

Congressional Delegation Report by U.S. Rep. John Spratt

CODEL Forbes / Skelton Kuwait-Iraq

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Our congressional delegation (CODEL) arrives in Kuwait on Friday, September 14. While at the airport, we tour the field hospital, the first of three we will visit. The hospital operates under a maze of tents which mask its capacity and sophistication. Inside is an array of medical equipment and a full range of medical and paramedical staff. We see a few patients in each of the wards, but find that most have been treated and returned to duty or routed to another hospital. Among personnel on duty, we detect an anxiety that we find elsewhere, over what happens next, now that the original mission is completed.

We spend the rest of the afternoon at Camp Doha where we are briefed in detail on logistics, one of the unsung achievements of the war and one reason for our swift success. Although the logistics of the Persian Gulf War were impressive, supply systems have sophisticated, and the logistics commanders are proud to present what they have achieved, despite the constraints of time and space in this war. We get a better insight into the operational complexities when we go out on the yard and see pod after pod of materiel, equipment, food, and medical supplies, scattered over hundreds of acres, and are shown how each container carries a radio transmitter to track its location.

We question the logistics commanders about the deficiency of body armor, and are told that there were enough body armor sets including ceramic plates to outfit those likely to face enemy fire during the war. But the intensity of post-war conflict was not foreseen. More troops are on patrol or in convoy and exposed to sporadic enemy fire than the Pentagon anticipated. More body armor is on order, and units with full armor vests are instructed to leave them behind as they rotate out of theater. A similar explanation is given for the insufficiency of “up-armored HUMVEEs.” More such HUMVEEs are on order, but the contractor has tight capacity limits, and the finished vehicles are heavy and hard to transport. As for defenses to thwart “improvised explosive devices,” detectors are being developed and tested, but there are no foolproof systems. The problem overall is that the Pentagon did not anticipate the resistance encountered after the conventional war ended.

On Saturday, September 13, we fly by C-130 from Kuwait City to Baghdad. On the helicopter from the Baghdad Airport to the palace where the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) is based, our escort officer observes that Saddam must have squandered much of Iraq's wealth buying ammunition and building garish palaces, because the country is replete with both. From the air and on the ground, Baghdad looks like an occupied city. Areas are cordoned off everywhere and road blocks crop up continually, along with a vast mix of military vehicles and uniform personnel. But the war damages seem selective, and lots of traffic moves about the city.

Ambassador Bremer greets us in a spacious conference room accompanied by much of his staff including Lt. General Sanchez and Ambassador Comstock, his British counterpart in the

Coalition Provisional Authority. Bremer addresses the security situation first, telling us that while violence may not be abating, it is manageable, particularly since 80% of the violent incidents occur in the same general area, the Sunni triangle, of which Baghdad is the center. He attributes the violence to three different groups: (i) Baathists, Fedayeen and other regime loyalists; (ii) criminals turned loose from jail by Saddam Hussein; and (iii) terrorists and foreign infiltrators. In Bremer's opinion, "The August attacks convince us that this is a global threat, with well-established jihadists moving through known facilitators in other countries, like Syria and Saudi Arabia. In addition, in the last six weeks, we have begun to get intelligence reports of an influx of Al Qaeda types, coming into northern Iraq from Iran. There may be several hundred in the country, and perhaps hundreds in Baghdad itself." Bremer and the CP A seem to perceive this threat as more prevalent than the military commanders in different sectors of the country. For example, Lieutenant General Petraeus tells on Monday us that his border patrols have intercepted armed men coming out of Syria, but Baathists remnants and regime loyalists are a bigger problem in Nineveh Province around Mosul.

Bremer assures us that he is not asking for more American troops, but acknowledges that he could use more foreign troops and better intelligence. He notes that our military are reconfiguring into lighter, more mobile forces, and uses a figure of speech we will hear often: he wants to put more of "an Iraqi face" on the security forces. To this end, training of the first battalion of a new army is near completion, and as one measure of its success, only 20 of 475 men failed to return from two-weeks' leave following the last block of training. The CPA's expedited objective is 27 battalions in one year, building to 9 brigades or between 2 and 3 divisions within two years. Walt Slocombe, former Deputy Secretary of Defense, is advising the

Minister of Defense. Slocombe later explains that the Iraqi Army "dissolved and disappeared," and that the country needs a new and very different military. It must be professional and non-political, and it must mirror the ethnic make-up of the country. It must be smaller, because the people detested Saddam's large standing army, yet it must be militarily effective. We have two parallel objectives, says Slocombe: (i) building a new army and (ii) building a new system of national security management. Except for ammunition, virtually everything, uniforms, facilities, equipment, has to be procured. Bremer notes that of the \$20 billion requested for rebuilding Iraq in the supplemental, \$2 billion goes to this purpose. He concedes later that 2 to 3 Iraqi divisions will not be enough to ensure the sovereignty of a new government, but the CPA seems hesitant to build too big a military too fast for fear that a strongman could seize the reins of power. As a consequence, two American divisions may be necessary to augment Iraqi forces, and "ensure sovereignty." Bremer foresees a need for American forces lasting as long as 4 to 5 years.

Sanchez informs us that there are 113,500 troops in Iraq now, plus 23,000 foreign troops. He will not be specific about how many must remain here or how long this deployment will last, saying only, "We will need lots of troops for a long time." He admits, however, that there are limits. Five divisions cannot be maintained here if for no other reason than the "3: 1 rule, " though a troop level a bit below 100,000 is probably sustainable. Sanchez hopes that more foreign troops will be here before spring so that some of our forces can be drawn down. Sanchez says that he is working hard on securing Turkish troops, though obviously not for the area where the Kurds live. Indian troops now seem doubtful, but the Pakistanis still seem willing. As security goes up, Sanchez says, the need for troops goes down. In other words, the political/economic situation will be the key determinant.

Bremer notes that the CPA has also called back 40,000 police and plans to stand up a force of 65,000-70,000. Each policeman receives 3 weeks of training before going to work, and many apprentice further by accompanying American troops on patrol.

The CPA also plans to stand up an Iraqi Civil Defense Force with 18 battalions by year-end, many of whom are conscripts from the Iraqi Army. They will serve under U. S. command as convoy guards and building guards, and will be paid from the Iraqi Development Fund.

Representative Skelton presses Ambassador Bremer for an assessment of how well the CPA is doing in response to the CSIS's warning that they have 90 days to get a grip on the situation or risk an irretrievable loss of control. Bremer seems to bristle as he responds: "I believe the security situation is under control."

Bremer is asked what authority or decision-making might be shared in order to encourage other countries and the U.N. to take a greater role. He replies that whatever may happen here, good or bad, the U.S. will be responsible. Therefore, we cannot cede much control over the situation without risking an outcome we do not want, but will be responsible for. This, therefore, is our dilemma: other countries want a decision-making role before committing troops or money, but we can allow them only a small role if we want to control the outcome.

General Sanchez tells us that there are about 15 incidents a week in the Baghdad area, but half of these are short-lived, and there is no "engagement" with the assailants. "Assassins come out of the crowd, shoot, and fade back into the crowd." He says firmly that there is no tactical or

operational threat to our troops, but warns, "As long as we are here, we will sustain casualties." He adds: "It is clear to us that there is a very violent element operating here." To impede the infiltration of foreign terrorists, Sanchez proposes to go to border control points and stop all males between the ages of 15 and 60 who do not have a valid purpose for entering Iraq.

Bremer says that he is pressing for supplemental funds now because the CPA had been counting on some \$3.5 billion in oil export revenues between June and year end, and these revenues will not materialize in large part because of sabotage of Iraq's oil and electric infrastructure. He acknowledges what OMB Director Bolton has already assured us, that the \$20 billion requested for the CP A is a final request, even though the estimated cost of reconstruction runs much higher, from \$50 to \$100 billion.

I ask Bremer, "If the need is \$50-100 billion, where will the balance come from?" He replies that the CPA will try to raise \$20-30 billion at the donors' conference in Madrid, but when we express incredulity, he adds that oil export revenues and multi-lateral agencies like the World Bank will have to fund the rest. Asked what level of oil production this projection assumes, Bremer says 3 million barrels a day, with 2.5 million barrels for export, at \$20 per barrel. In the long run, he says that Iraq probably has the capacity to produce 5 to 6 million barrels a day, but this would require some \$30-40 billion of foreign investment, which Iraq-Kurd law prohibits, and under the international law applicable to occupying powers, we could not change such laws, and in any event, we will defer this decision to the Iraqi government, once it is in operation. Ambassador Comstock acknowledges that the donors' conference is unlikely to raise anything

approaching the amount Ambassador Bremer has mentioned mainly because the donors are still assessing the situation in Iraq and wondering if contributions are a wise investment.

Sanchez depicts an antiquated infrastructure, depleted by neglect and hard to repair because spares are not available. "This country would have had huge economic problems," he says, "even if there had been no war." Sanchez observes that under Saddam, there was an huge diversion of resources to the military, illustrated by ammunition caches that far exceed any requirements. Sanchez tells us that Saddam Hussein is estimated to have amassed 600,000 tons of ammunition, and to have stored it at hundreds of caches throughout the country, where it is kindling wood for guerilla and civil war. Later the estimate of 600,000 tons is almost doubled.

Representative Skelton presses the issue of ammunition caches, asking if it is true that 55 identified caches have yet to be secured. Skelton is assured that the risk is taken seriously and that sites are being secured, but he does not receive a definitive answer until we get to Mosul. General Petraeus tells him 996 of the 1,003 caches found in the Nineveh region have been secured.

Sanchez acknowledges that there is a mountain of work to be done, but compares the situation here to Kosovo, where he was also commander, and observes that we are ahead of where Kosovo was after one year. Sanchez stresses the significance of success in Baghdad, saying "As Baghdad goes, so goes the nation. If we can stabilize Baghdad, it will be a big plus for the rest of the country."

The CPA list the following accomplishments so far toward "getting a sovereign government in place:"

(1) At the national level, a Governing Council has been selected, and it in turn has appointed 25 ministers, who are described as "generally technocrats and mostly competent."

(2) At the local level, cross-sections of prominent citizens have been convened, and based on their advice, city councils have been selected.

(3) At the judicial level, the "incubus of a court system" has been created by repairing and reopening 300 of 400 courthouses and weeding out corrupt Baathist judges. Criminal courts apply an old Napoleonic code and former edicts, along with some tribal law, but are hampered by a lack of prisons for the convicted. Not only were 151 prisons burned and destroyed, but prison records were burned too. \$1 billion of the \$20 billion sought by the CPA is earmarked to building new jails.

Bremer readily admits that his authority cannot be seen as an "endless occupation" and that the Iraqi people need a time table. But he counsels against haste in establishing an elected government, warning that we will risk "long term stability for short-term gain." Bremer estimates that it will take from 6 to 8 months to write a constitution, but his staff explains that even then, basic arrangements like election districts will need to be drawn, and these will require a reliable census. Later in the day, at a reception with members of the Governing Council, the Secretary General, al Kateeb, tells us that it will take "18 to 24 months to create an elected government, but we do not have 18 to 24 months."

The CPA offers this logic for what has to happen now, which we hear restated in

various forms wherever we go. The electrical system must be raised quickly to pre-war production levels, 4,400 megawatts, and in the near future to 6,000 megawatts to meet national demand. This will pump up the economy, which the CPA is already priming with money through hundreds of projects, large and small. The jobs generated will relieve unemployment, now over 50%, and remove some of the young men from the streets, who are otherwise prey to radical propaganda. This is just a first step, but critical to the economy and to confidence as well. Iraqis do not understand how Americans can win a war in three weeks but not get the lights on in three months.

Pressed for achievements, the CPA cites 6,000 reconstruction projects initiated all over the country but admits that they have not been effective at "explaining the positives." They claim that there are twelve good success stories a day that are eclipsed by incidents of violence and never published. Ambassador Kennedy says that it is "hard to count hearts and minds," but cites a Zogby poll showing that a large majority of Iraqis is pleased to be liberated; that a large majority wants the Coalition Provisional Authority to stay and finish the job; but that a large majority is also extremely unhappy over the loss of essential services.

After our morning session with Ambassador Bremer and the CP A, we meet in the same palace complex with Dr. David Kay and Major General Keith Dayton, who head the Iraq Survey Group and will soon submit a report on the search for weapons of mass destruction.

Dr .Kay says that his team of 1,400 have been at work since June 17, and he describes at some length the difficulties they have encountered. Looting destroyed records and wiped out

paper trails including lists of scientists and engineers involved in weapons programs. There are Iraqi who know about weapons research and production; but after years of oppression, they are reluctant to talk. Countless other small problems hamper their efforts. For example, weapons of mass destruction were not marked as such; items like chemical artillery shells may be mixed with conventional rounds, and stored in very small places.

Kay groups his findings in three general categories:

- (1) Evidence of intent to reconstitute weapons of mass destruction.
- (2) Evidence of activity with program elements of such weapons.
- (3) Evidence of actual weapons of mass destruction.

While Kay believes that there was intent to reconstitute, his team has found no actual chemical weapons and no evidence of chemical and biological production in the period before the war. They also have no evidence that a nuclear weapons program was being reconstituted. Kay emphasizes that this is only a progress report, that Iraq is a huge country, that there are many places his team has not been, and that their work is far from finished.

We next visit the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, based in a palace Saddam Hussein built for his wife. The brigade's operations offer a good insight into what military units are doing to restore services and stability. The 2d BCT's area of operations covers two districts in Baghdad (Karkh and Karadah) and consists of 18 neighborhoods and 720,000 residents. Tenant units are scattered throughout the sector, which includes the new Iraqi Government Parliament and the Al Rashid Hotel. In this sector, between 1 June and 12

September, the 2d BCT has encountered 9 RPG attacks, 4 hand-to-hand attacks; 7 grenade and 4 mortar attacks; and 52 small arms attacks. The division commander, General Hertling, calls his mission a "counter-insurgency" operation.

Their mission, in the face of such hostility, is not to close with and destroy the enemy, but "support and stability." The brigade has trained 1,545 special police for the Facility Protection Services and 139 for the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, with 52 more in training now. General Hertling describes the police forces they are training as "our key to getting out of here." 16,000 police will be required for Baghdad; it is hoped that 8,000 can be trained by this time next year. The 2d BCT commander, Colonel Baker, tells us that his brigade has been heavily engaged in seeing that the schools in its sector open on time. 137 schools were in need of repairs. Drawing on his commander's fund, repairs have been completed at 97 schools and at these, school will start on schedule. After completing school repairs, the brigade will focus on public works: water, sewer, electric service, and trash removal. The brigade's goal is the restoration of essential services in Karkh and Karadah by April 1, 2004. About 30% of this work is now done by engineer battalions and task forces; about 40% by local contractors; and the rest by NGOs and public works agencies. Over the next year, the 2d BCT plans to transfer more and more work to others. Colonel Baker's goal is to transition to a "support group" by the time his unit leaves.

Since June, the 2d BCT has suffered 27 attacks by improvised explosive devices – or IEDs. Most are detonated by radio control, operated by a nearby assailant lying in wait. Having observed this pattern, the 2d BCT concluded that there must be local cooperation so they have focused efforts on local forewarning, with some success, though its successes are not reported in

the press. "The media are six weeks behind what we are achieving." With the help of local informers, one assailant, Lt. Colonel Kareem, was captured, along with his equipment, which indicated some sophistication in this type of munition.

Later when we meet with the troops, an MP tells me that 15 members of her company have suffered IED attacks, and several have died. She believes that some may have survived the attack if they had been outfitted with an up-armored Humvee, vehicles in need throughout the country but in short supply.

Sounding a theme that we hear over and over, Colonel Baker tells us that the greatest problem in his sector of Baghdad is the lack of jobs and staggering unemployment. He has used his commander's fund to repair schools and employed local contractors to good effect. But more needs to be done. He is concerned about security, but believes that jobs must go hand-in-hand with security.

The next day, Sunday, September 14, we fly by C-130 to Baghdad and helicopter to Hilla, a city of a half million people in heart of the Shiite region, about 60 kilometers south of the holy city of Najev. As we fly south over the fertile plain between the Tigris and the Euphrates, we see why this is called the "breadbasket" of Iraq. The land is carefully cultivated and laced with irrigation ditches. We see backed-up irrigation and extensive salinity, but maize and other crops are growing over much of the land, and the rest seems laid by. As we pass over, people young and old stop to wave at us.

We land at a base camp where Polish troops have recently taken charge and are met by the Polish commander and the deputy who heads the CPA in this region, Michael Gfoeller, who is fluent in Arab and acts as our interpreter. On the way into Hilla, Gfoeller tells us that the post-war effort is "ours to win and ours to lose." Here in this region of Iraq, half the population lives, and the vast majority are Shia. 70% to 85% of the Shia in this part of the country appreciate what we have done, because they suffered the most under Saddam, but their expectations are high. We must get the economy going or the growing ranks of jobless young men will fall prey to radicals like the Wahabbis who are infiltrating the area. The majority may still appreciate us, says Gfoeller, but a bitter, determined minority of 20% to 25% can ruin the result. If we do not succeed among Shia in the south, we cannot succeed in the country as a whole, and we have a very short window of opportunity. The troublemakers range from old Baathists to Wahabbis and other Islamic fundamentalists, whose strongest presence is in places like Najev and Fallujah.

We come to Hilla, however, to meet with Shia who look upon us as liberators and wish for us to succeed. The first is an iman by the name of Sayyid Farqad al-Qizwini. His "Religious University" is housed in an opulent mosque built by Saddam and spitefully restricted to Sunnis only. After Saddam's fall, Sayyid Farqad boldly moved in, and Gfoeller persuaded the CPA to confirm his rights of possession and recognize his university. He operates an open university with an ecumenical outreach, welcoming Jews, Christians and Muslims.

He begins by thanking us: "You liberated this country from an awful oppression."
(Afterwards we learn that Saddam Hussein had targeted him for assassination by car bomb, and the bomb instead killed his father and brother who chanced to borrow his car.) "I am from an

ancient family, with deep roots among the Shia. Many of my family were killed, murdered or driven into exile.”

"We can learn from you, and you can learn from us. You must plant democracy firmly, and give people here a place in a new society. I want to make this university a center of democratic education for southern Iraq.”

He says that "at least 70% of the people are appreciative of what you have done; they want you here; and they need your help. Thank you for the \$20 billion."

"But safety and security still have not been established in Iraq. Saddam is at large and working through other elements. I hope that you will take this message back to the United States. Saddam was the most destructive man in the world. He destroyed lives here, in Iran, and in your country.

"Saddam destroyed the Iraqi people. Now they are like the French of old who could not imagine France without a king. Saddam collaborated with religious leaders to make sure their people were subservient to him. He was a shield for Osama. Everyone who collaborated with him at a senior level should be tried by an international court. We will be satisfied at nothing less.

"There was no part of our society who did not suffer under Saddam. Saddam collaborated with religious leaders to make sure their people were subservient to him. Anyone for peace was brutally suppressed." He tells how Saddam became angry at his personal physician, and took him to a field where wild dogs were allowed to eat him alive. Once-secret videotapes are being shown

here. "Saddam's lust for violence was insatiable. If you had delayed your attack by just a few months, I am sure my followers and I would be dead."

He says there is a list of 850 Baathists who played a major role in Saddam's regime. He does not believe in the death penalty, but he does not think it should be repealed until these people have been brought to justice.

"All of Iraq should stay firmly under American control," he says. "It was a mistake to give Basra and Nasariya to the British. They are linked too closely to Iran and Saudi Arabia."

"Go to neighboring countries. Tell them to leave Iraq alone!"

Sayyid Farqad is deeply concerned about fractionation of his country. "We could become another Lebanon with a hundred political parties here. I am probably the only cleric not decrying the CPA as an occupation force. Other clerics are beginning to speak the language of separation. They say we need to control our oil. I told the Minister of Religious Affairs, "The country doing more than any to aid Islam is the U.S.""

Gfoeller has obtained funds for the Iman to set up a computer center at the university which is connected to the Internet. Before we leave, the Iman proudly takes us to a large room outfitted with about 25 personal computers. Gfoeller tells us that this project is typical of many the CPA is sponsoring allover this area, but even "mini-projects" like this take time, and the CPA is constrained by a lack of staff. Eight associates work with Gfoeller. In his estimation, several

times that number are needed. Another problem is that the few assigned here from the State Department serve 120-day stints, leaving just when they are developing the relationships they need to be effective. When we meet with General Petraeus the next day in Mosul, we ask about the level of CPA staffing there, and he likewise confirms that the Nineveh Province is critically short of CPA staff.

We leave the Iman and go next to meet Iskandar Witwit, the Governor of Babel Province. Witwit is a descendant of Mohammed, but a businessman, farmer, and soldier, and not a cleric. His family founded the city of Al Hilla some 700 years ago. Witwit was once a Lieutenant General in the Iraqi Army, an air defense commander, but he crossed Saddam Hussein and was imprisoned and tortured twice and about to be imprisoned again when the war started. Thirty-eight members of his family were killed by Saddam, his brother before his own eyes.

Witwit's office is quartered in an old school. Its decorations are so sparse that they include the photo of an earlier congressional delegation. He starts by denouncing Saddam "There is no trace of humanity in the man...Al Hilla has been liberated after 35 years of occupation by a fascist regime. This is a historic city, this is ancient Babylon. But it has been so completely oppressed by Saddam that we do not even have potable water. Our housing looks like ancient ruins." Hilla has not meekly submitted. This city has "presented thousands of martyrs" who have resisted "a corrupt and oppressive regime with no equal in history." Witwit says unemployment is "widespread," and the families who suffer most are those who lost relatives in the 1991 uprising following the Persian Gulf War. He urges us to direct aid to these people, who are destitute.

"We must work hand in hand to build a better future. Consider this province your home, the people who live here your family. I want to turn this department into the white rose of Iraq, but our opponents – the Baathists, Wahabbis, and Iranians – are recruiting."

Asked what the CPA can do for Hilla, he says, "We need electricity to bring business back. We suffer from years of severe neglect. We need jobs, and we have a need for housing." He again singles out the families of those "butchered" in the 1991 uprising. "It is hard to implement democracy among the hungry and homeless."

"We have a desperate need for potable water, a modern water purification system, and medical care. Saddam limited medicare care in this region, concentrating it all in Baghdad."

As desperate as the needs of Babel province may be, Witwit sees potential in agriculture and in tourism because of 1,100 archeological sites dating back to ancient Babylon, and he notes that there are other industries here too, like textiles and building materials.

Witwit accompanies us to the site of mass graves found after the fall of Saddam Hussein. A wealthy Baathist named Muhammad Jawaad Arayfus has been identified as the demon who oversaw the murder of these people. Witwit describes how people were snatched from the street or dragged from their homes in the middle of the night and never seen again. Many were shot, their hands wired behind their backs, some with children in their arms. They were dumped into unmarked graves, and buried in the featureless desert beneath an electric transmission line, next to a Babylonian site not far from Arayfus's home. Arayfus was seized after Saddam fell but taken

elsewhere for interrogation and released by clerical error. He remains at large. Witwit emphasizes that the people will not feel secure until Saddam and sadists like Arayfus are finally brought to justice.

We go from the grave site to a museum dedicated to ancient Babylon, where we meet Brigadier General John Kelly, a Marine assigned to this area, who was formerly legislative liaison to Congress. General Kelly echoes what Gfoeller has already told us: "This region from Karballa down to Nasariya and west to the Jordanian border is critical to us, and Najev and Fallujah are the hot spots. If we do not succeed here, we will not succeed in the country as a whole, and the time for wrapping up support, and preventing the wrong elements from wresting control, is running short."

General Kelly speaks well of the Polish troops and their commander and also of Salvadoran and Honduran troops assigned to this area. The Marines are withdrawing, but given the Army's stretch-out, he believes that Marines will eventually have to come back.

The next day, Monday, September 16, we fly back to Baghdad and go by helicopter to Mosul, where we are met by Lt. General David H. Petraeus, commander of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division, which is charged with pacifying Nineveh Province. There are 6.4 million Iraqis (including Kurds) in his area of operation.

As background, General Petraeus tells us that the 101st fought its way from Kuwait to Mosul by way of Hilla and Karbala. Mosul put up token resistance and then surrendered, sparing

the city any extensive combat damage and allowing the Baathists to stay more or less in place and not flee the area. Petraeus is convinced that Mosul and the surrounding province of Nineveh are the most viable region in Iraq. "Unlike the south, there is no problem in the north that can't be solved with money. We don't need military personnel, but we do need money, a couple of million dollars a week." Out of funds made available to his division, Petraeus has already spent \$23 million setting up 3,100 projects, mostly mini-projects to get the economy on its feet and functioning.

There is a Sunni majority in Nineveh Province, and as a result, the region fared better under Saddam Hussein than the south where Shia are in the majority. There are many Baathists, "a lot of regime loyalists," and approximately 110,000 former members of the Iraqi military. In addition to the Arab majority, there is a mix of other people: Kurds, Turks, Yezidiis, and Shabankas.

The 101st is experiencing three to five hostile contacts a day, attacks that Patraeus describes as "drive-bys" and "improvised explosive devices." Patraeus says that he has "no hard evidence of infiltration from Syria or Iran in large numbers," though several nights ago his troops did stop "a mixed lot of Syrians and Jordanians" armed with RPGs as they crossed the Syrian border.

Petraeus's objective is "to stop the perpetrators of violence with minimum collateral damages." They make 30 to 40 arrests a week, and "we are trying not to create more enemies than we take off the street." He has another concern: "de-Baathification means firing thousands

of individuals; we need to figure out a better way to deal with many of these people."

Repeating a common theme, Petraeus says that his troops are trying hard "to put an Iraqi face on the provincial government, and particularly on its security forces...We are training security forces all day, every day. We have just graduated our third class of police. We have trained hundreds of border guards. We are now protecting 151 sites, 88 with Iraqi forces. ... It makes a big difference."

Petraeus says that human intelligence is "good and getting better," but concedes that they need to "improve interrogation and dissemination of results."

Petraeus calls Mosul a "massive ammunition supply point," and says that there are "boneyards full of captured or abandoned equipment." 1,003 ammunition caches have been located, "four of them huge." 996 of the 1,003 the ammno caches are secured.

As we fly over Mosul, General Petraeus points out that this is not a poor city, and he sees bright prospects for its future. The Tigris River supplies abundant water, and although the land is arid, it is extensively irrigated. Petraeus cites one system that waters 150,000 acres of land. Northwest of Mosul is an area that Petraeus describes as the "Kansas of Iraq," a region that grows huge quantities of grain. In Iraq's statist economy, the government has bought the grain crop in years past, and this year, the U.S. will have to do the same. There are three large cement factories in Nineveh Province, the only three in Iraq that operate full time. There are other successes, to which Petreaus points as we helicopter over the city – a hotel, for example, sold for \$16 million

to an expatriate and put back in operation under new ownership.

Petraeus calls the government here "good--really quite good," and adds that there is a "terrific university," plus good schools and increasing trade because the area borders Syria and Turkey. For instance, exchanges of oil and electric power are developing with Syria and Turkey. Because of a hydro-electric dam on the Tigris in the north of Nineveh, a dam twice the size of Hoover Dam, the province is a net power producer. At full capacity, the hydro-facility can generate 1,000 megawatts of electricity, although it currently produces around 600 to 650 megawatts. But even here where power is plentiful, investment is needed. There is a variation of 20-30 megawatts a day in supply, which creates problems for key facilities like hospitals, police departments, and cement factories, which rely on 24 hours a day of dependable power.

Under the auspices of the 101st Airborne Division, prominent citizens were convened, and a mayor and council selected from among them. The mayor is an expatriate, who lived for some years in Sweden.

Petraeus says morale among his troops is solid. They are not "jumping for joy," but they know the real victory is not won yet. They still have a mission to do, and they are trying to do it well." Many have been to Afghanistan, and now find themselves here. Petraeus believes that they deserve mid-tour leave: two weeks' leave for one year's tour of duty. The 101st has set up Internet cafes and arranged for international telephone service, but the troops we talk to think the service is too limited and too expensive."

Petraeus ends the briefing by saying again that the "northern area of operations has all the armed forces necessary for success, but we need money. Money is ammo, and right now, we are out of ammo. The CPA, on the other hand, have to have more staff, and they can't come and go; they must stay because this work is about relationships." Furthermore, the foreign forces in the country are "not into nation-building to the same extent we are."

We helicopter from headquarters of the 101st, another marble palace built by Saddam, to Kisik, an oil refinery in the desert north of Mosul, just repaired and returned to operation with local help and aid from the engineers of the 101st Airborne Division. The mayor of Mosul, provincial officials, refinery workers, tribal leaders, and a host of others endure the hot sun during a half dozen dedicatory speeches. The civil defense, who guard such facilities, are there in uniform, dark trousers and grey shirts. If there is rancor among anyone, we do not sense it. Everyone seems proud and appreciative and applauds enthusiastically as small vials of diesel fuel are filled from a spigot on a lead pipe and distributed among us. As we leave, four tanker trucks wait to fill up, and the civil defense guards present arms and snap to attention. One wonders if this is a harbinger of what Iraq can become.