

INTERVIEW

**BRIGIDIER GENERAL DAVID PERKINS, SPOKESMAN FOR
MULT-NATIONAL FORCES IRAQ AND MAJOR GENERAL
QASSIM ATTA, MILITARY SPOKESMAN FOR OPERATION
FARDH AL-QANOON**

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PARTICIPANTS:

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REP 1-12

REP=REPORTER

INT=INTERPRETER

[Set up chatter.]

GEN. QASSIM: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Ladies and gentlemen, As-Salamu 'Alaykum, welcome all here today and thank you very much to... I want to thank all my colleagues, General David Perkins, the Multi-National Force spokesman here. Our brief for the Baghdad Operation Command from... starting from 10th of July to 5th of August of 2008. First to start with I just want to give you the Ministerial Order No. 101 in 2008 that's been issued by the Chief in Command of the PM, the Prime Minister, that stated completing to the efforts of the national reconciliation efforts and in order to rebuild the one... garments of Iraqi society that al Qaida and criminals were trying to... and outlaws were trying to disrupt the national unity, and a part of the consolidation process of the national security and a part the getting our... or returning of all displaced families, we ordered the following... we decreed the following: First, to activate the Article VI that was issued in 2006 that was... it's not... it's not allowable to displace Iraqi citizens from their residence, and anyone who's trying to do that will be punished according to the criminal law. And the people who's participating in

displacing people from the residence will be... will be punished and they should return all occupied property to their owners, to the owners of those properties. Number II is that we're going to give a one-month period to the people who occupied those properties to return it back to their families and the Minister of... the Ministry of Displacement and Displaced... that was going to undertake the responsibility of returning all the families according to the period we gave above in order to register all the information and give all the documentation that supports that those homes and those residences belong to those people and those families and their legitimate residence. Minister of... Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Reconciliation and the Baghdad Operation Command, they're going to administer the displacement; they're going to undertake the responsibility of returning all the families that was forced to leave their houses, and we're going to facilitate all the... all the procedures to do this. And the same thing going to be happening in the provinces in order to make sure all the displaced families return to their families and their houses in each province. This is signed by Nouri al-Maliki, the chief in command and the Prime Minister of Iraq. The Brigade No. 42 in Rusafa area... operation... operations, they were able to disclose an IED

that was put in advertisement boards on the roads, on the streets, and this is... shows that the indiscriminate violence that the criminal groups are trying to use and their ways in trying to... trying to prove that they still there and they still are trying to affect the high morale of our heroes, our people after the gains, the security gains that we achieved through the Fardh al-Qanoon plan, and we're going to display the pictures about this advertisement board, the ads board. We found explosive materials in this... in this board here, and it was hanged in one of the street's light poles and on the streets, in Rusafa streets. And that we found explosive materials in there and it was designed to be detonated in order be... to trigger this on one of our security forces or the people or groups of people. This is one of the means that the terrorist groups are using, like sticky bombs or hiding explosive materials inside the sewage lines in some of Baghdad areas. So that's why this is... requires caution from Iraqi people and also to cooperate with Iraqi Security Forces in order to disclose such... such acts. Through the past two days we, Iraqi Security Forces was able to find... discover a lot of munitions and weapons and also munitions plants in Sadr City. This plant had a lot of big... big bags and stocks of... of TNT and explosive material and also empty, and that's very... that's very clear

to us that those, that the... as far as providing or supplies to... of the munition and weapons to those area -- criminal groups are sort of -- they're not being able to get supplied and that's because of our procedures. One of the important activities yesterday, we took the media with us to see the number of weapons and munitions that we found in Sector 14 in Sadr City, and we cleared -- This is the first time that the Iraqi Security Forces find GRAT- type rockets, it's 122-millim (sic), and the range of this rocket we know -- it's well known to everybody it's 21 kilometers. And we also found 27 rockets and also we found 120-millimeter mortar rounds as well. And we found one rocket, 240-millimeter; and also 135 mortar rounds, different sizes of mortar rounds. The dates of production of these... of these mortar rounds is actually February of 2008, and it was found hidden in one of the houses. And we also found a, about three 60-millimeters mortar rounds, and we also found a mortar... a rocket launchers and mortar directors as well, and we found also containers of -- And one of the important things that we are displaying right now in front of you that these rocket, Katyusha rocket launchers as well that you're seeing right now, these launchers are recently made, and different origins for those munitions and weapons as well. As you see (indicating). Most

importantly that we found, discovered, a lot of documentary films and videos that document the implementation of those attacks by the special groups against the Iraqi Security Forces and against the Multi-National Force as well. And targeting the Iraqi -- innocent Iraqi people as far as assassinating them or -- and also by snipers and sniper attacks as well. And these... All these documentary films now are under investigation, and you see the number of... number of documentary films that we have found, and that it has a lot of information about the activities that criminal groups are conducting as well. This one, 240-millimeter rockets, this is one of the weapons that was forbidden during the former regime, and the range of this rocket is 51 kilometers, and this is the first time we find... discover this sort of, type of rocket, and throughout Baghdad. And the... this... I mean this is a very bad or dangerous rocket. And also I think you've noticed the Iraqi security... or our army and national police, local police, patrol police, they were able to disrupt the kidnapping attacks and also bank robberies and where the Iraqi security force was able to rescue Ahkmen Atakhram, he's the brother of the international foot- -- soccer player, Anesh Atakhram, and he was rescued by the Iraqi Security Forces who were able to arrest a lady from the Daura area, she was

involved in the kidnapping process. And also we... Our security forces was able to disrupt -- one of the -- a robbery in the Palestine Street, and we were able to return the money back to the exchange office. Also through that period we were able to arrest one of the people involved in the bombing of the house of Mithal al-Alousi in the Al-Jamia neighborhood. And the day before yesterday we were able to arrest a gang that specialized in kidnapping kids or babies who were in the hospital, and then one of the members of this gang is a lady, and she's now under interrogation. And also the Baghdad Operation Command said that the security situation now is good, that we are able to open embassies and -- from other countries in Baghdad -- and yesterday we met with the Minister Balani, the Minister of Interior, and His Excellency has said that there is a special directorate in the Ministry of Interior, it's responsible of providing security for embassies, and it's called the Directorate of Embassies' Protection and it has 2,000 employees working in that directorate, and this directorate is ready to receive any ministry, any embassy, and provide security for those embassies, not... throughout Iraq, not only in Baghdad. In addition to the, of course, this accord that Iraqi Security Forces can provide in any sector in Baghdad and Iraq to provide essential... essential

security needed to each embassy. Last, the total activities for the 25 days, we killed two terrorists and arrested 470; we arrested also 152. There is a difference between arresting and capturing: Arresting is, you know, arresting wanted people, and also defused 550 IEDs and confiscated vehicles with illegal documentations; also confiscated and seized different... different rocket sizes and also confiscated artifacts that was ready to be smuggled out of Iraq and confiscated TNT material and C4 also. That is, my brothers, a total the activities of that Baghdad Operations Command has done since July. And now I defer to my friend, David Perkins, to highlight the activities of the Coalition Forces.

BG PERKINS:

Thank you, General. Good afternoon and As-Salamu 'Alaykum. It's a great privilege to be here today to join Major General Qassim Atta with me. General Qassim is a good friend and an Iraqi patriot -- And it's an honor to be working with you today, sir, here in Iraq.

GEN. QASSIM:

Thank you very much.

BG PERKINS:

Just as General Qassim has highlighted the situation in Baghdad, security around the entire country of Iraq

continues to improve. For the 11th straight week, violence continues at the lowest level in four years. We have entered a phase where the progress in security is building upon itself and is allowing for Iraqi government institutions, economic development and civil society to mature at a quicker pace. The partnership of Iraqi and Coalition Forces continues to work toward establishing security, enforcing the rule of law, and rebuilding Iraq. A good example of the teamwork and its partnership is the recent capture of two al Qaida in Iraq operatives north of Baghdad. Naja and Mustafa Katham were well connected to various wings of the al Qaida organization and had been involved in the recruiting of young Iraqi boys and manipulating them to conduct suicide vest attacks. They had also been instrumental in a June suicidal vest attack that killed over 15 Iraqi sheikhs and three United States marines. Supported by Coalition Forces, a unit of the 9th Division Iraqi Army conducted intelligence-based raid and captured both terrorists in mid-July. Operating side by side and coordinating intelligence, Iraqi and Coalition Forces are increasingly denying terrorists ability to operate or hide in Iraq. In Basra over the past several weeks we have seen very few security incidences. I must note that the recent holiday of the 7th Imam was celebrated without incident in

Basra. Iraqi Security Forces are steadily limiting the capability of criminal groups to regroup and are maintaining security throughout Basra's districts. Security has allowed for Basra provincial council to inaugurate the opening of a drinking water filtering plant and also a sewage pumping plant. Repairs and improvements to the city's power station have allowed an increase in electricity generation for Basra in the last several weeks. In Amara, joint security operations continue to thwart attempts by special groups to smuggle weapons and to conduct attacks against security forces. The 38th Brigade of the 10th Division of the Iraqi Army recently discovered in Amara a notable weapons cache of 25 Iranian-made 170-millimeter rockets and 13 explosively formed penetrator plates. Since operations started in the area, security forces have uncovered 187 weapons caches. Attacks by special groups in the district are decreasing as money and weapons supply lines are interdicted more and more by Iraqi Security Forces. In al-Anbar province, the security situation is stable as operations continue to lead to the discovery of illegal weapons caches and the detention of al Qaida Iraq operatives in the more rural areas of the province. In the cities of the province, local governments are making progress in providing services. In Rutbah, an overall -- an

overhaul of the community sewage system was completed in the last few weeks. The Anbar Health Department recently secured funding for the Ministry of Health to rehabilitate clinics throughout the province. Also, Coalition Forces are conducting training courses for Iraqi Army medics and electrical engineers so they can more adequately assist in providing essential services to local residents. In Mosul in the Nineweh province, operations continue against al Qaida in Iraq. While Iraqi and Coalition Forces pursue al Qaida in Iraq's leaders and operatives, a decreasing number of small groups are still conducting violent attacks primarily targeting Iraqi Security Forces and their recruiting drives. Even as al Qaida in Iraq's capabilities are steadily decreasing in northern Iraq, they continue to target Iraqis who confront their violent ideologies, and they continue to try to incite ethnosectarian violence. In Diyala, Operation Bashaer Khair is making steady progress against al Qaida in Iraq groups, and we especially note how the help of the local population has been a large factor during the security operations. In the last week they have uncovered 24 illegal weapons caches and detained over 480 suspected al Qaida in Iraq terrorists, 37 of which were detained last evening. Included in this number were eight al Qaida in Iraq emirs, four of whom

surrendered themselves to the Iraqi Security Forces. Also, 290 families, previously displaced from their homes by al Qaida terrorists, have returned since operations have started. The local government in Diyala has made use of improved security to increase its provisions of services, in particular, the Baquba General Hospital recently expanded its outpatient and surgical services. It is now attending to more than 5,000 patients, and conducting 150 surgeries a week. Our optimism is real but cautious. As I've already mentioned, al Qaida Iraq, criminals and special groups still have the capability to launch violent attacks. While the security situation is steadily improving, we continue to pursue those who oppose a united and flourishing Iraq so we can continue to build on our gains and not surrender them. Security and stability continue to be possible because Iraqi people have embraced the rule of law instead of violent ideologies that seek to divide them. With the improving capability of Iraqi Security Forces, the partnership of Iraqi and Coalition Forces is increasing its effectiveness to pursue this enemy, protect the population and rebuild the country's infrastructure and economy. Our partnership is strong and we remain committed to helping Iraqis rebuild their nation. With that, we both would like to take your questions now.

REP1 (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT My first question is about everyone is noticing that security stability that we are witnessing in Baghdad in previous months. The security stabilities are notable in Baghdad, especially, but recently, we... first week we have seen spikes in violence and especially in the street, the Palestine Street. Three operations or three attacks, and the last one was yesterday. My question is why are these attacks are very close to those checkpoints, security checkpoints, and I know that there is CCTV cameras very close to those checkpoints; I mean, why is these attacks targeting these checkpoints?

GEN. QASSIM: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT I agree with you, in fact, that the terrorists groups or elements are trying to conduct their attacks at certain times and they're trying to affect other operations in other areas, and that's what's happening in Diyala, that the Iraqi Security Forces has accomplished and they have achieved good... good achievements up there, and I think everyone is noticing the rapid improvements in security in Diyala and

that's because of the efforts of MoD, MoI and the support of the Multi-National Force and the ultimate support of the Iraqi residents in Diyala province. Those groups, those elements, terrorist groups that's remaining elements in Baghdad, they're trying affect the continuity of the operations that we are doing in other areas, and I think no matter how many attacks, terrorist attacks they're going to conduct, I can't tell you. This is never going to affect our morale or our security operations or our... the people's, the population's morale, and because population, Iraqi population, Iraqi citizens now is part of our plans as well. They're trying to affect the security operations and the plans that we're implementing in other provinces; that's what they're trying to do. They're trying to distract and... the attention from other areas and they are trying to prove to the public that they still are capable of doing things, but I can tell you that they can't do anything.

REP2

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

In regards to the munitions that, the huge number of munitions that you found in Sadr City, not too long ago there was a cleansing operations and... for those munitions and weapons caches in Sadr City. I don't think this number

was in that period of time. Is it possible that after this operation, now, after cleaning or cleansing the area from the munitions and the weapon caches and after putting this... this big perimeter around or the barriers around the areas, you know, around the sectors in Sadr City, how did these... how did that happen? How did we get all those munitions and weapons caches again into Sadr City?

GEN. QASSIM:

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Let me just explain. First, after... after doing the peace operation in Sadr City, our security forces are still there trying to disinfect the city from all the weapon caches. And obviously these weapons, they entered the city before the operation, the military operation, because the huge numbers of weapons and rockets, the GRAT rocket is 127-milli- -- and it was hidden in one of the empty houses there and we have information and we are continuing our searches and I think we are... we have taken our... the media with us and I think the media is getting bored with us because we keep taking them on those field trips and taking them out to see, and our security forces are still following the steps to cleanse and disinfect the Sadr City from those weapons and weapons caches. And the origins of these... of those...

these weapons are different origins, they... western weapons and eastern weapons and I'm sure they came from... through the borders of Iraq and Iraq has borders with Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iran and all (inaudible). Seriously, these weapons, they were there before the operations started and I'm sure there are more weapon caches in there.

REP3

As far as detainees, have you found any or captured -- have you captured or arrested any foreigners?

GEN. QASSIM:

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

No, most of the ones... No, the ones that we captured, they're all Iraqi... Iraqi citizens, and we have wanted... we have a list that we're tracing those wanted people.

REP4

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Thank you, Major General. My question to General Perkins, my question is as it looks like there are funds allocated to... to get or equip Iraqi forces, Iraqi forces with medium-sized weapons and this is... does that mean you're

intending to give more roles or different roles, new roles to the Iraqi Security Forces?

BG PERKINS:

Well, first of all, the story of the Iraqi Security Forces, I think, is one of the great successes over the last year. They have increased in capability as well as in size. And one just has to look at the operations in Basra, Sadr City, now in Diyala, Maysan province, and one can see a continual increase in their capability. We are continuing to partner with our friends in the Iraqi Security Forces to maintain those gains and to increase their capability, both from equipment as well as training -- continue to focus on training leadership, the... the small unit leaders as well as the large formations, and then equip them with forces so not only can they conduct combat operations, but they can also sustain themselves with fuel and repair parts. They have mechanics. And so we continue to focus on making sure the Iraqi Security Forces have a broad range of capabilities, and that those capabilities can be sustained over a long period of operations such as we're seeing in Diyala right now.

REP5

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Major General Qassim Atta, if you allow me just to go talk on a different subject today; I just want to thank God that I arrived safely here because I was attacked; I was shot at by the Iraqi police today. This is something happened more than once before. I was on Mohammed al-Qasim Road today, I was... I had Iraqi police approached me; they were protecting a fuel tanker. They drove by me and they shot me even after me showing them the badge, the press badge, they kept shooting at me. And I think I haven't even seen this in American movies before, happening in the American movies. So this is something -- even Iraqi -- also Iraqi police cars was in front of the Ministry of Education, I believe, four cars and they came, they drove... drove by us and they had their sirens on and they hit two Iraqi men, and they killed one of them and they injured the other. Also my question to General David Perkins, I also want you to convey my message to the Iraqi... to the Multi-National Force not to throw rocks or water on Iraqi people while they're driving on the streets, because this is the roads that the Iraqi people need to use, and they can't use any other roads or streets. And also Multi-National Force vehicles and the Coalition vehicles are hitting our Iraqi vehicles on the streets. And I know because it's probably because of a traffic jam, but this is something that needs to be stopped.

Major General Qassim says are you trying just to watch Iraqi -- what Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces are doing all the time?

GEN. QASSIM: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT I want to thank you for what you have mentioned as far as trying to -- I want more details about the incident that happened to you today so we can punish whoever that's trying to shoot Iraqi people, and if that's -- that force is the force that's protecting oil, maybe they are oil forces. We all... We always stress on discipline and on protecting people and not attacking or harassing the population. And I can say that -- or deny such individual behaviors, and I'm very thankful to you that you have noticed all negative behaviors. And this is something we ask all the media, and we have websites, we have 24 hour, 24/7 phone numbers you can reach us all the time. After the conference we can talk (inaudible) on the side. Maybe we can talk and we can get the details and we can punish the person in charge. And we don't like this to happen again. Thank you.

BG PERKINS: With regards to the Coalition Forces, I will tell you we go to great lengths to make sure our Coalition Forces do all

that we can to support and help the Iraqi people. And we spend a lot of time training our forces so that they know how to act properly in amongst the population. We realize that's the main reason that we're here. And we also go to great lengths, in fact, if there are incidences, that they are fully investigated and all appropriate corrective and/or punitive actions taken based on the outcome of that. And I can just tell you it is a major party, not only with General Petraeus, but all the leaders as well as down to every trooper here in Multi-National Force Iraq, so I'll guarantee you that we will continue to train our troopers out there so that they do all that they can to be a force for good and reinforce all that is good within the Iraqi people.

REP6

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Major General Qassim, you talked about discovering weapon caches. My question is when is Baghdad going to be disarmed? My other question is to General Perkins: In May, 2007, five British advisors were kidnapped and... and the security sources said that they were still alive. One other source said that one of them has committed suicide; so what's your comments on that?

GEN. QASSIM: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT: Now, thank you very much, Ahmed. The subject of Baghdad being disarmed, and we wish Iraq can be a whole Iraq, it can be disarmed area. Al-Khadhimya area, the whole al-Khadhimya, we announced that it's disarmed right now, fully disarmed. But this is all... depends on the cooperation of people with the security forces to... and providing information as far as the weapon caches, not only in Sadr City, but Shula, Daura, Saidiyah areas as well, and the Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi army, national police, MoI forces as well, they are still constantly and daily... on a daily basis discovering those weapon caches that belongs to criminal groups and outlaws, and, thank God, we are improving and we've been able to find tons and tons of those explosive weapons, fatal weapons. Today we found this one-a-kind weapon cache in Sector 14 in Sadr City. But we do have more information that there are more weapon caches in this city. We need support. Yes, we are in communication with Iraqi people, with citizens, with the sheikhs, with religious imams, and they are always providing information, a huge amount of information, accurate information, and Iraqi Security Forces are working on this information. But we do need the continuity of

cooperation of Iraqi people with the security forces so we can help the city and Iraq and Baghdad and get disarmed.

Thank you.

BG PERKINS:

Regards to the kidnapping, I will tell you with regards to all people that end up being kidnapped, it is a major concern of ours; it is indicative of the barbaric nature and the tactics of the terrorists and the criminals that they resort to this. We spend a lot of time, effort, focus a lot of intelligence in trying to break up and detain these kidnapping rings. In fact, General Qassim spoke of a success in that recently here of detaining some of the primary people that facilitate these kidnapping rings. But really, regardless of their victims, it is one of the areas, again, that is really indicative of the barbaric nature of the enemy they face. With regards to the particular issue you brought up, we have no intelligence to confirm that, but I will tell you, across the entire spectrum of victims, we are very concerned and spend a lot of effort and time to take down these kidnapping rings and break up this activity.

REP7

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Major General Qassim, As-Salamu 'Alaykum. I want to talk to you about the displaced families as far as the decree of the Prime Minister. You mentioned that there is one month for the occupiers to empty those houses and let it back... give it back to their families. And there are about 600 houses that's destroyed or... and bombed through the attacks, I mean, in Baghdad. Now, what's those family that's going to live? Where are they going to go? Where are they going to live? Are you going to compensate them?

GEN. QASSIM:

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

As far as the compensation process for those, the people who got harmed or their houses got damaged by operations, our military operations, or attacks or terrorist attacks, this is something that's being followed -- tracked and followed up by the... the... the Prime Minister's office, the... There's a committee that the minister of... Ministry of Displacement and Displaced People are a part of it and member in it, and they're working on the process of compensating the... the damaged families and. And we have mentioned before that there is no success for the Fardh al-Qanoon plan unless all the families, displaced families, goes back and returns back to their family -- to their houses and homes. And we're

going to stress our efforts, joint efforts, and with the follow-up and tracking of the Prime Minister, that we're going to end this whole thing by compensating people, by also put complimentary flights between different... the Iraq, in different neighboring countries to get all the displaced families come back. And this is something we discussed with the Prime Minister, and we're going to be accurately implementing this ministerial order and we're going to empty... evict all those houses as well.

REP8

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

We heard their, you know, decisions and orders and government orders as far as returning all those families, those displaced families, to their homes. And particularly I'm talking about Hawr Rajab area, and then a few days ago a few families, displaced families, returned back to their homes in Hawr Rajab with the help of the sheikhs' support office and -- but we're -- they're -- we're talking again are there flyers given to the... distributed to the people, I'm talking about displaced these people again and Hawr Rajab area and al-Mikanik area. My question is to Admir- -- General Perkins: In Diyala there is an operation, Bashaer

Khair Operation in Diyala area. Has the Coalition Forces helped on the field or they just provided logistic support?

GEN. QASSIM: (Speaking in Arabic.)

INT There are people who's trying to disrupt the orders that's issued by the Iraqi government and any positive step that can face some challenges. And we have asked people before to break this fear barrier and to start helping the Iraqi Security Forces in order to return back to normalcy as far as the areas that suffered from ethnic cleansing in dis- -- and there are some people that are trying... or some groups are trying to... or they're working against the return of displaced families. And we are aware of that and we arrested some the people who's trying to distribute those flyers, and of course with the help of the... or cooperation between Iraqi people and security, Iraqi Security Forces, this is going to fail, all the plans or the plots that the terrorists are trying to implement here or conduct here. So like we said before, they're not going to be a successful plan for... there's not going to... for that kind of plan would not succeed unless we cooperate with the people and get them back, return back to their areas. Of course we are going to face one or two challenges, but we are aiming to

return all the displaced families in the period of one month that was mentioned in the ministerial order. There's another question, I think, to General Perkins?

BG PERKINS:

I think follow-up regards to the nature of the Coalition support in Diyala. There's a wide array of support that's going on: We have soldiers and units, personnel embedded in Iraqi units as trainers and fighting along side by side. It is, though, Iraqi-planned and Iraqi-led. We are also providing a series of other supporting efforts such as air support, intelligence support, engineer support, so there are units that are side by side embedded as well as a broad array of support activities that's going on. But again, clearly an Iraqi-led operation.

REP9

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

More than three checkpoints and... and... and streets, Palestine Street, and three attacks in Palestine Street. What's your role here as far as protecting?

GEN. QASSIM:

Thank you. Some of the -- for this question, some of the areas now are getting attacked by terrorist groups in order to create this instability of security, like in Karadah area of

Palestine street. If you see that some of the attacks are focusing on areas that's gotten back to normalcy again, I mean, this is something that we are working on; we are always looking to, you know, the people that can... and also the media can provide information and a clear picture to the Iraqi Security Forces. We can't really watch... our security forces watch all the Iraqi people and, you know, discover all the infractions and violations. But... but we are working, and I want to comfort you here and assure you that all of the work and all the operations that are... attacks that happened so far, they are, you know, they are to -- they happened; they tried to prove that their (inaudible) trying to prove that they're still here, they still are able to conduct, but we are... attacks... but we are there and we are working against them.

REP10

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

As far as orders that's been issued by the Prime Minister against those occupiers of those houses and what are the areas you think that are going to be difficult for displaced families to return back to their homes? I'm sure there are some areas and neighborhoods that's... they used to be hard for Iraqi Security Forces to enter, and also there are areas

and neighborhoods that has, you know, political strifes (sic) and now, you know, there are complex areas where, you know, displaced people or families cannot get back to their areas. Can you just identify those areas to us?

GEN. QASSIM:

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

I just want to assure you here that there are... there is no hard or difficult area here for Iraqi Security Forces. All the areas now in Baghdad are... is under the security forces, Iraqi Security Forces, completely under... Yes, there can be violations or attacks, but our operational assistant here that we have full control over throughout Baghdad and we have even rapid reaction as well from our side, from our security... Yes, we had bombings in the Daura area, Adal Hariyah, Jemiyah area and Rajab, Hawr Rajab area also. These are most areas that was, you know, people, families were displaced from those areas. We... we've seen, we have seen that families are returned back to their areas, but our plan is to return all the families back to their homes. And I don't think there is a reason, you know, that we... that... there are no big, or big terrorist groups can return back. I think... I think there are a few elements or individuals of, you know, terrorist groups still around, and I

don't think they're going to be that effective. Our security forces now are are more effective now; they are much better than before, and they are much better than when we started with Fardh al-Qanoon plan, and I think everybody is assessing the security for- -- security situation that -- and saying that it's a big jump as far as security improvement, and people are getting back to their fam- -- to their houses and displaced people coming back and the reconstruction projects and rebuilding for the... for the cities as well as also the political atmosphere and diplomatic efforts between us and other neighboring countries, and I think everyone has seen the tour of the Prime Minister and the success that that tour had achieved. And I think that the Prime Minister now is focusing on other areas and the security situation now, God willing, it's under control, not only in Baghdad, but in other provinces as well.

REP11

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Major General Qassim, we all know that, thank God, security situation has improved throughout Iraq, but what's happening to the, you know, the checkpoints now? The checkpoints now, you know... you know, like those checkpoints, like two or three or four lines of checkpoints,

you know, and then I think especially putting in mind it's very... the weather is very hot nowadays and the people cannot wait in the line and all that. I have another remark here: I think that on the entrance, you know, to Baghdad, after, you know, there are negligence by the security forces there. I saw two soldiers, or two Iraqi soldiers, they were playing with their cell phones while vehicles were passing by, and I don't think this is part of discipline. General Perkins, as far as the convoys on the highways, sometimes the convoy goes like hundreds of kilometers, and the vehicles behind them, you know, they... they can't pass, over pass the... by those convoys. When is this going to stop?

GEN. QASSIM:

If you remember, we all... everyone was asking before to increase the number of checkpoints, to increase the number of patrols. And this is something that was asked by all the people and by the media and everything, the number of increase -- the number of checkpoints was about 415 checkpoints throughout Baghdad when Fardh al-Qanoon plan started. After the improvement in the security situation now, the number of checkpoints now went down to 215 checkpoints in both Karkh and Rusafa area. And every time the security improves, that gives a chance for

our security forces in Rusafa and Karkh to reduce or bring down the number of checkpoints and make those checkpoints more ideal. And there's a plan for Ministry of Interior and the government of the office, the Baghdad government's office, that also to build... about... you know, ideal checkpoints, about 28 throughout Baghdad. Of course, the performance of the soldiers is -- relies on different... different things, and some of the media sometimes covers or talks about the use of cell phones by our soldiers, and I direct through you and through our units that it's forbidden. The use of cell phones is forbidden during duty by our forces -- army, police -- this is a procedure. It can be -- probably a mistake or, you know, a violation, an individual violation, but I... we do like our soldiers to be professional, disciplined, and highly skilled. And that's part of building a... the soldier that has all the features and to reach to perfection, that takes time. If you see that we are building security forces and at the same time recruiting and we're fighting terrorism. So we're getting attacked inside the recruiting drives, and this is something that we have seen a lot of infraction. We have seen a lot of challenges, and we had a lot of people, unwanted people attend -- joining the security forces. We are... We're keeping the vetting process; we're keeping on

vetting and... and... and selecting and trying to get... requalifying our forces and we... we are open to criticism; we are open to receive all those negative remarks from all of you. And we have now teaching ethics and professionalism in our Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, and how to create the perfect soldier. And we are in the phase of, you know, building those... those... phases of building those soldiers, and you see that... hopefully, you will see that our soldiers will become professional, disciplined as far as a uniform and all the size (phonetic), and that's what we aim for. And MoD and the MoI, and also the (inaudible) as well. The last question? I think there's a question to General Perkins.

BG PERKINS:

Sir, following up on that, I think General Qassim made a great point there, that we are always in a period of assessment. So when we start out with a security situation, a solution is developed, and that includes the numbers of checkpoints, number of barrier walls, the tactics, forces used on the highways -- all of those things go into the solution of a certain security situation. As that security situation changes, as he mentioned, then you can change some of your mitigation measures. Maybe you take down some walls, maybe you take down checkpoints. But then

you have to reassess. Another component of it is we develop tactics to deal with the terrorists and criminals; they, in turn, develop other tactics to try to outmaneuver us. So we are always changing what we do to try to stay ahead of them. From a big picture, we are always trying to get the maximum amount of security with the minimum amount of disruption to normal life. And we're always doing a balancing act there, always going through an assessment, and always trying to stay one step in front of the terrorists and criminals. And we'll continue to do that. But as the General said, the input from the people who live here in Baghdad, and in all of Iraq, really, is very important to us because it gives us great insights into what some of the other effects are of things we do. So it's a continual dialogue, both with Iraqi Security Forces, Coalition Forces, the Iraqi people, as well as a military assessment as to what measures have to be taken with regards to maintaining an adequate level of security so that daily life, economic development and all that can continue.

GEN. QASSIM:

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Last question.

REP12

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Major General Qassim, lately, recently, we have noticed increase of, you know, female suicide bombing operations and also IEDs and planting IEDs and -- What are the, you know, information that you have as far as recruiting women in those attacks, and do you have any plans or tactics to confront such attacks or such acts?

GEN. QASSIM:

(Speaking in Arabic.)

INT

Thank you, Haidar. You noticed that enemy now uses all sort of tactics and ways to conduct their attacks and kill more people, as many people as they can and target, you know, institutions and infrastructure of the country. And of course part of using the women, and this is part of the bankrupt ideology and the... because the terrorists now are out of material and they can't really do any better and... and they're of course incapable of recruiting men, so now they've seeking this... this way is by recruiting woman. And also, they try to exploit the mental problems that some of women, of those women, have, and also they try to convince any number of woman or females there to

conduct their attacks. The Iraqi Security Forces is disrupting so many attacks through our... suicide bombing attacks. That was one of the reasons why the terrorist groups now are seeking women to conduct their attacks and also the... also one of the reasons because a lot of their suicide attacks, suicide bombers got killed by our forces. Now they are seeking females because they are not... it's easier for a female to go through and it's a cultural thing as you know. And also we are working on searching or hiring female searchers so we can get rid of this problem. And also three days ago, Major General Abdul Karim Khalaf, he... he announced... he announced detaining or capturing a network that's responsible of recruiting females to... for suicide... of suicide bombing... bombers, female bombers. And also if you've seen in the holy visit to the imam and (inaudible) and the bombing that happened in Karadah, so we are working on getting the intel info about the... their whereabouts, and that network and this targeting woman and recruiting woman. Of course, the cooperation of the people, Iraqi people is very important. I think a part, also, of putting an end to the unemployment problem is part of the solution as well. And try to gain as many women and fe- -- and young... young men, Iraqi young men to help them and rescue them from being a victim and being used

by al Qaida to... and this is of course, our religious imams and scholars are very important in this as far as explaining to the Iraqi people that the religious aspect of this... this thing. And these operations or attacks can be conducted, you know, and here or there, this area and that area, and I'm sure that causes a lot of casualties, and it's very painful to have casualties, and I say that one is too many, always. I say one is too many. And... But we all have to work side by side in order to fail all those attacks and prevent any ethnic or sectarian violence here because that's what terrorist groups are trying to do. And at the end I want to thank my colleague, General Perkins, and I think I have been very dictator as far as running this conference here today. I wish to see you again at other press conferences. I wish you all the best, thank you very much.

BG PERKINS:

Thank you very much.

[End of recording.]