

PRESS CONFERENCE:

Maj. Gen. Michael Jones, Commander of the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team

Maj. Gen. Hussein Awadi, Chief of National Police

Rear Adm. Gregory Smith, Director, Multi-National Force – Iraq Communications Division

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Ahmed Jassem from Al-Arabiya

Suri McGee from ABC News

Debra Haynes from The Times of London

Gina Chung from The Wall Street Journal

REPORTERS 1-6

***REP1 = REPORTER 1**

***INT = INTERPRETER**

SMITH: Good afternoon. Salaam alakim. I'm joined today by Major General Hussein Awadi, Commander of the Iraqi National Police and Major General Mike Jones, Commanding General, Civilian Police Assistance Training Team. I'll provide a brief operational update and then we'll turn the remainder of the time to General Hussein and General Jones. The Iraqi security forces, both Army and police, are conducting increasingly effective independent operations. Iraqi security forces are working closely with local citizens to coordinate security efforts and are achieving considerable success. One such example of the tremendous progress being made by the Iraqi security forces is the rescue operation launched Monday to free the eight Shi'a and Sunni sheikhs kidnapped Sunday by a Shi'a militia splinter group. According to Iraqi sources, the mission resulted in the rescue of seven sheikhs, the capture of four abductors, and the killing of at least three other criminals. The body of the eighth sheik was unfortunately recovered at the scene. We commend the bravery and professionalism of the officers and men who planned, led, and successfully executed this high-risk, daylight operation. And we acknowledge the bravery and honor of the sheikhs who continued to fight against al-Qaida to support reconciliation despite enduring torture and humiliation at the hands of criminals who had defied Muqtada al-Sadr's pledge of a cease-fire. In other operations, this

past Thursday in Ninawa province, a local Iraqi reported that he had seen a suspicious vehicle, a dump truck, parked on the Qayyarra bridge and the driver jumped off the bridge into the water below. Iraqi security forces approached the vehicle and discovered 50,000 pounds of explosives inside that dump truck. An Iraqi explosive ordinance team defused the bomb preventing the loss of untold numbers of civilians and the certain destruction of the bridge. On Friday, local citizens in Hillah provided the Iraqi security force with a tip of the location of rockets hidden in a home. The recovered weapons consisted of 27 Katyusha rockets and two firing stations. Rockets from the same cache are believed to have been used by terrorists in recent attacks against coalition and Iraqi security forces, as well as Iraqi citizens. On Saturday in Baghdad, tips from local residents led to the discovery by the Iraqi national police of a cache containing mortar rockets, RPG launchers, and explosively formed penetrator...IED. This was the third cache found in ten days with tips from Iraqi citizens by the Iraqi security forces. The increasing trust and strong cooperation between local citizens and law enforcement is helping to prevent terrorist attacks across Iraq. And we congratulate those brave citizens and the professional response of the Iraqi police and Iraqi Army personnel. These are but a few examples of the courage, the growing partnership with local citizens, and the increasing effectiveness of the Iraqi security forces. We also continue

our aggressive campaign against al-Qaida to both capture and kill those individuals associated with al-Qaida. The area around Arab Jabour, south of Baghdad, has been a traditional safe haven for AQI. Iraqi and coalition forces have conducted a series of operations in Arab Jabour since early September to root out these terrorists. Our collective efforts have had a positive and, we hope, lasting effect. On 5 September, Abu Jar'ah was killed. He was the AQI emir for the area around Arab Jabour. On 7 September, Dr. Ismael, who was involved in kidnapping, terrorist planning and weapons procurement, was also killed. Dr. Ismael had the responsibility of teaching Taliban-like views to those that associated with al-Qaida in that area. On 11 September, Abu Fahad was killed. He was the emir of the Five Farms area and was a likely successor to Abu Jar'ah. Also on 11 September, four AQI terrorists were killed in a separate engagement with coalition forces. On 3 October, four AQI terrorists were killed in an engagement with coalition forces. Four AQI terrorists were killed in an engagement on 5 October. On 29 October, an AQI terrorist involved in improvised explosive device operations was captured. And, finally, yesterday, Majid Abu Bilal, an AQI cell leader was killed. The attrition of these senior leaders has weakened AQI and Arab Jabour. Reports indicate that some AQI terrorists have fled the area and the remaining groups are struggling to coordinate their operations. This has allowed the community to partner with Iraqi and

coalition forces to hold the hard-fought gains. The concern local citizens are now, and for the first time in a long time, effectively defending their neighborhoods in Arab Jabour. In other operations against AQI, coalition forces rescued a man on Sunday southwest of Baqubah, who had been kidnapped by al-Qaida in Iraq because his brother was in the Iraqi Army. The rescued hostage was found tied to the ceiling with his arms raised behind his back causing considerable personal injury. The image shown, taken from an AQI torture manual we captured last spring and previously released to the media, demonstrates just one of the many ruthless torture techniques used against innocent, captured Iraqis. As this brave young man in Baqubah said upon his release, I would rather have died than dishonor my family by joining allegiance with al-Qaida. These ruthless tactics have led to the backlash on the part of Iraqis against al-Qaida as they partner with Iraqi and coalition security forces to root out terrorists and criminal elements within their communities. The homegrown efforts of these Iraqis have proven invaluable to Iraqi and coalition efforts to secure a lasting peace. However, optimism must be tempered with reality. Iraq remains a difficult place, beset by many challenges that require the continued combined efforts of the coalition and the Iraqis. The people of Iraq are stepping up, not only to fight the insurgency, but to reconcile their differences in building a bright future for a new Iraq. Their resolution in the face

of such challenges is inspiring and their efforts are making a difference to secure Iraq into a burgeoning reality. Here to tell you about the coalition efforts to support developing the capacity and the capability of the Iraqi police is Major General Jones, Commanding General of the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team.

JONES: Thank you. Good afternoon. Mahata al-salakim. First of all, it's a pleasure to be here. As you know, CPAT is responsible for assisting in the development of the Ministry of Interior and Iraqi police forces. After three months in command at CPAT, I have to tell you that I'm very impressed by the effort that's being made here and the progress that's been made. It's been a couple years since my first tour in Iraq and as I've visited and I've looked at the programs in place, it's actually quite gratifying to see the considerable change in the progress that's been made. Today we're here primarily to focus on national police reform and I have to tell you it's one of many ministry programs, and I'm very honored to be here with the Commander of the National Police, Major General Hussein. The program with the national police reform, I think, is one where the senior Iraqi leadership has certainly taken the initiative to try to move progressively and quickly to ensure that they improve both the conduct and the professionalism of the national police. First of all, if you look at the entire program that began some time ago, really last

winter, it started with the evaluation of the leadership of the national police and a result of that were some extensive changes in the leadership. Obviously you all know the statistics; two of the two division commanders, nine of the nine Brigade commanders, 18 of the 27 battalion commanders were replaced to put the right kind of leadership, new leaders there, who were both more capable and committed to professional conduct of the forces. They also began an extensive training program to retrain the national police forces. Numaniyah is the location of the training center where the last of the national police Brigades is currently going through that program. And that's an extensive program that not only goes through a re-vetting process but, in addition to that, trains police skills and also goes through many of the issues of rule of law, human rights and other kinds of things that you would expect to see in any sophisticated police training program. And then we've begun a new phase of that reformation program and that includes the training that's being conducted here in Baghdad that has just recently started. In this case the NATO Training Mission - Iraq has stepped forward and the Italian Carabinieri have joined us here and are conducting the training of that program. And for those that are not familiar with the Italian Carabinieri, they are known as one of those very special forces around the world of very high-end policing, very high discipline, good conduct, and a high degree of professionalism. And so we

expect to see very good results from that training as part of this overall training program to increase the capability of the national police forces here. And I think, finally, the last comment I would make is that proof is in performance. That as these national police units have come out of training and gone back into the fight; they've taken responsibility in a lot of very contentious areas. Here in Baghdad especially, I think that everyone would agree that security conditions here in Baghdad have improved significantly and I think a good part of the credit for that goes to those national police units that are deployed out there in control of sectors and are behaving very responsibly and performing very well. So again, I'm very happy to be here with you and I'd like to turn it over to General Hussein before we get to questions.

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I'd like to thank you today before I just start and I'd like to talk to you about the concept of the Iraqi national police. Some of you know that there's Army and there's police, so what is meant by national police? A national police is a force that is smaller than an Army and when it comes to Army and conducts several operations but currently its basic job is to fight terrorism. In the future, these units will be developed, of course, with the development of a political process to be included in all of the

provinces and it will include much more duties like fighting natural disasters and mainly, its main duty will be to fight terrorism. Ever since it was established in 2004 until now, the national police played a great role in establishing stability and it achieved many victories in fighting terrorism in many of the provinces in Musul, Samura', Basra, and Medein south of Baghdad in addition to Baghdad, of course. Today the national police is making a milestone through raising its training through, as General Jones said, they're taking new programs and they're taking several trainings in coot and these courses of training will continue until the Iraqi national police reaches the goal that we want. And there are also educational courses so that the national police can be developed more. This is just an idea, a general idea, about the term, a national police. And now we're ready to take the questions.

SMITH: First question please.

REP1: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Question from al-Maria TV. Question to General Hussein. Are you convinced until now about the weapons that you have with the national police? Thank you.

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: The national police has different duties from the Army and their needs, artillery or tanks, but currently we are assigned some duties that resemble the duties of the Army. Of course, the arming of the national police is enough. But currently we need more arming, more weapons -- more heavy weapons, actually -- than we possess now because the duties of the Army and the national police have been mixed so far. Are you talking about the small weapons? Yes, we do have enough small weapons.

SMITH: Next question please. Sir, yes sir.

MARQUEZ: Hello. How are you? Miguel Marquez with ABC News. General Hussein and perhaps General Jones might want to weigh in on this as well. In some ways it's surprising that we're talking about this today because for so long I've heard very high-level American officials here say that the national police should be disbanded. I'm sure that both of you are familiar with many of the complaints that the national police have had over the years. A couple of recent examples, in Gazalia, some of the concerned citizens or citizens' Brigades as they are called, have expressed concern about the national police and their treatment there by the national police saying that they are going to turn against them essentially. In Diyala province, there's great

concerns with the national police and them not sharing power with many of the Sunni groups that have turned to the American side but they're still not finding support from the national police side. And maybe instead of getting into a discussion about sectarianism, the problem seems to stem from one of political leadership and perhaps General Hussein can talk about, is any police force going to function properly in a place that doesn't have political leadership from the top down? Thanks.

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Actually changing the command since the beginning, the national police is a new experiment in Iraq. And any new experiment should face some challenges at the beginning. We did have some problems at the beginning and we worked together with the coalition forces to remove these challenges and problems that faced the national police. Among them, we reported some violences in human rights and we reacted upon this and some of those who did that have been presented to court. But nowadays the national police, and after over one year and a half, we don't have a single incident of a violation of human rights. As for al-Gazalia and Diyala, there's no presence of the national police in Gazalia or even Diyala. There could be some duties that have been done previously in 2004-2005, but currently, according to Operation Fardh al-Qanoon, there is no presence of the

national police in those places. These accusations against the national police and sectarianism is really complicated. And it's a political one, it's a political issue. The national police does not follow any political or sectarian or any party and it's a combination of all the sects and the nationalities and religions. And I ask everyone or anyone to visit the national police and see that for himself. But, of course, due to these political problems, some accusations could be thrown against the national police from a certain sect because this conflict is clear. Because we know that the national police belongs to the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Interior is actually...belongs to a certain political group, and this, these are wrong. And these are rumors used by some of the political sides to make these problems and the process of the political process but actually, as I've told you, the national police includes all the sects, all the nationalities in Iraq.

JONES: The only comment that I'd make is that I listen to and I hear a lot of the discussion about what should be the way ahead. I respect the variety of opinions that are out there. We listen to them. I would tell you that the first point is it's not really our decision as a coalition. It's an Iraqi decision that they have to arrive at what's the best way to ensure that they have the force that acts in the way that they need it to and performs the missions that they need it to. The second thing is as to what that best course is, we have disbanded units before and tried

to start over and gone down that course and that's obviously a viable technique or an approach to have. In this case they've chosen a course of action to reform this particular entity rather than disband it. So, again, it's their choice. I think that the issue of trust is one that is easily lost and hard to regain and that's one of those issues that the national police are dealing with. And I think that their current path is a responsible way to do it.

SMITH: Yes, sir. Please. Right there.

PALEY: Hi. I'm Pete Paley from The Washington Post. I wanted to direct this to Major Jones first but then to everyone. In terms of broader than just the national police, but the police in general; there are a lot of concerns about the concerned local citizens or the local Brigades that they are not getting enough support from the national government. In particular, Sunni groups that are trying to get support and get involved with the police and become enmeshed with the police are being rejected in all their efforts from the Shiite government. Can you talk a little bit about those challenges; why you think that's happening and what the U.S. is doing to overcome it? And then also if General Hussein can talk about whether he thinks that the Sunni groups are getting enough support from the Shiite central government. Thank you.

JONES:

Thank you. The concerned local citizens are, and folks that fall in that category, are a variety of groups all around the country. The first point that I would make is that they are not exclusively Sunni. You have both Sunni and Shi'a that are in local communities who are trying to stand up to the issues of security and trying to help their community become more secure. So it's not a sectarian movement to do that it's, I believe, a general popular movement that's occurring in a variety of places. The second thing in terms of concerns about whether or not the MOI is being somehow obstructionist in hiring these people. Their policy is pretty clear and that is for those positions where they can bring people into police officer or police positions, they're doing that. We'd seen large numbers of Sunni that had been recruited and trained and are now policemen as a part of this movement. The largest number that I recall off the top of my head is the Abu Ghraib number and I believe it was over 1,600. So, yes, there are obvious difficulties in terms of the generic process of trying to incorporate new policemen going through the administrative procedures of hiring. I think that's clear. Part of that reason is just because this rapid expansion of the force creates a large amount of work that has to be done to properly get the applications, vet them, going through that hiring process. I would say some of that frustration may be borne out of the normal friction that goes into trying to hire large numbers of people. But from my perspective in

terms of what I've seen the last several months, the ministry is making an effort to incorporate these folks. They're doing it regardless of sect and the result of that is I have seen fair numbers of Sunni folks who are part of this concerned local citizens movement be hired.

REP2: [Unintelligible]

JONES: I have not seen that. The vetting process that they go through in the hiring lists that I've seen that have actually gotten to the MOI, the people who have been vetted out of that are people who have criminal records that have been taken off those lists, not pulled off the list because of being associated with some particular sect.

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Actually, I'd just like to follow up in answering this question. At the beginning of forming the security forces of the Ministry of Interior, some of the sects prevented their people and their men to go and join the security forces and this caused that the majority of the forces that participate in the security forces at that time while the other part was few and limited. But as the political and security process continued, we see that all sects are present in the Ministry of Interior. For instance, at the national police, we have two commands; one that the

commander is a Sunni and the other is a Shiite. And we have ten Brigades; four of them are Sunnis and six are Shiites. We create a balance but it's not just because or not just to create a sectarian balance but... And we don't view the Iraq security forces like this belongs to a certain sect and that belongs to another sect or et cetera. We view all people, all those working with us are Iraqis and the main duty of the Iraqi security forces is to protect the Iraqis. So their allegiance should be to Iraq and not to a certain party or sect. And the national police, we have a high percentage of Sunnis and we have also a percentage of many nationalities present in Iraq and the problems started at the beginning when because some of the sects prevented some of their peoples to join forces. But by time and as the political process continued and progressed, today we have a balanced and a normal percentage in all the sectors of the Minister of Interior and not only in the national police.

JONES: Thanks. Please go ahead.

PARKER: Ned Parker, Los Angeles Times. Question for General Awadi and for General Jones. In trying to understand better the process of reforming and what you do when there are allegations of sectarian behavior or misconduct. So I was hoping the two of you could both lead me through what happened with the Wolf Brigade, now called the Peace

Brigade, in Saydeh which had been through retraining in Numaniyah and then was in Saydeh for several months, had complaints against it since the summer, at least since June, even publicly by American officers, about the issue of Sunnis being targeted in a sectarian manner. The Brigade was removed in September. But I'd like to understand why it took so long when it was documented to remove this Brigade and what is going to happen to them now? It would be helpful just to get both of your perspectives on this. Thank you.

HUSSEIN Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Actually what happened was conveyed by the media in a wrong way. What happened is that a unit from this Brigade went out to conduct a mission in a certain place and according to, and combined also with the coalition forces, and the mission was conducted in that certain place but, as I mentioned awhile ago, because there are some political movements that mean to cripple this process, some of these political movements tried to incite sectarianism through media in those places. And there were some allegations that a dead body was found in Malhanya but investigation proved that this is not true. So if this was true, we would have presented people to court and they would have been convicted. As for the second Brigade in Saydeh that you talked about, currently the same Brigade is still there, present, and is conducting its missions. I agree with you that with so many troops

there could be some mistakes here and there but when we find a mistake it is tackled immediately. Concerning this incident that you've mentioned; this was not true. None of this happened. There was no violations of human rights as it has been announced. And there was a joint forces by the coalition forces and also from the Brigade itself conducting the mission in that place and as I said, due to some political movements that live in that place tried to incite some problems or media, in the media that there is a violation of human rights but this is not true.

JONES: The comment that I would make is, first of all, clearly the misconduct of units is something that we have our antennas up, that we're very sensitive to. Although the timing of those events were before I got here, I had heard about several incidents that may have happened. I know there is investigations that have been initiated. I haven't seen the results of those. I don't believe they're complete yet. But I have not seen the results of those to determine whether or not something happened or, if so, what happened and who was responsible. What I am sure of is that there have been other incidents I am aware of that have been investigated by the ministry where proper action has been taken by their internal affairs in terms of disciplining people and so I'm confident if the results of the investigation are that there was wrongdoing, that we'll certainly be encouraged and the right actions

will be taken in order to solve the problem and prevent those kinds of activities in the future.

JONES: [Unintelligible] if you want to follow up later, that's fine. Let's make sure we have a chance... In the first row, please. Right here in the first row. Right here. Yes, sir.

JASSEM: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Ahmed Jassem from Iraq...is that a newspaper? We know that the national police is one of the formations of Operation Fardh al-Qanoon. And Lieutenant-General Abud Quanbar said that the victories achieved are actually now 70% in Operation Fardh al-Qanoon. We would like to shed some attention to removing the barriers in the streets because you know and you are familiar with the problems posed by these barriers to the Iraqi civilians. And I'm sure you go through these streets and you know what happens to the people when they go through these streets. As for some other areas or places where the barriers or the terrorists are actually removed like al-Gazalya or Shirt al-Hamza_ or other neighborhood. We also would like from you when you sweep and clean these or clear these places from the terrorist groups, you start reconstruction and providing services to these places because you know those places, they suffer from a huge shortage in their infrastructures. And so we would like to

just follow up with this and take care of the Iraqi citizens through the checkpoints also that are run by the national police. And we know that some of the officers they possess good amount of experience like the commander of the third Brigade in Kamalaya. I think he's a Brigadier General or a Colonel. He's one of the good commanders in those place and we would like thank him. And we would like to thank you, too, for your concern. Thank you.

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Actually, we choose the officers in a good way and, hopefully, all the officers will be good and they will all serve the Iraqi people. As for the barriers in the streets, they are being removed so that we can, you know, make the traffic much easier inside the main streets in Baghdad. And as the security situation improves, we will, of course, remove these barriers. In Gazalya or in any other place, the services, there are some committees supporting the Operation Fardh al-Qanoon, and they are the ones responsible for providing services after clearing the places from the terrorist groups. So we have supporting committees that supervise all types or all kinds of services like electricity, water, health. So they're responsible for restoring these services to these places. But our duty is to just security and also to help restore these services during Operation Fardh al-Qanoon.

JONES: Yes, sir. I think you had a question.

REP3: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Question from Hura TV to Admiral Smith. How would you reply to the statements of the Iranian foreign minister? He said that the multi-national forces are actually protecting the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization.

SMITH: Well, first of all, as you all know, those are both a protected group of individuals in the north of Iraq as well as designated by the U.S. government as a terrorist organization. Our policy, both of which don't reside here at Multi-National Force – Iraq. Our duty is to make certain they are, in fact, protected and remain in a protected status in north Iraq. So, again, the policy, the U.S. policy, and I would have to refer you back to the State Department for a comment on the nature of the Iranian comment.

REP3: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: It's not about the PKK but the Mujahedin-e Khalq. It's not the PKK.

SMITH: I heard your question. That's exactly the answer that I would give to the MEK. Yes, sir. Please, first row.

McGEE: Suri McGee with ABC News. Please can you tell me the total number of national police and how many more you think are needed that have been retrained so far?

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: Currently, while we have different places of training like in Numaniyah, we're training a whole Brigade of 2,000 soldiers. And in another camp we're training over a battalion with the Italian police. This is the number of those who are being training and the training is going through or actually courses so that it will go through all the Brigades of the national police. And every time we need new kind of training, every time we have new kind of training, we will let you know. But these courses are actually open and we have training centers in different places in Iraq in which we conduct some essential training of the national police. And the national police, of course, will have a college of the national police in which we train the experts that focus on the training the national police and not the normal police officer like courses in the human rights, courses in the checkpoints, and home inspections, cars, for instance. As for the number of the trainees, it varies from one time or another. Sometimes we have 2,000 and some others like in Sulaimaniya the number may reach 1,000 in a certain or 500 or 1,000. The number varies actually. But the total number of the national police currently we work on ten divisions in

addition to separate battalions that are linked with the commanding operation.

McGEE: So how many...

JONES: You're asking for the number, right? Okay, I believe the number of currently assigned is just over 27,000. I think the total authorizations are...we'll get you an exact number but it's, I believe, about 33,000 is the total if you include all the units and the headquarters and so forth.

REP4: [Inaudible] retraining, so far?

JONES: We'll get you the number. I don't know it off the top of my head.

McGEE: And can I just follow up with the General Hussein? In an ideal world, how many more would you have being trained?

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: These courses are continuous and I'd expect within one year we will go on again with these courses for all the national police.

[Unintelligible] 30,000 soldiers in the national police. The Italian ones that we will work on are actually, we will train eight battalions. As in Numaniyah, we will train 1,000 for one month or in one month. That's why I say these courses are continuous. So we will cover all

soldiers in the national police within one year. So the whole total of those who will be trained will be around 30,000.

JONES: Yes, ma'am, in the middle of the row there.

HAYNES: Debra Haynes with the Times of London. This is a non-police question, I'm afraid, for Rear Admiral Smith. It's about what's happening up in the north. President Bwazani of the KIG has said that if Turkey does mount an incursion that threatens Iraqi sovereignty, the Peshmerga forces there will fight back to defend their land. And MFI has ultimate responsibility for protecting Iraqi sovereignty, what contingency plans or what plans has the coalition put in place in case such an event occurs?

SMITH: Obviously a very complex situation that's going to work itself out over the next several weeks we hope in a very peaceful, diplomatic way. And I think that's the best hope for the outcome. Clearly there's planning that occurs at our level and at national levels. Our primary responsibility here in Iraq is for, as you know, the security of the Iraqi people. And that's throughout Iraq. And while there's limited U.S. forces, coalition forces, in the north as you know, the responsibility extends border to border, east to west, north to south. Our current focus as you well know is here in Baghdad and areas between here

and Mosul in terms of the north and well down to the south. And those focused areas will continue. So, again, I think the hope is that diplomacy will be the main course of action that's going to be necessary to bring about a solution here to this issue. And Multi-National Force - Iraq will continue its focus on its primary mission which is to support the long-term security here in Iraq.

HAYNES: Inaudible question.

SMITH: We don't, as you know, we're not going to discuss what planning may be underway except to say that the national level, clearly they are strong NATO partners with Turkey, our strong allies and friendship here with Iraq requires us to have that kind of dialog that you would, of course, recognize as taking place but I'm not going to comment specifically on any planning or operations that may or may not be happening at this level or at the national level. Yes, sir.

REP5: This is [unintelligible] from the Washington Post. You said earlier that you have liberated the eight tribal sheikhs from Diyala province. Will you please shed more light on who were the abductors and whom they are affiliated with? You said that they are a splinter group. Are they a part of the Mehdi Army who just obey the orders of [unintelligible] to cease their operations [unintelligible] so could we

have more details on who conducted the operation and how it was done and how long it took? Thank you.

JONES: Well, I'd ask my friend here from the national police to perhaps give you some insights into yesterday's operation which was, as you know, planned, led, and executed by the Iraqi security forces. A very brave mission that was done to free these now seven individuals that were alive at the time they entered the house in which they were kept in in this small village. The individuals we believe are responsible are, in fact, individuals who have dishonored Muqtada al-Sadr's pledge of ceasefire. These are a splinter group; individuals that are operating outside of the ceasefire. The individual names of the group fully involved, we've not yet announced. That's being determined and investigation underway to understand that completely. There are a number of individuals in detention so we have an opportunity to learn more about what motivated the group to do the attack and the kidnapping and we'll learn more. And as we learn more and are able to assure that we'll be certain to do that in the coming days. Please, I think you've had your hand up for awhile.

D. SMITH: Doug Smith from the Los Angeles Times. There are areas where local citizens groups are arming themselves and conducting antiterrorist policing activities. Do you see those forces as being absorbed by the

national police at some point, or displaced by the national police, or just left there to do what they're doing where the national police can't establish coverage?

JONES: I'll make a general comment about the concerned local citizens program. It is a temporary program not meant to be a long-term solution to Iraq's security. It's a transitioning or bridging function that allows neighborhoods in which there is perhaps insufficient resource available to do all the policing necessary to provide that local policing in coordination with both the coalition and the Iraqi security forces. So many of the individuals in the concerned local citizens program, now numbering nearly 70,000, less than 20,000 have expressed an interest in actually becoming a full-time member of either the Army or the police. And those individuals, again, will go through a further vetting process and eventually end up in the training programs that General Hussein mentioned if they want to be police and serve in that capacity. But many just simply want to serve today to provide security for the neighborhood understanding that, in the long term, they may move into some other public sector position or private in the private economy and doing everything from carpentry to opening up their own stores. But for now, they see a need and they're stepping up to fill that need.

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: I expect that there will be many demands or requests by those national citizens to join the Iraqi security forces and according to instructions from the Minister of Interior, we formed a Brigade that is called, Amourisha Brigade. The instructions of the Minister of Interior included all the good guys. Those who, of course, passed all the vetting process. So all the demands of joining the Iraqi security forces have been met and the Minister...currently, as Admiral Smith said, some of them actually are looking just in their neighborhoods and the Minister of Interior opened the doors so that they can volunteer to the Iraqi security forces.

JONES: I think we have time for one more question if there is one. Whoever had their hand up the longest I guess.

REP6: [Unintelligible] from NBC. So about the [unintelligible]... The difficulties facing the Iraqi national police, what are the difficulties and do we have any coordination with the commanding Operation Fardh al-Qanoon? Is there any kind of impact or influence of the political parties of the conducting of missions by the national police?

HUSSEIN: Speaking in Arabic.

INT: The national police as part or actually part of Operation Fardh al-

Qanoon and it's working in Baghdad under the commanding of Operation Fardh al-Qanoon. That's why it's part of the operation and they conducted a good job in those places. The challenges that the national police face currently represented by the terrorism. As to the others like arming, training, we've managed to conquer these challenges. But the main challenge that we face is terrorism. Hopefully, we will conquer this one, too. As for the influence of the political parties on the national police, I think that as long as the political process is moving forward, those things will go away. We did have some of these things in the past that now...

SMITH: I'm sorry, go ahead sir.

JONES: Well a comment I'd make in terms of difficulties is that the national police are like a lot of the other forces and that is that the challenges they face are many. Partially because the result of what is an extremely rapid expansion. The Iraqi police, just like the rest of the police forces, have grown tremendously throughout the year. Less than a year ago, I think the total number of national police was about 19,000. And as I said, I think their numbers now are about 27,000. Any organization that grows that rapidly is going to have lots of challenges because in terms of the time it takes to do things, it's much faster to recruit individual policemen than it is to grow leaders who

have experience and are capable of commanding those forces. The timelines to acquire equipment are sometimes significant. How long it takes to build facilities to house those forces are significant and so forth. So I think all the same challenges that confront all the security forces that are rapidly growing are reflected in the national police as well. It's just going to take time to be able to overcome all those obstacles.

SMITH: And we will entertain our last question. I'm sorry. I see your hand was up so...

CHUNG: Thank you. Gina Chung. Wall Street Journal. Can you talk about how the current situation between the different Shi'a groups is affecting the police with Hakim al-Sadr trying to negotiate some sort of truce but fighting continuing between the groups in Dulhania and other places? And then also, Sadr's call for the ceasefire, how is that affecting the police in terms of trying to root out people who have infiltrated the police or people using it for their own personal purposes or criminal purposes? I'm trying to sort out sort of the good cops from the bad cops.

SMITH: Just one comment that I can offer and then I'll obviously quote Prime Minister Maliki in this regard. In Karbala on Monday he mentioned

that this is a trying time in which individuals who are trying to attempt to infiltrate the security forces for their own motivations that are not aligned with the long-term stability and security of Iraq is a challenge. But obviously making that statement at his level shows you the awareness that he and the government have of the problem and the intent to follow through to root out those individuals that are involved at that level. So I think that's a very encouraging sign from the prime minister.

JONES: I'll be happy to speak to that as well. In terms of the affect of the competition between organizations inside one community or even between communities, I think the challenges in the police forces are pretty much a reflection of the challenges that the nation overall faces. I think in terms of trying to weed out people who have bad behavior as a result of those kinds of feelings is kind of an ongoing process. I mean we already talked about...it's specifically in the national police the weeding out of leaders who were engaging in bad conduct. In addition to that, I would tell you that there's a large number of policemen, Shirta, who have also been eliminated from the force because of the same sorts of issues. And that kind of observation and investigation of conduct in eliminating people continues to go on. The same is true of the ministry as a whole. I think if you look at the numbers of investigations by the internal

affairs people that are ongoing, the fact that they have, in fact, fired or punished thousands of individuals for improper conduct or behavior, is a significant step forward in the disciplining of the force and eliminating those bad actors. So I think it's an ongoing process. I think it's going to take some time. It is difficult sometimes in order to identify the behaviors that people have because, obviously, people try to hide their behavior if it's bad behavior. But I think there's an ongoing effort to do that.

JONES: Well thank you for coming today. We appreciate your attention and focus on the main subject today dealing with the national police. I invite you back in the coming days. Thank you.