

PRESS CONFERENCE:

**Major General Mark P. Hertling, Commander, Multi-National Forces - North, and
1st Armored Division**

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PARTICIPANTS:

Major General Mark Hertling

REPORTERS:

**Ahmed Jassem from an unidentified local newspaper
Deborah Haynes with The London Times
Steven Fell[ph] from The New York Times
Kim Gamel from the Associated Press**

Unidentified reporter from Al-Watan Newspaper.

REPORTERS 1-15

***REP1 = REPORTER 1**

INTERPRETERS 1-2

***INT1 = INTERPRETER 1**

MAJ GEN Good afternoon and As-Salāmu `Alaykum. The last time I talked to
HERTLING:

this group, on 9 January, Multi-National Division – North was in the early stages of an operation in the eastern part of Diyala Province near Muqdadiyah which we called Operation Iron Harvest. I'm happy to report that – with our partners in the 5th Iraqi Army Division, Major General Sallem[ph] and his soldiers – we were able to defeat al-Qaeda in that city and in several other towns in the breadbasket area of that province. We continue to pursue smaller elements of terrorist groups in the outlying area of the key cities in Diyala. I would offer that the security situation in Baqubah and Muqdadiyah and the small towns in between, like Sherween and Hembis and many others, is significantly improved and the province is no longer restive. With improved security comes increased governmental assistance. My friend, Governor Ra'ad, is attempting to execute three years' worth of budget to improve the lives of the citizens of that province, bring drought relief to the farmers of the province, and work improvements in essential service for his citizens. While there are still extremists who are attempting to interrupt the security of Diyala as evidenced by the two female suicide bombers last week-end, attacks in the province has been down into the single digits and life is getting back to normal with increases in the police department, and additional jobs for the citizens. While some of you may have questions about Diyala or Kirkuk or Salah Ad Din, I am assuming that most of you

are interested in what is going on in our northernmost province, Ninawa, and its capitol city, Mosul. Since the 10th of May, Lieutenant General Riyadh and the Ninawa Operations Command, supported by coalition forces, have been conducting operations in Ninawa to attack those who would inhibit improved security and a return to normalcy for the citizens of that northern province. Initially called Operation Lion's Roar, we have proceeded into the next phase which is called Operation Mother of Two Springs and – please excuse my Arabic – Operation Um Al Rabiein. We have been preparing for this operation since early January, establishing security stations and traffic control points. Since that time we have also been increasing intelligence collection. And during the last several months, we have killed or captured many key terrorists, extremists, and criminals in that area. The enemy has been very active in Mosul, but with our Iraqi brothers in the Army and police, we have also been very active in small-unit engagements and sensitive targeting since January, setting conditions for these major operations. Prime Minister Maliki gave the order to Lieutenant General Riyadh to begin the major phase of the operations on 10 May. And on that date, a curfew was put into effect and major, large security operations occurred throughout the City of Mosul and in the Jazeera Desert areas of the province. Coalition forces were in direct support of those operations, but we were also watching the

movement of terrorists and insurgents while conducting our own operations with our Iraqi brothers of other army divisions in other provinces in the north. Since 10 May, the Ninawa Operations Command reports the detention of over 1,200 individuals. Some of those are criminals, but many of them are mid- or self-proclaimed senior-level leaders of al-Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq, Ansar Al Sunna, Nashqabandi, and various other terrorist groups. Those captured hold a variety of jobs within their organizations. They call themselves battalion commanders, VBID and suicide bomb makers, foreign fighter facilitators, financiers, emirs, and wallies[ph]. As the coalition force commander in Multi-National Division – North, I would say that this operation was professionally planned and executed by my friend and brother, Lieutenant General Riyadh and his staff in the Ninawa Operations Command. The soldiers of the 2nd and 3rd Iraqi Army Divisions and the 3rd U.S. Cavalry Regiment joined by Iraqi national police, Iraqi border patrol forces, the Iraqi Air Force, and the 1st U.S. Combat Aviation Brigade, special operations from both Iraq and the United States, and a variety of other organizations have been in coordination – and I’d like to make this point very clearly – better than I have ever seen it when two armies of different nations come together. And we believe together we have significantly affected the terrorist, extremist, and criminal organizations in Mosul, Ninawa, and other

areas of the northern provinces. We have seen this in a decrease in the level of attacks. We have seen how we have affected the enemy through interrogation and detainment reports, and they have all indicated that the enemy has suffered significantly. But they are not completely defeated yet. There is still much work to be done. The people of Ninawa are encouraged by the actions of the police and the Army. But they are also encouraged by the actions of the central government in fighting threats to their security. Prime Minister Maliki, Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir, and Minister of the Interior Balani have all been present in Mosul for the last several weeks. Vice President Hashimi traveled there today. Each one of them have given very strong, strategic and operational guidance to both Lieutenant General Riyadh and his operations command and to me, as the Multi-National Force commander. With that as an update, I'll now take any questions you might have. Yes, sir.

REP1: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: Ahmed Jassem from a local newspaper. Sir, each battle has preparation. And after ending of all battles, there's organization. What is your preparation of what will happen after Um Al Rabiein operation? And you...can you update us about the senior criminals who were captured by you and the Iraqi security forces? And we

have heard by media...we couldn't see there is a fierce battle in Mosul and they...and the criminals...and the criminals they don't have the ability to face the Iraqi security forces and you will capture them by intelligence reports. Can you give us details about those criminals?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

Yes, I can. That's a very good question. Of the 1,200 or so criminals and terrorists that have already been captured, it's believed that probably about 200 of them or so are part of terrorist organizations. There are others who were caught with weapons or at cache sites or at places where they shouldn't have been. There has not been, in the eyes of the press, a fierce battle. It wasn't like, perhaps, some of the other battles that we've seen here in Iraq: Fallujah, Basra, or places like that. But there have been continuous targeting of individuals who attempted to affect the security conditions in Mosul. As the individuals are captured or detained, the minister of justice has actually sent several teams to Mosul to quickly decide cases – who should be kept with evidence or who should be released. And that is an ongoing process. In addition, for each of the individuals that was detained, they have collected both...the coalition forces with our partners in the police primarily, the Iraqi police, we've conducted biometric screening of individuals

who were detained. When they are released, we still have that record of biometric screening in case they commit other crimes in the future. So it's a several phase process of not only just the Army and the police conducting actions, but there has also been significant activity by the minister of justice to get crimes courts and investigative lawyers there. And in terms of what's going on after the operation, the prime minister has allocated an additional amount of funding for the province of Ninawa that will help restructure the damage that has been caused there. And that's already beginning in some neighborhoods. For example, when the operation first started, several of the neighbors...there were two neighborhoods on the east side and west side of the Tigris that were the first ones that saw action. There is already some activity by the mayor of Mosul and also by the governor and the central government to get relief funding for those neighborhoods to attempt to fix some of the things that were damaged and even to get some food into some of the local neighborhoods. I hope that answers your question. Shukran. Yes, sir.

REP2: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: Al Watan Newspaper. The fact about the suicide bombers, there is a lot of questions about the two female suicide bombers in Diyala

Province. It was a significant indication of the increasing attacks... suicide attacks by the armed groups. Is there any significant movements to indicate the sources of...who sent these suicide bombers?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

The answer is yes. And, in fact, that was quite a terrible action last week. The two female suicide bombers that occurred on Saturday seemed to be acting in coordination. And their actions were directed against a security checkpoint and a sheik. What was...and the sheik's name was Sheik Talib. What was unfortunate [about] that is he was one of the key security leaders in that town near Mondolay[ph]. We have seen an increasing use of suicide vests worn by females which, as I've talked to my Iraqi brothers about, it seems to be a direct assault against the beliefs in Islam. But we do see certain members of cells attempting to persuade women specifically – in many cases, wives of those who have been killed as terrorists – to conduct suicide operations. And we are very active in trying to determine the links between those who are trying to force women to wear suicide vests or trying to persuade them to do that and the individuals who are still trying to disrupt the security conditions in Mosul or in the northern provinces. The suicide vest wearer that executed himself yesterday also in Diyala – I believe it

was in the town of Qubah which is north of Baqubah – was an individual, in fact, that we had intelligence on, but we couldn't find him before he executed the vest. It is an attempt, I think, to continue to affect the security conditions. Most of these are occurring outside the major cities and it's unfortunate because they are very difficult to detect, as you well know. What was most interesting about the woman suicide vest or the female wearing the suicide vest last Saturday is she was, in fact, detected by an Iraqi policeman and was asked to stop. And that Iraqi policeman actually saved several lives by stopping her from outside of the building. So there is some good news unfortunately[sic] with some of the people that were wounded in that attack. But again, I think it shows the barbarous nature of the terrorists that we are fighting together as Iraqis and coalition forces that they are attempting still to disrupt, by any means possible, the increasing security gains that we've made together.

REP3:

Deborah Haynes with The London Times. When I was in Mosul in February, a common complaint that I heard from the Iraqi Army officers was the fact that despite the arrests that they were making – because they failed to connect the evidence with it – about 80% or 90%, in some cases, of the people they were arresting were being released. What has been done to ensure that these 1,200 people that

have been arrested in the recent operation are going to be convicted or prosecuted? Sorry.

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

That was quite a difficult situation back in February because the criminal court system in Mosul had not been stood up very well. The governor was attempting to get what we call a Mobile Crimes Court from Baghdad to assist with some of those trials. And, in fact, Chief Judge Medhat did promise additional Mobile Crimes Court during the period from March and April and they did arrive up there are try many of the cases. And, in fact, we were tracking that as we prepared for this operation. I'll repeat what I said earlier to this gentleman up here, I'm not sure if you heard it or not, but the minister of justice has, in fact, sent several investigative judges to Mosul within the last week in preparation for Um Al Rabiein and they have been actively trying the cases to get additional evidence against these individuals in a rule of law procedure. It's still very challenging because, as you know, the criminal courts are not set up completely. But I think the minister of justice is trying to do everything they possibly can to try the cases very quickly and to keep holding those who are guilty of crimes and releasing those who are not. Yes, sir.

REP4: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: I would like first to thank you. There is a question about Mosul. Until now there is no combat operation with the terrorists by the Iraqi security forces or Multi-National Force; it's just logistics and intelligence operations. And we...you have captured a lot of terrorists. Is there an expectation to have an armed confrontation in Mosul in a few...in the next few days?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** I have to admit that I was getting extreme feedback from the speaker in Arabic and I couldn't understand the question. I'd ask you to repeat the question if you don't mind. And can we turn the speakers down that are behind me here?

UNIDENTIFIED: [Unintelligible.]

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** Please.

INT1: Sir...

INT2: Is there any...we don't hear of any big operations in Mosul...

confrontations and the work was always intelligence information, arresting people. But I didn't hear of any big confrontation. Is this something that's going to happen? Do you expect that to happen?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

We do actually. And General Riyadh – and that is a good question – because we were concerned in the early phases of the operation, during Lion's Roar, that, in fact, there would be extreme fighting between the forces. That did not occur. I think it did not occur because of the number of Iraqi police and Iraqi Army that were in the streets of Mosul combined with the curfew. General Riyadh and I have talked significantly over the last week. I've been up there most of the time with him. And we anticipate there will be some attacks by the enemy once they come out of this initial phase of being surprised within the city. We anticipate that there might be car bombs, suicide vests, or the things like that. And again, it shows the barbaric and inhumane nature of the enemy to continue to try to come back and affect the people even though they've become secure. But I think there have been some things which may prevent that. Number one, within the last ten days since the operation began, we have seen a significant amount of cache sites uncovered. Now that's because they've been found, in some cases, by the police or the Army, but in many more cases they have been turned over to the police and the army by the citizens of Mosul which has

been extremely important to the success of this operation. On Saturday, I was with General Riyadh in a[n] Iraqi Air Force Huey helicopter. And we flew over the city together and he was dispensing...or he had one of his soldiers in the back dispensing leaflets that had tip lines which people in the city could call in order to report things. And what we have seen is the citizens of Mosul – who are tired of this injustice, who are tired of a lack of security – have been calling those Iraqi police lines in a significant number. The phones have been ringing off the hook. So I would continue to make a message to the people of Ninawa Province and to Mosul particularly, continue to call those to get rid of the ammunition on the street. What's been most interesting is we've compared numbers. The coalition force has also helped the Iraqi police establish a tip line over the last six months. In those last six months – now this is throughout the provinces of MND-North – but in the last six months, we've had close to 52,000 tips of which about 8,000 tips have been actioned and something has resulted as a result of the tip which we received from a citizen. So what's most important is the people of Iraq are beginning to see how important a role they play in security and how they can trust the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police to ensure that security becomes more and more prevalent every day. Shukran. Yes, sir.

REP5: Steven Fell[ph] from The New York Times. Excuse me.

UNIDENTIFIED: Excuse me.

REP5: Steven Fell[ph] from The New York Times. I just got back from Basra; obviously a very different city, very different circumstances. And I just wondered could you talk a little bit about that? Lots of Army and police went in, tens of thousands, all over the place. What lesson...are there any lessons that can be drawn from Basra or is the circumstances so different in the areas you're in?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** I'm hesitant to speak about Basra because I've got too much to concern myself with in the north. But there have certainly been some lessons learned. And, in fact, it's interesting because when Prime Minister Maliki came to Mosul with the minister of defense, Abdul Qadir, he, in fact, passed some of the lessons of Basra to General Riyadh and I was able to listen to some of that conversation and they were all very good lessons. I think the key difference is that Basra...the actions in Basra started without any true preparation and intelligence targeting. This operation in Mosul which began on the 10th of May with Operation Lion's Roar, we

had been preparing for since late December and the Ninawa Operations Command stood up on the 15th of January. So there was extensive preparation. There was the building of operation outposts and traffic control points throughout the city – a massive engineer effort. And what is a very unique story about this is the combination of the Iraqi Army and the U.S. Army engineers in building those security outposts through Mosul and there have been over 30 of them built. You can see some of them on this map in the key problem areas. The reconstruction of the “Riyadh Line” – what we call it. He doesn’t call it that. We call it that. But it’s the line around the city with checkpoints allowing people in or out. None of that occurred in Basra so I think, as you said, it’s a very different circumstance in Mosul than what occurred in Basra and, I think, to a degree, what’s going on in Sadr City as well right now. They are all very different. But the good news story is, in my view, the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi police, and the Iraqi government are now reacting very well to very different circumstances on several different fronts. And the success of the operations in Mosul so far has been very heartening.

REP6:

Going back to the problem with female suicide bombers, are security forces doing anything to address this problem? Are they

training females to search other females or...?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

Ah. That's a great question and thank you for asking it because it's something that the provincial...the four provincial directors of police in our four provinces where we have soldiers and I have discussed this and, in fact, what we'll see – and it will be a very good story for some of you to cover starting in just a few days – we will have our first class of 112, I think it is, females entering the Kirkuk Police Academy. So, yes. It is something where I think there is a demand for more female security officers, both in the police or in private security firms. There is a tendency to allow women to go through checkpoints without checking them as closely as men. So these are critical to have the female checkers of the female people who are walking through checkpoints in the near future. And I think the various police chiefs understand that now and they realize that they have to get officers on the police force and in the border entry points. To answer the first part of your question, I'll be honest with you, I'm perplexed by the role and the ability to recruit women to become suicide bombers. It seems to me – and I am certainly not an expert on the Koran – but it seems to me to go directly against what the Koran preaches from what I've read, and it goes against the Islamic religion. But yet I think there are other cultural indicators

that cause some women to believe that they must do this to either take care of their families or revenge their husbands and that's very unfortunate. Yes, ma'am.

REP7:

General Hertling, it's Kim Gamel with A.P. How are you? I wonder...other similar operations in Sunni areas have had success because of cooperation by the Safwa Councils, the Awakening Councils. And I understand there aren't as many in Mosul but there are some Awakening Councils who apparently offered to help but were refused by the government. Can you comment on why their role isn't welcome there?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

I can, Kim, and I appreciate you asking me that question because it allows me to elaborate. There are some Awakenings in Ninawa Province. There are none right now in Mosul. And the reason why is I think that you take a look at the primary reason for having an Awakening and that is to bridge security forces in an area that doesn't have either police or Army. Mosul has both of those and, in fact, Minister Balani has promised additional police forces to the City of Mosul and the surrounding areas. So there are some areas within Ninawa Province near Sharqat, the southern part of the area here, [and] Haishel[ph] where the Awakenings have been very

successful because there weren't police there. The citizens of Mosul because they are so diverse and cosmopolitan – there's Chaldeans, Assyrians, Yazidis, Sunnis, Shi'a, Kurds, various religions and ethnic groups in the city – it's such a cosmopolitan area that it's very difficult to have one group say we will take charge without turning that into a group that might cause some concern in the elected officials and the approved security forces. So in Mosul proper, both the governor, the mayor, and General Riyadh have said we don't need or want Awakening members. In areas surrounding Mosul and in other parts of the province where there is less police or less security forces, it is an option and, in fact, the Government of Iraq has taken advantage of it. Thank you.

REP8: As-Salāmu `Alaykum. [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: General, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said that this is the last campaign against al-Qaeda in Iraq. Are you with Prime Minister al-Maliki in this statement? There is another question. Have been secured the border with Syria and Mosul?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** Well, first of all, I am very much with Prime Minister Maliki in all the things he's trying to do. He has said that this is a last campaign...I think he has said this is a last campaign against al-

Qaeda. Campaigns consist of many battles. I think we will see elements of al-Qaeda, as we've already seen in some regards, depart the City of Mosul or attempt to depart or operate in other areas of Ninawa and we will continue to pursue them. I think...I certainly don't want to put words in the prime minister's mouth but when I think he said Mosul, he meant all of Ninawa Province because there is a significant activity by al-Qaeda in the province. General Riyadh – with both of his divisions, the 2nd and 3rd – are addressing the problem of al-Qaeda and other terrorists not only in the City of Mosul, but in the surrounding western Ninawa Desert and to the south to Sharqat. But I think...I've had this discussion actually with the prime minister last week and I told him that we will continue to contribute with the Iraqi Army in pursuing al-Qaeda wherever they go and searching them out and seeking them out and detaining or killing all of them because until that happens, there won't be security that you can be 100% assured of. Shukran. Sir.

REP9: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: Are you happy with the outcomes of the battles in Ninawa Province? Are you satisfied?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** I am so far. It is...from our perspective because of what we've seen

with the reduction of attacks, with the reduction of incidents, we've had—I'll give you an example because we track these things very closely. The week before Lion's Roar started, we were averaging about 40 attacks of some type a day in Mosul – just Mosul, the city. Since the beginning of Lion's Roar and Mother of Two Springs, we've been averaging between four and six a day. The people are back on the street. There seems to be an economic resurgence even though, to a degree, part of the curfew is still in effect and that's for heavy trucks and motorcycles. But we're seeing the people of Ninawa and Mosul, specifically, say, "We're finally getting the security we wanted." And the police and the army are acting. So, to answer your question, I'm very happy with what's going on there. I know General Riyadh is very happy with what's going on there. But, as we've discussed, on any given day, something bad could happen again so we have to ensure the people still understand that we are in a pursuit operation against these criminals and terrorists and there could be dangers any day so people still have to be very careful with what they're doing. Shukran. Sir.

REP10: As-Salāmu `Alaykum.

INT1: As-Salāmu `Alaykum.

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

Alaykum salaam.

REP10:

[Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1:

General, you know and you have told about the operation in Mosul and you have said that there was operation in Diyala. Military intelligence has a lot of time. Therefore, it caused the run away of many terrorists from Diyala to Mosul. The time element is very important. How do you estimate the situation if the extremists or the terrorists will come back to...?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

Could I have someone interpret, please?

INT2:

He's saying that the intelligence phase took a long time [unintelligible] and a lot of those people, the terrorists, go to other provinces [unintelligible]. Are you worried about this happening in Mosul?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

We worry about it happening everywhere and that's why the difference today than a year ago or two years ago is it wasn't an attack against the terrorists or the criminals and then depart. What's critical now – and it's linked to the capability of the Iraqi police – is

once the Army and the police forces and the coalition forces are done with an area, the security of that area is then turned over to a growing-in-capability Iraqi police. And that's why it is so critical as police are trained, they get into the key areas where we have just cleared in order to hold those areas for security. I will tell you that in Northern Iraq and the provinces of...the four provinces of the north, not the Kurdish regions, but in Salah Ad Din, Diyala, Kirkuk, and Ninawa, we are short a significant number of policemen. We have a challenge right now in getting police trained in the four academies that we have in the northern provinces because we need more than we can train in a short period of time. But we're attempting to fix that problem. We just, as an example, we just opened a new academy in Diyala, near Ashraf, which graduated its first class of 418 policemen last Thursday. And that was an historic event in Diyala because not only—and in Kirkuk as well because not only were these...many of these policemen in Kirkuk and Diyala newly formed police, but they were also...some of them had been previously Sons of Iraq. So we had our first group of 400 former Sons of Iraq become Iraqi policemen. I was at that graduation and a young man – as you know, as a tribal custom in many tribes will read poetry when they have a very emotional experience – and one young man who had just been commissioned as a police officer stood up in front of his 400 classmates...418

classmates and read a poem about what it meant to him to be a protector of the citizens of Diyala and he was crying as he did it. A very emotional event for him and, I think, as well for General Ghanem, the director of police in Diyala, who realizes that he has to get several thousand more police in the areas that have been cleared during a very short period of time. So that is something that we're continuing to work on. But we do have a shortage of police in the north because most of the attention has been on building the police force in Baghdad. So over the next six months or so, we're going to have to graduate several thousand policemen in the various academies in Northern Iraq. Shukran. Sir.

REP11: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: Mohammed Delaway[ph].

UNIDENTIFIED: [Unintelligible] ask you about your earpiece.

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** It's not working.

UNIDENTIFIED: [Whispers unintelligibly.]

REP11: [Continues speaking in Arabic.]

INT1: Can you hear me, sir, now?

INT2: What he's trying to say is how do you evaluate the level of the performance of the Iraqi police in Mosul and the Iraqi Army?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** The Iraqi Army and police?

INT2: Yes.

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** It's interesting to me because I was here in Baghdad in 2003 and 2004 when both the police academies here in Baghdad and the army was beginning to stand up. And when I arrived back in Northern Iraq in October of this year and I saw my police and Iraqi Army counterparts, I was amazed at the level that they had reached. The Army especially. The Army, in many cases, are conducting operations on their own. We are partnering with them in all operations and, in fact, for my commanders, they have to get permission from me to do a unilateral operation as opposed to doing one with the Iraqi Army. There are certainly some challenges: the

logistics, some of the communication tools that the Iraqi Army still needs. Some of the – what we call in the military – enablers like artillery. The engineers are coming around but they still need a lot of equipment. So it's still a growing armor...Army. But from an Army perspective, I'll tell you, I'll fight alongside my Iraqi brothers any day. They are very good. They need some more equipment and it's slowly coming. The police, as I said a minute ago, in some cases they are very good; in some cases they still need training. Many of the police in the police forces were put into uniform and pushed into their position without the proper amount of training. We're trying to fix that now by getting those police officers who have been hired back into training so that they know things like how to treat people, how to provide respect for people, how to do the right investigative work – things like that that all police officers need. So again, that's part of our challenge over the next several months with the Iraqi police. But my Army...my five Army...four Army division commanders that I work with on a daily basis are all very good friends. They are my brothers. And I'll fight with them at any time. One last thing that I'll say. They all have a very...they are all very proud of who they are as Iraqi Army. And they are...the forefront of nationalism in this country. They are not worried, in many cases, about Sunni, Shi'a, or Kurds. They know they are the Army and the protector of the people. And what I say is the Iraqi

people should be very proud of the way their Army has developed over the last several years. It is a very good Army now. Shukran. Sir.

REP12: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: What about the armed militants who were captured? The second question about the stability in Mosul. What is your comment about that?

INT2: What's the percentage of the people who were arrested that were from Arab...other Arab countries? And what...how do you evaluate the level of security and stability in Mosul right now?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** I don't think I can give you a percentage. I can tell you that there...we have been tracking people from outside of Iraq, certainly, that have been trying to affect the security conditions in Mosul. Many of them have come across the Syrian border, both in the Western Ninawa Desert and even through the Port of Rabiya. But I'm sorry I can't give you a percentage. There have been various nations represented in the people we have detained or captured and, in some cases, killed. And how I would rate the

security conditions in Mosul, it's still...I'd have to say it's still an area where we're trying to improve security so it's still not completely safe. But in my view, it's getting better every single day. And that's...I guess that's the best way to describe any kind of insurgency operation is that you never have a win or a loss or a day where you can flip the switch and say it's now better, but every day it becomes more and more secure. And I think that's what we're working on in Mosul. Sir.

REP13:

You have in the past described the.... General, you have in the past described the north as an economy of force – I believe was the phrase – area as far as coalition forces are concerned. Is that still the case? And I wanted to ask the same question about the Iraqis. Specifically, when you've got a big operation in Sadr City and a big one in Basra, I think a lot of people want to know is can the Iraqi government, the Iraqi armed forces, and the coalition operate with such large numbers in so many different cities at the same time effectively?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

Steve, there's two questions in there [laughs]. I'll answer the first one and do I consider...still consider the coalition side of MND-North an economy of force? Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think we

can continue to be an economy of force primarily because [of] the capability of our Iraqi brothers. I mean I have about 21-22,000 U.S. military in this area. Here's Baghdad – in that area to the north. The Iraqi security forces, the Iraqi Army in that same area has about 50,000, maybe a little less. So, I mean, it's a significant number and because the capability of the Iraqi divisions are so good in my area and we're partnering with them very well, that it allows me to still be an economy of force but continue to pursue the enemy where he goes. Now, are we covering every single place with security? No, we are not. There is still, as I said before, the need for police. There are some areas where we know the enemy is attempting to hide where sometimes we just don't have enough forces to go after him so we have to adjust. And that adjustment is taking place on a weekly and on a monthly basis because, as I think I told you once before, I'm a cavalryman and we pursue the enemy wherever he is going and, hopefully, we get them...we get there first, before the enemy does, so they don't get themselves set. But there are some areas, quite frankly, that we know we have to continue to pursue into in the MND-North area of operations.

REP13:

And in terms of the Iraqi Army [unintelligible] been stretched if they are in Basra, Sadr City, Mosul, [unintelligible].

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

Yeah. That's a good question because I was amazed at, quite frankly, how many reinforcements General Riyadh was given for the operations. Several battalions – and I won't say of what type of forces, whether they were Army, national police, police, special operations – were all shifted to the north in support of Lion's Roar and Mother of Two Springs. I think any commander worth his salt would say that they would always want more [laughs] and General Riyadh did and so did I. But we also know the realities of the situation that there are threats still in Baghdad. There are threats in the south. And even some emerging threats in other places that have to be covered. But I think the most important part of working with General Riyadh, I think, is the...not only the capability of his force, but also their ability to read the people and the terrain in our area. They are going places we would have never thought to have gone as a coalition force. Finding things in places we would have never attempted to look. And we're now sharing intelligence with them, quite frankly, like we would do with any ally anywhere else in the world. So I think those all contribute to an increasing capability in MND-North. But, yes, we are still [laughs] the economy of force. I'll say that one more time [laughs]. Okay. Sir.

REP14: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: Have you found any evidence that Iran [is] involved in the terrorist operations?

INT2: Have you received any evidence in Mosul that Iran has developed [unintelligible] supplied [unintelligible]?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** No, we have not. We have not seen any indicators of Iranian influence in Mosul. We have seen some weapons that we're not sure where they came from, specifically missiles, rockets, and some other devices that could have shifted up from the south or might have come across but we don't know. We don't know. We're continuing to investigate. But in Mosul and Ninawa we have not seen that. We have not seen those indicators. Okay. I think I'll take one more question if you don't....

REP14: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT1: General, we all know that we are facing an enemy who is excellent in...to be disappeared. Is there any interventions or violation in the Iraqi security forces? And if that happened, how would you deal with it?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:**

I would be foolish to say that there is none. I'm sure that there are some what we call sleepers within both the Army and the police. But, frankly, as we saw a few years ago even in our Army, there are people who are less than...who have less than the right type of values and who shouldn't be in an army defending a nation. But I think what we see is an increasing character in the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police. They are increasingly becoming more adept at protecting the Iraqi people. For an example, a few weeks ago I had a commanders' conference in Tikrit and I not only had my American commanders, but I had all of our Iraqi general officers as well and they all came together. And we talked about values among soldiers and how that's important. We've seen, unfortunately, an incident where that's occurred recently here in Baghdad. But values among soldiers of defending the people of the nation are very important. And I think the older and older the new Iraqi Army grows, the more those values will permeate the people who defend the Iraqi people. And the more they will have a sense of patriotic pride in the nation of Iraq and I think those are all very good things. So, yes. I'm sure there are people who have infiltrated the Army and the police, but I think it's not a big enough problem right now to be concerned with. And I think commanders at all level[s] will take care of those. Okay. Shukran.

REP15: Can I just follow up on that one?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** Sure.

REP15: I think last week that the authorities in Mosul demoted a few commanders and transferred 140 of the police from Mosul to...

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** Mm-hmm.

REP15: ...to Baghdad. And so they were moving some police from Baghdad up to Mosul. Did...can you tell us what was behind that? What was the reason for that? Did that have to do with infiltration?

**MAJ GEN
HERTLING:** I don't know. It was something that was reported to me as well. Several of the commanders said, "Hey, our counterparts have been transferred to Baghdad." But I never saw anything, quite frankly, that said they were either transferred or demoted because of infiltrations or poor actions. I think in many cases they were transferred just because armies and police forces transfer people. I

mean they take them and put them in different jobs. And I think that's part of what occurred in both the Army and the police in Ninawa Province. I don't think I want to speculate on why either the minister of defense or the minister of interior either transferred or changed positions of people in the police. But I think it has to do with sometimes normal personnel or human relations that all affect the way people interact and the way people are subordinate to each other in terms of command relationships. I don't know. Okay. Thank you all very much. It's been enjoyable. I'm hoping I gave you a little bit better indication of what's going on in the north and in Mosul specifically. Thank you. Shukran.