were you able to introduce more police forces and more prepared police forces than you were able to do while the violence levels were high?

MG JONES: I think overall, police forces in the country grew in general. So it wasn't necessarily associated purely with the level of violence. The place where it was most marked was clearly in al-Anbar. Whether or not there was any cause or effect there, I don't know.

I think a part of it was because the decision was made politically by the leadership in al-Anbar that they were going to associate themselves with the government and they were going to participate in the political process, and therefore, they made it okay to be able to join the police force. So that is why you saw that big change in that dynamic.

In other places, you saw the increase of the police forces. Even in places where there were high levels of violence like Baghdad, you saw the police force continue to grow. In areas where the violence was less, as you saw the effects of increased security operations, the change you saw was really the role that police were playing in terms of their visibility out on the street, their ability to gather information about what was going on, in some cases participating in operations and that kind of thing.

So you sort of saw all of that in a variety of places around the country.

DR. KAGAN: Could you give me a sense of maybe an anecdote about how the various reforms of the National Police and of the Iraqi Police, did that generate an effect on the ground? And by the effect, I mean two

things. One, did it actually reduce the sectarian behavior units, and two, did it actually contribute to security in a particular area? Could you take a district of Baghdad perhaps and talk about that?

MG JONES: I think in Baghdad, you could see very clearly the -- now, I wouldn't attribute it at all to the National Police. I mean, it's a variety of factors. The National Police were an important part. Coalition forces were an important part. The Iraqi army was an important part. So they are all part of this equation.

But a little less than half of Baghdad was the sector responsibility of the National Police. So the Iraqi had, I would guess about 55, 60 percent of the sectors in Baghdad. The National Police had the other portion.

A year ago, a good day in Baghdad was 50 attacks, or if you broke 50, that was a pretty good day, in the forties. Today, as I was leaving the last week, the numbers of attacks in Baghdad were down to two, three, a very, very small number that most people would not have imagined in the environment we were in last year. So a portion of that credit has to go to the National Police. That clearly in those sectors that they were in, you saw marked decreases in violence. You saw decreases in sectarianism. You saw decreases in civilian deaths, murders, all those kinds of things that were associated with the violence that we were seeing last year. So a part of the credit has to go to them.

When you look at -- the operation in Basra is an example. A pretty surprising performance by the National Police, the first that I found most amazing was their deployment down there, which was done with great secrecy and very little notice, and within 48 hours, they had a brigade's worth of National Police deployed down to Basra and immediately started going into operations in which they performed very well.

The last operation that they did up in Mosul, the National Police went to Mosul, again, very short notice, great secrecy, moved very, very quickly, in a couple days had their forces on the ground and operating up in Mosul and had such a huge impact on the population. When they got to the end of that phase where they then redeployed, the local people were unhappy with the fact that the National Police were leaving because they were so placed with their performance, in fact, had a demonstration to protest the fact the National Police were leaving,

which if I had told you that a year ago, nobody would have believed that.

Again, this is a predominantly Sunni area that these National Police were operating in. So it changed that dynamic quite a bit.

You see lots of examples. I wouldn't oversell the direct relationship between levels of violence and that National Police unit because there are so many complex factors, but at the same time, I would tell you, you can't discount the fact that these things are occurring in sectors where the National Police are responsible.

DR. KAGAN: Do the operations in Mosul and Basra portend the National Police that will deploy largely out of Baghdad in the future?

MG JONES: Clearly, the last phase. This is really a four-phase kind of reform effort that the ministry is doing. The third phase is using the Italian Carabinieri to do some training to raise the level of professionalism of the police, but the last phase is to geographically disperse the National Police, so that they are spread around the country, and the intent is that as you achieve sustainable security, that the National Police would be primarily garrisoned and then respond to crisis as necessary.

So everything from an upswing in organized crime in a place that gets out of control that the local police are not able to deal with, to natural disaster, all kinds of issues where you would need additional police forces, that is kind of the long-term vision and the last phase that Minister Bolani describes in the ultimate disposition of these police forces. So it is an example.

They had to deploy from Baghdad to go up to Mosul, but as a result of that operation, one of the things they are doing right now is they are training a battalion to be stationed in Mosul of National Police that will be permanently located there.

DR. KAGAN: What are the other visions that Minister Bolani has and also General Hussein has for the future of the National Police Force?

MG JONES: Their ultimate view is that the National Police will be very similar to a Carabinieri-like

organization, and that is that they will be equipped and trained to be able to do paramilitary operations, not quite on the level that the military can do, but very high-end operations in terms of being in high-threat environments, very dangerous environments, and very sophisticated paramilitary kinds of operations, and that includes equipping with better mobility in terms of vehicles. It includes a vision for aviation capability in order to provide reconnaissance for those kinds of forces, and it includes also being trained in everything down to counter-drug operations, which they anticipate, along with organized crime, would be a big mission for them in the future, down to being able to do local policing when necessary.

For instance, if you have a local police force that becomes tremendously corrupt and needs to be replaced, their vision is the National Police unit could go in, establish normal law and order operations in a community, while they then regenerate a local police force in order to become responsible for normal law and order operations.

So all of that is in their vision, which obviously is going to take a number of years to be able to do, but it is very interesting that they have such a well-defined vision for where they want to go.

DR. KAGAN: What role do coalition forces play in the functioning and performance of Iraqi Police units and National Police units?

MG JONES: Well, we have a lot of roles. First of all, the organization that I led is responsible for supporting in a variety of ways, although it is less today than it has been in the past, materiel support of trying to get them the right equipment and ammunition, the kinds of things that they need to be able to operate. Although that is a decreasing responsibility we have, it still there.

We also help in institutional training in terms of police advisors who are out there in their institutions, their training academies and so forth, where we provide advice for the faculty, everything from curriculum development to training Iraqi trainers to be able to give good instruction.

And then there is the part with the forces on the ground, which we call the organizations that do

that "transition teams." These are a variety of kinds. You have police transition teams that go out that work with provincial directors of police and their headquarters, the district commanders and their headquarters, and police stations and their leadership in order to help develop that normal policing capacity.

You have National Police transition teams that aren't embedded in the National Police units. So they are there with them for training, and when they go out on operations, they are also with them in order to provide connectivity into what we call the "combat enablers," the things like fire support and aviation support and that kind of thing.

You have border transition teams that are out with the Border Forces, and then you have port of entry transition teams that are assisting at the ports of entry in order to provide training and assistance.

So we do a variety of things, and then the biggest transition team that we have is with the actual ministry itself. That is designed to provide all kinds of assistance in developing ministerial capacity, everything from how do you properly account for and distribute equipment, how do you do finances to maintain accountability of the money, to budget properly, strategic planning, to develop their annual plans and relate the budget to that, to internal affairs, the inspector general, the whole gamut of types of functions that the ministry does as an institution.

DR. KAGAN: One of the changes in 2007 that was most noticeable on the ground was the partnering of U.S. units, combat units with the Iraqi army. Yet, the police have not had the opportunity to partner with, say, U.S. police units because there aren't any in country for that kind of partnership.

How effective are the transition teams as a method of professionalizing the National Police and the Iraqi Police?

MG JONES: I think the idea of partnering, because you don't have exactly the same kind of capabilities, is a little bit more challenging, but some units have done it actually quite well.

Multi-National Force-West, I think did a superb job of partnering with police by the creation of police transition teams from their military forces.

We helped by providing international police advisors, which are civilian police professionals that we embed with those teams that go out that work with Iraqi police stations and leaders and so forth, and so in those kinds of cases, I think that we have seen good progress. You have seen the same thing in Baghdad and up north in Multi-National Division-North and so forth.

So I think we have seen a lot of success. It is different because the military forces don't perfectly line up with the policing function, but one of the things that made it effective this last year is the fact that police were really doing in many places counter-insurgency policing type functions which are different from normal law and order kinds of policing functions.

So, in those cases where police were doing things like checkpoints, searches, and that kind of business, those operations are things that the military does have a lot of experience doing, that they can share, and they can work together.

In the normal law and order functions, not so much, and therefore, the partnership isn't nearly as close.

So I think that has been a challenge. The other thing is just flat out the size of the police force. Again, 460,000 police or so of various types in the country, when you look at the amount of forces you can dedicate to do that kind of partnering, there are less than 200,000 military forces. So, obviously, if you are dealing with a smaller force, partnering works better than this very large and diverse force, but I think the coalition forces overall have done a pretty good job of adapting to try to establish those relationships and to be able to operate together.

The other interesting dynamic that has happened is not just the coalition partnering with Iraqi police. It is the Iraqi police partnering with the Iraqi army, which has been a very interesting development, to say the least.

When I was on my first tour in 2004, it was not normal to have Iraqi police and Iraqi army do

anything together. In fact, there was tremendous animosity between those forces.

Now, all those frictions aren't gone today, but what we have seen is because of joint security stations where you have Iraqi police, Iraqi army, and coalition forces all operating together out of a single place, doing joint operations and that kind of business, the level of cooperation has increased markedly.

I went down to Basra, and part of the business of the Basra operations is they replaced the director of police with a new officer, and so I was talking to him. He was on his second day on the job, and we were having this discussion. I thought that I was going to propose something to him that would be a little unusual, but maybe I could edge him in that direction.

I said, "You know, in Baghdad, we had this very successful joint effort where we had these joint security stations that had both Baghdad police, Iraqi army, coalition forces together, and that it really seemed to work out well, and that is something you might want to consider," and he said, "Well, yeah, that's a really good idea."

I talked to the army commander about that yesterday, which was his first day on the job, and we have agreed we are going to establish joint security station, and the other thing we are going to do is we are going to eliminate all checkpoints that are individual checkpoints, that every checkpoint in the city is going to be a joint checkpoint with both army and police there because we are going to end this animosity back and forth saying, "Hey, my checkpoint was doing his job, but that other guy's checkpoint wasn't doing his job," and that was what the problem was.

So he was already at the far head of me in terms of trying to cooperate with the army. So I think all of that has combined together to really change the dynamic of how the police forces are functioning.

DR. KAGAN: How important will the coalition be to the development of the police forces over the next year, two years, three years? Is that coalition presence still necessary given the level of performance that we have seen with the National Police and the Iraqi Police?

MG JONES: I think probably yes. The reason is because, again, it goes back to what we said

before about how monumental a challenge this is.

The first thing we should keep in mind is that although the security and situation has improved markedly -- and a part of that credit goes to a variety of other things, political, progress, the capability of the Iraqi security forces improving, et cetera, et cetera, but we shouldn't forget that 148,000 troops are there as part of this whole situation, and obviously, that has to have a security effect.

Likewise, we shouldn't overestimate the capability of the forces or the challenge of continuing to develop them or the determination of a lot of people to not let this be successful. So it is still a struggle that is going on, although the situation has improved tremendously. It is still a struggle, and the enemies to this idea of having a democratic regime in place in this country, they are still going to oppose it very strongly in my view. So I think the struggle will continue while these forces continue to mature.

The second part is the amount of institutional change that we are talking about, changing the institutions of the security forces from ones that were designed to exist in a dictatorial regime to ones that support democratic form of government. That change is immense.

The change inside the Ministry of Interior to this culture of accountability is a huge thing that is going to take a long time to achieve.

Other things are things like just something as simple as the automation of systems. While these forces have grown, one of the challenges is not just organizational and design, but they have all manual systems that work just fine when there were 60,000 Iraqi police service guys before we came, but when you have 270,000, these manual systems just don't work.

And sometimes we think that something as simple as automation should be a matter of, well, look, we will just give them computers and do some training, and we will be done with it, and we forget the fact that our own organizations, it took us a long time to automate. In fact, we still have systems that aren't automated even in what you could arguably say is the most technologically advanced society on the earth.

So all of these things are going to take some time, and because it is all new, it is very difficult for the Iraqis to do it on their own. They don't have any experience about what should police forces do in a democratic society.

What should police forces do during an election? Are there limits on what political participation police forces ought to have? They just have no experience at it. So they are going to have to learn their way through this, and with some continued assistance, the likelihood of being successful increases, and left on their own, they might figure it out, but the odds and the amount of time that it will take are just different than if they have continued assistance, I think.

DR. KAGAN: The provincial elections are, of course, one of the hallmark events of 2008 or possibly January 2009.

MG JONES: Right.

DR. KAGAN: To what extent do you think that the Iraqi police forces generally, both the National Police and the Iraqi Police, are expecting to take responsibility for securing the elections, particularly within cities, and to what extent are they involved in protecting parties or political interests during those elections?

MG JONES: Well, they are very clearly taking their responsibility seriously. The leader of the national effort to secure the elections is Deputy Minister Ayden who is the Deputy Minister for Forces for the Ministry of Interior. He clearly is in the lead. The army is in a supporting role for the elections.

They have already issued their plans to the provincial directors of police. They know how they are going to secure the polling stations and so forth, and so they are doing the work to prepare for that.

They are already in the voter registration phase, and the police are playing an active role in helping to secure the polling sites. In fact, just before I left, we had the transition of a province to provincial Iraqi control, and one of the problems was that the police didn't cover down on some of the polling stations because they had this big security challenge of making sure that the ceremony for the provincial transition responsibility was secure, and so

they ended up with a registration station not being secured that day by the police. So that got reported and caused them to make some corrections the next day.

So they are really taking the responsibility seriously. They have experience doing this. Sometimes I have to remind my friends that the Iraqis have gotten a go at the business of securing elections now, several times in the past. It is always a challenge. It is a monumental effort, but the police are I think taking their responsibility seriously. They are performing well so far. They have very good plans for how they are going to secure the election on election day, and I think they are going to be successful.

DR. KAGAN: Will the coalition play a role in helping the police make the transition from a counter-insurgency force to a rule-of-law force? Will the coalition participate in teaching forensics skills, for example, to the police and integrating that process into the legal process within Iraq?

MG JONES: We are very active in doing all those things.

To start with, in terms of the transition to the rule of law, the interesting thing that happened about four months ago was we got a call from Multi-National Force-West that said, "Well, here in Ramadi, in Fallujah, our police departments are pretty well skilled on their counter-insurgency tasks, but they really don't know much about enforcing the law. So we need to have some help in terms of training to do that."

So we worked in partnership with the Ministry of Interior to develop a mobile training team and developed some training aids that we could hand out to Iraqi police and went out and conducted training on the basics of what does the law say and what is your role in enforcing the rule of law, and some of it was very, very simplistic, how do you get an arrest warrant, how do you get a search warrant, what is the mechanic that you go through in order to do these basic legal functions.

So we went out there with the Iraqi partners, and we did some training for those forces up in Kirkuk where there are no longer any military forces in the city, the same sort of thing.

So it won't be one day everything changes, but kind of spot by spot, you will see some of these

changes I think. So, as this demand grows for learning about those things, obviously we are helping. Part of our help is in helping Iraqis become trained, so they can do this without us. So that is why it is a joint effort at this stage. As time goes on, we anticipate it will be an Iraqi effort to go out and do those kinds of things.

In addition, we are working with them on institutional training, and that is, right now they go to training to become an officer at the Baghdad Police College, and that is the last training they ever have. So we are helping them develop more advanced training courses for more senior folks, people at the captain level, at the colonel level and so forth in order to professionalize their force in these rule-of-law issues.

So we will see this coming year, those will be implemented, and I think you will see significant changes there.

In terms of forensics, we are actively helping in partnership with some other people. The UK CIFPOL [ph] are our primary partners in doing that, but developing the forensics capability is part of the equation.

The other part is in educating the judiciary in order for judges to understand what kind of forensics evidence is there, how reliable is it, and why should I use this in a court of law.

Interestingly, the tradition in Iraq, like in a lot of the countries in the region, is that they have a confessional-based judicial system, and that is, in court there are only a couple of things that sort of count. One is direct eyewitness accounts of a crime, and the other is the confession of the criminal, and those two things drive this confessional-based system which is, in my mind, unhealthy in any society, but especially in democratic society.

The reason it is unhealthy is because people go to great lengths to include all kinds of bad behavior in order to get a confession. So, if you are going to take that off the table as being a primary motivator at the abuse of human rights, then you have to have some other method to take people to court and to prove their guilt.

So this business of forensics evidence being used in court is extremely important if you are going to graduate to an evidentiary-based judicial system that promotes human rights and tries to make sure that people are treated fairly by their police forces.

DR. KAGAN: You have answered so many of my questions. I wanted to ask you whether there are other comments or remarks that you would like to make about the time that you spent with CPATT.

MG JONES: Well, just I have been really honored to serve with the men and women of CPATT. It is a very interesting organization. It is a coalition organization. So we have folks from different countries, military, civilian, contractors, all kinds of people who work together, and then we do it in partnership with a lot of other people, international organizations like the United Kingdom DIFID organization, the EU JUSLEX [ph], I mean all kinds of people that are participating in trying to make the interior forces effective and establish the rule of law in a stable, secure environment in Iraq. So it is a real honor to work with them.

It was an honor to be there during this period of huge change where clearly we had gone through an extreme escalation of violence, and it changes not only in the amount of violence, but the type of violence, where sectarian violence was becoming so dominant in the country, bringing it to really what I think was on the brink of a civil war, and then during the time that I was there to watch that change, to where we have a situation today where clearly levels of violence are much higher than what we would want because we want there to be no violence, but it has changed to a degree that I think most people would find were not imaginable a year ago.

If you talked to people back then about, well, what do you think we can really achieve with the increase in forces and the change in the strategy and all the other kinds of things that were going on last year and somebody said I think we can have a 50-percent reduction of violence, most people would say, well, that is pretty optimistic. And to have seen no matter how you count it as being something that far exceeds that, 80 percent or something, it is monumental change, so the levels of violence, but also the changing and the maturing of institutions.

You have seen a new increased confidence by the Iraqis. You have seen that reflected in the political dynamics that are going on, and you see it in the operations of their security forces.

The Basra operation, which frankly was a surprise to many of us, the fact that they did it so rapidly and achieved the results that they did in such a short time, where in Basra today it is a completely different city than

what it was just a few months ago, and the same thing in Mosul and Amara and Baghdad, no one would have imagined the Iraqis going into Sadr City and changing the dynamic completely there just in a matter of months.

So all of those kinds of changes that have occurred have truly been monumental, but the other thing is we should always caution ourselves that we shouldn't get carried away by the euphoria that goes with achieving remarkable things, and that is, it is still going to be a very difficult struggle for some time to come.

Some of that struggle is based on the fact that this country has been traumatized not only by the years of the regime, but by the violence over the last several years, and then on top of that, you have some neighboring countries who are not thrilled with seeing a modern, prosperous, democratic society in the heart of the region there, and so they are going to do things that try to oppose progress.

So it is going to continue to be a little bit of a challenge and a difficult struggle, but I think that if you look at it, there is good cause for optimism, as long as we temper it with keeping in mind that these kinds of environments, especially in this region, are just challenging places.

DR. KAGAN: General Mike Jones, thank you so much for joining the Institute for the Study of War today to talk about your experience, and thank you most of all for all that you have done at CPATT over the past year. Thank you for everything.

MG JONES: Kim, thanks very much. It is a pleasure to be with you.

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