

**PRESS CONFERENCE:**

**Brigadier General Frederick Rudesheim, Deputy Commanding General (Support),  
Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 1st Calvary Division**

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**PARTICIPANTS:**

**Brigadier General Frederick Rudesheim**

**REPORTERS:**

**Laith[ph] Ahmed[ph] from Samariyah**

**Jeff Zultiz[ph] from Stars and Stripes**

**Ben Morgan from AFP**

**Rob Nordlund[ph] from the New York Times**

**Mahol[ph] Farjim[ph] from Baghdad Media**

**Mohammed Ahmed from Associated Press**

**REPORTERS 1-6**

**REP1 = REPORTER 1**

**INT = INTERPRETER**

**[PH] = PHONETIC SPELLING**

**BG**

**RUDESCHEIM:**

Well, good morning. As-Salāmu `Alaykum. As mentioned in the introductions, I'm Brigadier General Fred Rudesheim, the Deputy Commanding General for Support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 1st Calvary Division.

First I'd like to offer my condolences to the families and friends of the Iraqi Security Forces and the reporters and the civilians who've lost their lives earlier this week in two separate attacks in Baghdad. Soldiers and reporters are both servants of the people. Both

professions are dangerous and demanding, and they take immense dedication to serve this higher calling. The two attacks in Baghdad area were directed at Sunni leaders and police recruits, men that had rejected the hatred and violence of the past and were working towards a peaceful and more promising future.

Although there will continue to be isolated acts of violence and disruption, the Iraqi people stand firm with their decision to be heard through their votes. With the succession of January's...success of January's provincial elections, the people of Iraq have taken a remarkable step away from the bloodshed and sectarian violence of the past. As a coalition force, we remain dedicated to our partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces and look forward to our continued success in the future.

Last month, on February 10th, the 1st Calvary Division assumed command and control of the Multi-National Division – Baghdad from the 4th Infantry Division. Since then, we have worked hard to rapidly gain an understanding of the area, the citizens, and our maturing of Iraqi Security Force partners. I'd like to share a few of my observations over the last 34 or 35 days. The first thing I've noticed is the continued professionalism of the Iraqi Security Forces. They are well led, trained, equipped, and are continually

growing in their capabilities. Their increased proficiency was demonstrated most recently during the Ar Ba'im Pilgrimage in Baghdad, during which over 2.5 million pilgrims moved through Baghdad over 300 miles of roads safely. This was the largest and the safest pilgrimage since the Government of Iraq allowed them to resume. The Iraqi Security Forces planned, coordinated, and executed the security for the pilgrimage with Coalition Forces in support. This success has provided a model for future operations and a blueprint for our evolving relationship. We're proud of our Iraqi partners and remain honored to serve at their side in strengthening security throughout Iraq.

Then there are the physical changes that are so striking. There are more cars on the road, businesses and places for the average Iraqi to go, markets are up and running in more neighborhoods than ever before. And the people are out, and many of the scars of the past terrorist attacks are disappearing thanks to the success of Michael Grant's programs and improvements in essential services that are bringing the city back to life. Make no mistake, there's still much to do. But the neighborhoods across Baghdad are being restored and displaced residents are returning home. We've even seen a steady stream of displaced families returning to Baghdad over the last several months.

Finally, there's an air of optimism. Visiting with local governments and leaders, Iraqi Security Force leaders, as well as talking with the average Iraqi citizen we've met, I feel a growing sense of hopefulness. The recent success of the elections, the increased confidence in the Iraqi Army and police forces, and the return of commerce all provide a steady momentum for this optimism. From the neighborhoods of Doura, to the urban bustle of Abu Nuwas, to the rural areas of Saba al-Bor, the people are excited about the future as they sense better days ahead.

I'd like to use the opportunity to address the security agreement and its implementation in the Baghdad Province—and I welcome your questions regarding the security agreement implementation. As you know, the security agreement defines the principle provisions and requirements that regulate the temporary presence, activities, and eventual withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. It is the guide that we will use to assist us in the responsible withdrawal, first from the cities, and then eventually from Iraq. Last week, General Abud, the commander of the Baghdad Operations Center, hosted a conference that included commanders from the Rustafa and the Karkh area commands, Iraqi division and brigades, the MND-B division and supported...subordinate brigades, the Iraqi National Police and the

Iraqi police formations. We discussed the security agreement and heard each other's concerns. We also began working on ways to resolve security agreement implementation issues at the lowest level possible. We quickly recognized that there is a mutual understanding of the security agreement intent and clarity in its practical application, which is strengthened through these types of forums. We identified the importance of maintaining our close partnership and constant communication throughout the implementation of the security agreement. We identified the importance of the intent to continually improve the security agreement for the people of Baghdad as U.S. forces initially reposition from the cities and ultimately leave Iraq.

In accordance with the security agreement, we continue to process the returning of facilities to Iraq. Since the beginning of February, MND-B has closed, returned, or transitioned 11 facilities that include combat outposts and joint security stations. Many more facilities are scheduled to be closed, returned, or converted for other uses between now and the end of May. At the end of March, we will close and return one of our largest forward operating bases, Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah. Rustamiyah has supported Coalition Forces since the beginning of the war, has housed several thousand soldiers and hundreds of vehicles until as recently as last

summer. Next month it will be in the hands of the Government of Iraq.

The security agreement calls for the withdrawal of combat forces from the cities no later than June of 2009. It also states that we will continue our efforts to cooperate to strengthen Iraqi security capabilities. This will include training, equipping, supporting and supplying, and establishing and upgrading logistical systems for our Iraqi partners. The logistics systems supports include transportation, housing, and supplies for Iraqi Security Forces.

We will continue to work with the Iraq Security Forces from whatever location in Baghdad Province they deem necessary. Our partnership is as strong as it ever was and continues, in fact, to grow every day. As we transition into the next phase of the security agreement and begin to relocate our forces into the more rural areas, our partnership will evolve as well. The repositioning of our forces to peripheral locations around the city and outside the city will contribute directly to the security of the city's center through the choking off of supply chains in fueling terror. The Iraqi Security Forces will initially maintain and increase the security of Baghdad, which will ultimately lay the foundation for all of Iraq to move ahead.

So with that, I thank you very much for coming and I'd open it for your questions. Thank you. Yes, sir.

**REP1:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** Laith[ph] Ahmed[ph] from Samariyah. General, you said there are some points that you indicated you were considering [unintelligible] regarding the...regarding the security agreement. And there is say that Secretary of State Clinton will come to Iraq if there are any changes in agreement. Would you elaborate on this, sir?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Let me try to respond to your question—and please come back if I haven't done it adequately. First off, the security agreement implementation, from the perspective that I bring, is one at the lower tactical level. We're talking about the Baghdad Operations Center and MND-Baghdad, the division to which I belong, working together as partners to implement the security agreement. So a question about the visit of the secretary of state and any regards to anything that she might do would be more appropriately asked of our embassy or of other agencies. So is there something else that you wanted to ask more specifically?

**REP1:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:**

If the tables are the content of the treaty, the agreement itself, been provided, would you be ready for it? Would you accept that—the implementation of the agreement?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:**

We are absolutely prepared to implement the security agreement as signed by both the sovereign nation of Iraq and the United States. So as I laid out in my remarks but I want to reiterate, there are some important points that the security agreement lays out for us. For 30 June, for instance, we will have, by and large, repositioned forces out of the cities to locations where we can continue to secure and support the Iraqi Security Forces, but not from their previous locations in the cities. So that's one. We also know that by the security agreement that the 31st of August of 2010, combat operations will end. That also is directed and our president has said so. So that also indicates...that's a change in mission focus that we are prepared to implement and are on the path to implement. And then finally, that by December 31st of 2011, all forces are directed by the security agreement to be out of Iraq. And again, I just...I want to limit my remarks to the formation that I belong to, which is Multi-National Division – Baghdad. We are prepared to move forward with our plans and execute those plans in order to stay on that particular agenda.

Thank you for your question.

**REP2:** Jeff Zultiz[ph] with Stars and Stripes. I was wondering if you could talk kind of about the evolution of the IZ as it pertains to the security agreements. You know, how will the timeline for Iraqi forces assuming control of much of the IZ roll out? How many FOBs or U.S. installations will remain in this area? How many checkpoints will be eliminated and eventually, you know, will the walls around this area come down and will this become part of Baghdad proper? So how is the IZ evolving under this security agreement?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Well, Jeff, when it comes to specifically about the IZ, I'm not going to be able to respond with how many checkpoints are coming down and the specific timeline for their removal, or even about...talking about the specifics of the walls. What we have though, this is a sub...

**REP2:** [Speaks briefly off microphone.]

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Well, that's a subcomponent of the security agreement that's being worked out. And that right now is being worked out between the Baghdad Operations Center, which is our operational counterpart,

and MND-Baghdad. And there's a lot more players in this than just those two entities because of who all is in here. So there has been a substantial handover of the IZ already, and I...and it's going to stay on track. But I've got to tell you, Jeff, that's...right now, that's a subcomponent of our focus, which is how it is that we actually continue to conduct our mission, which is securing the Baghdad District while we reposition forces according to the security agreement.

**REP2:** Has anything been determined at this point? You know you say it's kind of ongoing. Is there any initiatives that have been agreed upon that, you know, you can talk about today in terms of the IZ's future?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** No. I really can't give you some specifics on the IZ because that right now is being worked out. And again, because of all of the different entities involved including Multi-National Corps – Iraq has got a piece of that as well and as well as State. I think we all are working on that right now so to try to give you any specifics would probably not be helpful to you.

**REP2:** Can you talk—sorry.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Yeah.

**REP2:** Can you talk about the kind of official desired end state as, you know, the U.S. forces side is looking at it?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** With regard to end state for the IZ?

**REP2:** Correct.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Yeah. Well, I think we're on solid ground when we talk about the IZ going the way of the intent of the security agreement, which is, number one, we're moving our formations out of cities by the 30th of June. So there's going to be very few troops left in the cities and, in fact, the ones that are left, their mission focus will be different. They are not going to be the ones that would be within the confines of urban Baghdad in our case, would not be conducting combat operations; they would be enabler support for our ISF partners. We have other forces that would be conducting combat operations, but their locations would be out of the city. So that's our focus right now. We understand then that the IZ is an entity that is...was created for a purpose, and I think we're all working very diligently to shrink to the point where it also is handed over the Iraqis on a timeline which is mutually agreed upon. And that's about as far as I can take it.

**REP3:** Good morning, General. Ben Morgan from AFP. In light of the two attacks last week and the fact that those two attacks triggered some concerns among senior Iraqi leaders, do you have any concerns about the security? And what...do you have any knowledge about what actually happened, how that was able to happen? Thank you.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Yeah. Thanks Ben. I do know about...if we're talking about attacks in both east and west of Baghdad, the last of the two being in the Abu Ghraib area. Are those the two attacks you're talking about? One was a bike...bicycle-borne IED. And the second was a...we believe was a suicide vest. Those two attacks?

**REP3:** Yes, sir.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Yeah. Again, in partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces, we realize that there's going to be days when the attacks are incrementally more than an average. And any attacks at all are something that we are all...that the security of the...the security forces and the U.S. forces are working diligently to eliminate altogether. But those attacks occurred because of specific situations that presented themselves, and we assess those both to be AQI, Iraq Al-Qaida, the intent of which was to try to disrupt the pace of

progress and to, again, try to stay on the board, if you will, by having these attacks occur amidst a relatively calm period of time. So we've responded appropriately in concert with our Iraqi partners to ensure that attacks like these cannot occur. But unfortunately, Ben, I know that we will have other days like these that you're talking about. And I certainly understand the concern of the Government of Iraq and the security forces because we have those same concerns and we're working very diligently to respond to them.

Yes, sir.

**REP4:** Rob Nordlund[ph] from the New York Times. I just want to double check, first of all, it is June 30th this year that we're talking about. Right?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Right.

**REP4:** And can you go through a little bit more detail exactly who is going to be left within the cities? I suppose trainers, MIT teams, logistics people. But could you give us some more detail on that? And then a second question. Does this mean that American forces will not be carrying out any combat operations in the cities except by invitation

of the Iraqi Security Forces? And is that also going to be the case outside the cities?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** You managed three questions.

**REP4:** Sorry about that [laughs].

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** That's good.

**REP4:** Actually it was four.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** That's right. Okay. I'll try to answer three and see which one I missed.

**REP4:** Okay.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** You rattled off a few of the...I think you're on with regards to who it is that we're leaving...most likely will leave in the city after the 30th of June of this year. We will have the transition teams, the military transition teams. The national police transition teams will certainly be there. What we're wrestling right now with and have not come to closure with as we have our dialog with the BOC is what other formations need to stay in the city in order for us to

accomplish our mission.

And let me go to your second question to sort of segue. We will conduct combat operations in the city, but we won't be in the city. There won't...the forces that conduct those will not emanate or originate from the city, they will come from the locations that we select and move to. And those combat operations will occur outside the cities as well. So I want to leave it very clear that we're not...there's no cessation of combat operations after, you know, on the 1st of July of this year. But rather the key point is that we have repositioned our forces and reduced our footprint substantially when it comes to Coalition Forces within the city proper. And again, speaking about MND-Baghdad, we're talking about Baghdad specifically.

Did I miss one?

**REP4:**

I don't think so. Just to clarify though, I thought you said though that if there are combat operations it would be at the invitation of the Iraqis. Is that right?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:**

Combat operations right now, according to the security agreement, our mission is to respond...is to conti-.... We're at the behest of the

Iraqis right now, according to the security agreement, to fight terrorist activities. So that's a mission, that's not a request. That's a mission that we have ongoing. Everything we're doing though—and I guess I want to make sure and get this straight with you. Everything we're doing is in concert with our Iraqi partners so we're not going to be conducting unilateral missions. We haven't been doing that for quite some time. But I think that's the point I was trying to make with that remark.

**REP5:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** Mahol[ph] Farjim[ph] from Baghdad Media. The question is the security agreement or the role of the troops gives a lot of concern to the Iraqis, a big concern on Iraqi part. Could you elaborate or have some comments on Iraqi concerns in regarding the withdrawal of the Coalition Forces from Iraq?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Okay. As I understand it you want me to elaborate on the concerns that the Iraqi people have concerning the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. Let me attempt to answer your question, and please redirect if necessary. According to the security agreement implementation plan, we will reduce our presence in the cities, reposition to other locations, and continue the responsible drawdown of equipment and personnel according to the plan and

the response of the requirements of the Government of Iraq and the U.S. on plan through the middle of next year to the end of 2011.

What we won't do is we will not forsake the security that has been established by the Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces. Everything we do will be a responsible and thoughtful action that is based on the security achievement in a particular area so that we don't inadvertently produce instability or a lack of security. This is what we are working with very, very closely with our Iraqi partners. I mean this is an assessment; it's a military assessment that is ongoing, continually, to determine what is the necessary presence of forces and the application of those forces. And I would add that there are a substantial number of Iraqi Security Forces in Baghdad proper. They outnumber us by a lot. So it isn't simply the number of troops that are in a particular area, but it is a conduct of the operations in a particular area that we are focused on.

And I would conclude my remarks by saying that, again, we have to do everything by, with, and through the Iraqis. We have been doing this, not since the first of January of 2009; we've been doing this since middle of last year when our predecessors in Baghdad, the 4th Infantry Division, really took that up and worked that so that we were conducting all operations by, with, and through the Iraqi

Security Forces that we're partnered with. So it will be a responsible withdrawal of forces based on the security situation, always keeping in mind that it...that we have, as our orders, what we are directed to do on the designated times that I alluded to earlier: the 30th of June of this year, the 31st of August of next year, and ultimately the 31st December of 2011.

**INT:** Is there anybody else?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Now, did that answer your question or...?

**REP5:** [Responds briefly off microphone.]

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Shukran.

**INT:** I didn't hear him, sir.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** He said yes.

**REP6:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** Mohammed Ahmed from Associated Press. I have.... Sir, I have two questions for you. One...the first one is regarding the issue of SOIs and the former Ba'ath Party members. There are some issues with

the Ba'ath Party...former Ba'ath Party members of their returning to the Iraqi Security Forces such as an Army and the police. The second question, it was known that Osama Bin Laden had a tape yesterday, some kind of audio tape. Do you have any comment on that one, sir?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:**

Again, I want to make sure I answer your question. So I understand two parts. One was on the Sons of Iraq and some concerns about that. I would like you to be a little more specific. I understand that you alluded to former Ba'ath members and the issue of perhaps them being reintegrated into the military. But that...if you could please clarify or elaborate. And I can go to the second one immediately and just tell you I don't have any knowledge of the audio tape that you allude to. So if you would just...I would like to answer the first question if you could clarify it, please.

**REP6:**

[Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:**

He says as the SOIs are still concerned about the Iraqi government behavior toward them, the way it's acting. The first question is that there is a concern on the part of the SOIs of the seriousness of, you know, on the part of the Iraqi government in dealing with them. The second question is about the former Ba'ath Party members that some kind of a reconciliation or negotiation with the current

government, but it's not determined yet, and if you have any comments on that one, too. That, like, they don't see, the Ba'ath...former Ba'ath Party members, some of them were officers...senior officers and officials. They don't see any seriousness on the part of the Iraqi government to get somewhere or achieve something.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:**

Mm-hmm. Okay. Let me respond by talking about something that I focus on and I think I can give you some depth on. You went to the...your concern or the concern more precisely of the Sons of Iraq that the Government of Iraq is not serious about the reconciliation of the Sons of Iraq. I would respond in this way. What we're seeing right now are some serious overtures—this is from the perspective of the Coalition Forces. As you know, the payment of the Sons of Iraq was transitioned over to the Government of Iraq some four months ago. And they have been paid through the Government of Iraq and then directly through the security forces in the area...their respective areas for the last four months—I think we're actually going on the fifth month. That's...that is for Baghdad, for the province of Baghdad specifically. That has gone, by and large, well because there's been joint monitoring by security forces and Coalition Forces of that and there doesn't seem to be any specific issues with that.

Also, we understand that the Government of Iraq is working to transition those that are currently being paid as Sons of Iraq, primarily doing operations in concert with the military in their respective areas' localities, transitioning to other employment. That is going in some places better than others. There has been a hiring freeze by the Government of Iraq as I understand it regarding security forces, primarily tied to their budget. And so there's al-...but there has been a commitment, a previous commitment to reintegrate the Sons of Iraq into security forces, primarily the police and perhaps the Army in fairly large numbers. That has happened but not to the degree that was anticipated. It's ongoing, but it's a work in progress. So there is that piece.

But what...when you look at it from a security perspective, which is our lens or our viewpoint, the Sons of Iraq are getting paid and they are at the checkpoints and, in almost every case, they are with Iraqi Security Forces, either national police or Iraqi Army, as ordered by and as designated by General Abud, the commander of the Baghdad Operations Center. So that piece seems to be working well, and in that regard we're pleased. But there's much work to be done in the second half that I alluded to and I think the Government of Iraq has taken that on. But more...that question would more rightly go to

them.

Your second question about essentially the reintegration or reconciliation of former Ba'athists, I really can't address that. It's not been a topic that we have focused on in MND-B, because reconciliation from our perspective has been, for the most part, focused through the program for the Sons of Iraq. And so that's about as far as I can take it. Thank you.

**REP2:**

Jeff Zultiz[ph] again with Stars and Stripes. Regarding the two attacks you discussed earlier, have you seen any information regarding how these guys got to these sites? Was this simply a checkpoint mistake where somebody missed them or does it reflect, you know, ulterior loyalties within ISF ranks? And if so, is that anything that, you know, the U.S. military at this point can do anything about in your view?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:**

Yeah. Well, Jeff, I mean you kind of walked me down a certain path where it might have been a number of things and I just have to back up a second and say that while the attacks have happened several days ago and I have actually seen over the course of those days several different versions of what occurred and the reasons behind it, we're clearly still sorting it out. And I don't mean the

Coalition Forces; I mean the Iraqi Security Forces as well are all still sorting it out. So any conclusions on that beyond what I gave you already which was the likely assessment is that we think it was AQI behind it because of the type of attack and the manner in which it was conducted. I can't draw any other conclusions to help you out.

**REP2:**

Yeah. Could you give us a rough idea—I know it's still being worked out—but just an estimate of what percentage of American troops would be left in Baghdad after June 30th. And also, I assume that Victory...Camp Victory is not included within Baghdad—that would be considered out of Baghdad.

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:**

Right. To your second point, yes. The Victory Base complex that's in Baghdad is not part of that. Hmm. Anything I say will be, in fact, wrong when I give you the percentage. But I would tell you that it would be a very low percent, somewhere under 10% would be the ballpark. And I reserve the right to be exactly wrong on that, too. But the point I'm trying to make—and not avoid your question—is that it's going to be a very small number. And when we get to it, we're going to have...explain exactly why those folks had to stay in Baghdad. It's not going to be some, well, we think we need a few here and a few here and then somebody's going to rubberstamp

that. Because this is not something we take lightly. We understand that we are going to have the vast majority of our formations moving out of the city proper and moving to the rural belts and the rural qaddahs for Baghdad.

Let me amplify on that. This, in fact, is an opportunity for our security forces. This is, in our view, a good thing. Not simply because it's part of the security agreement and we're executing it, but because of the way our enemy fights. We talk about an enemy that tries to establish themselves in rural areas and establish support zones in the rural areas surrounding Baghdad—we typically call them support belts—and then from there conducts operations into the more urban areas of Baghdad. So with the increase of Coalition Forces in those areas with the pre-existing Iraqi Security Forces in those areas, we are going to have the opportunity and certainly we'll be working towards choking off any security zone...support zone belt that the insurgents try to establish around Baghdad. It also...collaterally, it also works towards preventing the accelerants from coming into Baghdad from one of the many routes that they typically take, either from the west or from the north. It could come from any of the directions, but currently we're concerned about west and north. And so our presence in those outer qaddahs we think will enhance security overall and ultimately lessen any attacks

that occur in the city.

Any other questions?

**REP2:**

Sorry, sir. Just kind of touching on what I talked about before. You know the Iraqi Security Forces as they now stand are a relatively new institution in Iraq in a culture where tribal, familial, religious ties are very much at the forefront. In your view, how does the ISF go about ensuring, you know, loyalty to the institutions within its ranks, and is there anything the U.S. can do to assist in that in your view?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:**

Hmm. I alluded earlier to the professionalism of the Iraqi Security Forces. And I guess that's probably where I would go. My job is I am the deputy commander for support. And typically the deputy commander for support has to do with logistics and all things in that regard. I've also been tasked to have operational over watch of Coalition Forces on the west side, so all Coalition Forces on the west side of Baghdad defined as by the river. I give you that as a backdrop because I get out and about in that regard, not just working through essential services and such.

What I am seeing at the...when I go to the joint security stations, the

JSSs, what I'm seeing when I go to the headquarters where we have our battalions linked to Iraqi brigades, where we have our brigade headquarters linked to Iraqi division headquarters, what I'm seeing is—and this is coming from our commanders, our Coalition Force commanders to me—that there is this swell of professionalism in the Iraqi Security Forces. I'm not...I wouldn't for a minute try to say that those elements don't exist. What I read though is that there is this growth in professionalism that is neutral when it comes to affiliation. It's all about pride of unit, pride of mis-...of accomplishing a mission. And there are commanders, Iraqi commanders, and I give this to you anecdotally, but there are Iraqi commanders, many of them, from their counterparts—I have met them or I...and I speak to their counterparts, their Coalition Force counterparts—that are saying, hey, Sunni, Shi'a, regardless of sectarian affiliation or ethnic background, there is a clear understanding, it doesn't matter. The only thing that counts is that you know your job, get it done, and are professional. And there's also a growing professionalism in the Iraqi ranks when it comes to the noncommissioned officers.

Again, that's been...your point is spot on. I mean they have grown and they've grown exponentially in a very short time. It's really quite compelling and amazing just how far they've come in this

short amount of time. But I think that what I'm alluding to goes a long way to tamping down any of the previous elements that tend to be divisive. And so I think there's a lot of hope there on a personal level.

**REP2:** Any idea of what is causing that swell in professionalism? Is there...do you hear any reasons?

**BG  
RUDESHEIM:** Yeah, I can tell you. They're proud of what they do. They're taking charge and they're proud of what they do. And we're...they're not getting handed something, they're doing it. And it's a fabulous thing. The Iraqi military is...while we say it just started, the truth of the matter is the elements of it existed, were disbanded, and have come back together again. And there is a strong commitment to service that pre-existed. Moreover, there's a strong sense of nationalism. And again, I'm giving you my personal opinion. There's a strong sense of nationalism now that I can't...I wouldn't even try to characterize when that happened, but it's sensed now. So I think that goes to this sense that we are good, we know we're good, and we'll get the job done.

Okay? If there are no further questions, then I'm going to...I'd like to just give you all some concluding remarks.

In closing, I would tell you that the 1st Calvary Division has a proud legacy with the people of Baghdad. The division was here in 2004 and 2005 and returned again in 2006-2007 with the surge, and here we are again. So third time for this division here in Baghdad. All of us have made a tremendous commitment to the people of Iraq and we want to see the Government of Iraq and the security forces of Iraq succeed. We also want the people to enjoy a safe and secure neighborhood so they can rightly...as they rightly deserve as their country transitions to normalcy. In the upcoming months we remain dedicated to contributing to the progress wherever and whenever we can, supporting our allies by, with, and through the next steps to Iraq's success.

So with that I would say thank you, shukran jaziilan, for coming today, and I look forward to speaking with you again in the months to come.