

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH WITH MAJOR JOSEPH MUSACCHIA,
CHIEF OF SECURITY FORCES/COMMANDER OF THE 81ST SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON VIA
TELECONFERENCE FROM IRAQ TIME: 9:00 A.M. EDT DATE: FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2009

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PETTY OFFICER WILLIAM SELBY (Office of the Secretary of Defense for
Public Affairs): And, Major Musacchia, we're going to go ahead and get started
now. But, we're going to -- as we're going, I'm sure a few of the other
bloggers will join us. But, we'll just go on from here, and all right here we
go.

And I'd like to welcome you all to the Department of Defense's Bloggers
Roundtable for Friday, April 17, 2009. My name is Petty -- (background noise) -
- oh, there's one.

Did somebody just join us?

Q Jarred Fishman.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay, Jarred, you're third on the line. And this
is Petty Officer Selby. I'm hosting the call today. Petty Officer Selby,
with the Office of Secretary of Defense Public Affairs and I'll be moderating
the call.

A note to the bloggers on the line today, please remember to clearly
state your name and blogger organization in advance of your questions. Respect
our guest's time, keeping questions succinct.

Today our guest is major Joseph A. Musacchia, chief of Security Forces,
commander of the 81st Security Forces Squadron.

And, Major Musacchia, if you have any opening remarks, you can go ahead
with those right now.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Roger that.

I'm Major Joseph Musacchia of the United States Air Force. I'm
currently deployed here to the Iraqi theater of operations in the position as
the deputy director of the special staff for the Ministry of Interior transition
team.

Our responsibilities here are to help mentor the Ministry of Interior's
internal affairs divisions, the inspector general's divisions, and to assist
with the minister of Interior court system's legals branch. We're primarily

responsible for all aspects of the rule of law and the assistance with policy primacy, and to assist in the anticorruption efforts within the ministry.

(Long pause.)

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Still there, sir?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Yes, I am. Any questions?

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay, yes. We'll go ahead and take some questions now.

And Colin (sp), you were first on the line, so if you want to go ahead.

Q 'Morning, sir.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: 'Morning.

Q You guys, I would think, right now are doing probably the, let's say the second most important job in Iraq -- one that the folks in Afghanistan are certainly looking closely at for answers, what are you finding have been the most helpful approaches to win Iraqi trust -- (background noise) -- in your efforts?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: That's a very good question.

There's been several things that we've been working on, as far as developing the trust of the Iraqi people. We understand that in the Ministry of Interior, that when it comes to the level of the assessment of the Iraqi police force, and the people responsible for law enforcement, it has a direct correlation between the reduction in the people's fear of crime and their trust and their confidence.

So, what we've been doing is we've been working with the Ministry of Interior, especially in the three branches that we're primarily responsible for, to teach them various sets of skills that would be important for them to develop that level of trust and confidence. For example, we've instituted various courses in the inspector general's office and in the Interior Affairs office where we're teaching everyone on the basic level, to where everyone goes through various introductory courses.

The things that permeate these courses is police ethics. And, in addition to police ethics, is various blocks of study that focus on anticorruption initiatives. So, in essence, we're trying to build the foundation of the future of these organizations that will lead the Iraqi nation into the next couple of years, and hopefully be something that (be)comes a social norm, so to speak, for the Iraqi nation well into the future.

Now, that's where we're starting, but there's actually other things that we're working right now to address the levels of anticorruption that currently exist within the society. And the things that we're doing is -- the adage that we like to say is that "you don't know where you're going until you can first see where you are, and see where you've been." So, we're actually introducing various aspects of knowledge, and criminological study and analysis to where they can take a look at what levels of corruption currently exist within the MOI, and then trying to teach them various ways that they can then address it.

And by looking at the various problems that they have, then we are teaching them the capability to target those specific areas. And through a (deterrent ?) effort, of seeing true enforcement of the internal Security Force penal code, it's also developing the trust of the Iraqi people.

Q A quick follow on that, are you ceding your lessons across to colleagues in Afghanistan?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: We're not -- (inaudible) --

Q I know the -- I know the situations aren't exactly parallel, but.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: You are correct. But, I see your point and I concur with what you're trying to say. Because, the fact of the matter is, is that although they are separate countries, these are cultures that are bound by certain levels of social norms and mores. We haven't been addressing with those people directly, but we have been working in close conjunction with various other people throughout this theater of operation. We work frequently with the Ministry of Defense. We also work frequently with the U.S. embassy and the Department of State.

We actually have anticorruption committee meetings that we get together. And we often get to discuss the various different projects that we're working on, particularly with MOI, and share that knowledge and experience across the board.

But, to answer your question in a short, with our friends in Afghanistan, no, we haven't gotten that far yet.

Q Okay, thanks.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And, Jarred, if you want to go on with your questions.

Did somebody else join us while we're -- ?

Q Hi, this is Captain Dave Faggard, from Air Force Public Affairs.

How are you?

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Good, sir.

Q Good.

Q And I'm Beth Wilson, from Homefront in Focus.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay. And, Beth, you are third on the line.

So, Jarred, if you want to go ahead with your question.

Q Thanks for your time, sir. And it's good to have another Air Force person on. I get promoted to captain in three days, so --

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Outstanding. Hoo-ah. Air power.

Q Yeah, thank you.

We normally have Army people, so I'm interested to see, what's your impression on the ground -- you know, aside from the theoretical and the philosophical about what we're talking about, but in your day-to-day existence, when you meet with the Iraqis in either the Ministry of Defense or in Interior, what are your impressions about what you've been seeing in the last several months and weeks? And just tell us, kind of a bird's eye view -- back over here in the States, as to what it's like, actually, on the ground?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Okay. Two things I'd like to answer in that respect.

The comment that you made originally, about you mostly see Army people on the ground over here, I'd like to follow that up because I'd like to promote the fact that we actually have several members of the United States Air Force Security Forces that are involved with this mentoring process. We have several that are here within the MOI, and we also have some that are on the DoIA staff.

And we're actually working on a joint project right now with a captain who is a Security Forces officer, but is actually being deployed as an instructor in Air University, and he's actually bringing some of the problem-solving skills that we teach in our professional military education, that we're training the Iraqis on to help them with basic analytical understandings of how to address various different kind of crimes. So, the United States Air Force is definitely here in the fight, and the Security Forces are here in the fight to address the aspects that we need to develop the police force for the nation.

To answer your question directly, my impression is that right now in the MOIs you have a group of people -- particularly, when I speak of the people I deal with directly, the internal affairs, the inspector general, the legal offices of the MOI, cassation courts -- is that you have a group of people who truly, truly want to make this a better country. We see a lot of young people; we see a lot of enthusiastic people. I hear this almost every day, the comments that are made is that "We don't want you to do this for us. We want you to teach us. We want you to show us how we can do this, and how we can do this on our own so we can make this a better country." And that's what our focus has been.

As we all know, under the presidential directive, we will be slowly fading out. And our intent is to teach them how to fish at this particular point. We're looking at them from the strategic level. We're trying to teach them the strategic concepts but, more importantly, the "headquarters" strategic skills that they need, to implement the types of processes they need, to adjust to the various threats when it comes to anticorruption.

One of the things that we've been working on in the Internal Affairs office, and it has been very productive thus far, and it is in the genesis phase, is that we're trying to teach them how to work with what is called "intelligence-based operations." This is something that's actually a modification from what the Air Force Security Forces refer to as our "integrated base defense concept," to where we use the intelligence that we've collected from previous activities, and the current intelligence that we receive, to help drive our operations into the future with the very limited resources we have.

When I brought this information to the inspector general, Major General Taha, he said, "I want you to advise us, but I want you to train us." And I gave him this idea -- and it received the full support of the Coalition, when I

told him, I said, General, I said, I don't want to teach your colonels. I said, I don't want to teach the older people here. There's a few people that worked in the headquarters elements, they're the best and the brightest. They're the young men that graduate in the top of the class out of the Baghdad Police College and have kind of risen up. They're the DGs.

And I told him, I said, I want you to create what we call the "committee of the youth." I want you to bring in your young people. I said, these are the people we want to teach. These are the people that you see the fire in their eyes, you see the desire. I hate to use a pop culture term, but this is the "youth of the nation." These are the young men who want to bring Iraq forward, and these are the people that we're mentoring, these are the people we're teaching, these are the people that we're instructing and providing them with the skill set and a knowledge that they can take into the future.

So, you see a great desire on the part of these people to make their country better. You see them wanting to create a transparency in their government, to show that they are fair, that they're balanced, that they are not corrupt, that they are ethically driven. So, I see nothing but positive in my encounters. I have yet to see a situation where it is a negative connotation in any way.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: I hope that answers your question.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And, Beth, you're next. (Long pause.) Beth?

Q Sorry, just had a fight with a mute button.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: That's all right.

Q (Laughs.) Good morning, sir. Thank you for taking your time to be with us this morning.

Can you give us any anecdotal incidents, or stories of something that took you by surprise in a positive way -- you know, exceeding expectations? Or, were you surprised that this is the attitude that you've encountered, that they don't want it to be done for them, they want to learn and be able to "walk on their own," as we would say? I'm thrilled to hear that this is the mind-set. That's outstanding.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Yes. And that's one of the things that -- it didn't necessarily take me by surprise, but it definitely restored my level of hope. Because, like I said, I went and I started talking to the younger people. I started talking to the people at the mid-level management areas. Because, we, in this particular position that I operate -- I work with, and I advise a person who's a major-general equivalent. And I often talk to him, of course, with the level of respect due to his rank and position, and I tell him, who do you want me to go talk to? Who do you want me to go help? Who do you want me to help guide?

And he sends me out to these people -- and that happens from both the inspector general, that happens from both the Internal Affairs, and from the legal offices, and it's gotten me the opportunity to actually work with these people. And some of the anecdotal evidence that you're talking about is, we've

often gone up, and I've said, okay, we really need to start examining what's been happening here.

We need to -- we need to stop lumping all of your activities into one general area. And I said, we need to start stratifying. And I'm trying to explain (into ?) that, of what's the really bad cases, what are the bad cases, and what are the not-so-bad cases? And I've turned around, and they've come back the next day with statistics that have just blown my mind.

They've done this. They're out there. They're gathering it. They're trying to understand it. And it's one of those situations where they have it. What they need is just the knowledge to do something with it. And every time that I talk to them they're like, "Listen, this is great, but I don't want something that's going to die. I want something that will go on and on. I want something that we can build on." And this is the things that they're saying to me.

They've brought stuff to our attention -- totally unsolicited, and they've said, "We've noticed this, and we would like you to look at it. What do you think?" And then they give it to us, and then I've taken it back and we've analyzed it, and we've looked at, and we've brought it back and we said, here, this is what we've come up with. But, before we give it to them we'll say, what do you say? Tell me what you see in this analysis. And we walk through it.

And I hate to use a cliché, but you see the lightbulb go off. They're trying. They're making the effort. They're making the effort.

The analogy that I like to use -- and it isn't a tangible evidence, but I've said it many times, is that in America there was recently -- there was an article that was written in the early- to mid-'80s, and it was an article that analyzed the American law enforcement system into essentially three areas, and I apologize for not being able to quote the author off the top of my head.

But, he said that American police -- (inaudible) -- has been divided into essentially three eras: And the first era of that policing was the political era; and the second era of that policing -- which ended in about the 1920s, and it went from the upper 1920s to the 1960s or '70s, was an era of policing that was called "professionalism." And then from about the 1970s until now, we've been in what we consider the "modern" era of policing.

My analogy is that the Iraqis are still in that political era of policing. But, they're trying. They're trying to move forward. They're trying to get to that point to where they can make up a gap of almost 100 years of police evolving. You know, they can't go from Barney Fife to CHIPS overnight.

Q Correct.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: And they're getting to that point. And they're making that effort because they see the rest of the world -- the thing that I predominantly hear every day, "I want modern techniques. I want to do things the modern way." They want to move into the international community and they want to be accepted as a nation with a capability equal to the rest of the modern world.

Q Outstanding. Could I ask a --

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Hopefully, that answers your question.

Q Could I just ask two quick follow-ons?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Sure. I'd be happy to.

Q How long have -- sir, how long have you been in-country, just (as ?) background?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: I've been in-country about two-and-a-half months now.
Q Super. Thank you so much.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: You're welcome.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay, and did anybody else have any questions -- Tech Sergeant Randolph, or -- ?

Q Yeah.

Q Yes. I'm sorry.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Who was that -- I'm sorry?

Q This is Tech Sergeant Randolph, from Air Force blog, sir.

I just have a quick question. If you can give maybe a specific -- an example of a specific issue or event, and you're actual feedback, or the assistance that your office provided to help the Iraqi police force resolve that issue?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Sure. I'd be happy to.

One of the things, as you know, is that we often address the anticorruption, which is one of the things that we try -- we're trying to develop that trust of the community. So, one of the things that we look at is, is they look at all of the discipline that they've administered to the police for various acts that they have transgressed; so, what we're looking at is we're trying to teach them right now to look at what we would call, in the American system, a felony, a misdemeanor or an administrative punishment.

And, to break it down into our beloved United States Air Force terms, what's going to get you court-martialed, and what's an Article 15, and what's an LOR? What are those breaks? They had everything lumped into one general category. They would say, "Well, we've got the stats of everyone who's doing (sic) disciplined, and look, we're disciplining more people." And I've tried to explain to them, I said, well, what we need to do is that we need to examine what you've been disciplining them for -- you know, what have they done?

There was also a recent article -- an article that was written awhile back, and it said that in police corruption -- once again, I apologize for not being able to quote the article, is that police corruption in the United States was once divided into two categories: They called people "the meat eaters" or "the grass eaters." And what they said was, the grass eaters were the police officers who would accept the free donut and cup of coffee at the donut shop.

They were the people that -- where you would go in and you'd get a lunch, and they'd come with the bill, and the owner would say, no, I'm not going to take your money, and they'd accept a free lunch. For all practical

applications, that's corruption; you know, that goes against office policy; but, you know, it happened. Those are people we'll call the "grass eaters" -- the people who weren't actively going out trying to pursue a corrupt position because of their rank or stature.

The "meat eaters" were the people who actually aggressively went out and sought out bribes -- the people who were shaking down people, the people who were actively out there trying to make additional money off of their position and rank. We're trying to teach them how you can break it down.

Now, the reason we're doing that is because then we'll be able to figure out, okay, are the really bad crimes on the decline, or the administrative declines (sic) on the rise? Because, if the administrative disciplines are on the rise, that means that you all are trying getting stringent upon the conduct that you expect of the lower ranking police officers. Are you making them wear their uniform the way they're supposed to wear their uniform? Are you making them, you know, conduct themselves -- (inaudible) --?

If you see a rise in that type of discipline, then that shows an indication that you're really sticking to the rules. You're letting them know that there is no rule that should not be followed. If you see a decline, a steady decline, as we've been applying this discipline, over the major infractions, then apparently the message is getting across, that if you do this, you will be disciplined.

So, we're trying to teach them that you need to analyze the situation to where you're stratifying it into different categories. And, as a result of that study, then you can truly show progress, not just lumping it all together.

Q Do you have indicators yet, one way or the other?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: We're getting there.

Q Okay.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: We're getting there. We're working that issue with them right now. But, like I've told them, and we've discussed with our staff, "the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." And we are teaching them how to do this.

These people, although they have a spirit and they have a desire to do well, and they truly want to try, is we have to begin at the basics. We have to teach them basic statistical analysis because they've never really had to do this in police work. They've done rudimentary statistic analysis. They've done -- "we've had x-amount of happened this month." But, they really haven't looked into it. They really haven't explored true criminal statistics.

And we're getting there. We're teaching them, and they're catching on. And they're getting it; and they're starting to stratify; and they're starting to make progress. And then once we get there, we'll really be able to analyze this and be able to give some good data to them, and with that, things that Dave created.

Another beautiful example that I'll give to you -- that is something that they've done nothing but show pride and ownership in, and this is a tangible effort, is in the inspector general's office, human rights falls under the inspector general. So, any type of human rights violation that occurs in

any of the detention facilities, or if anyone is a missing person, or someone they believe is in a detention facility, or they can't find somebody, or any kind of complaint, they'll go through the human rights department.

Well, when we first started becoming involved with these folks, they have people who come once a week and they can bring their complaints to the minister. They would be equivalent to anyone in the United States being able to show up on a Tuesday and talk to the secretary of Homeland Security. That's what we have here. And people come from all around, and they go through various triage stations to where they're vetted, to where these issues can be brought up to the inspector general himself, or eventually the minister, if necessary, but most of the time they'll make it to the inspector general. The "missing persons" people, we were actually able to follow a Mr. Mike Cayman (sp) -- has come over here, and he's the person who works with our human rights, and he's done a phenomenal job -- and he and I worked on a situation together where we were helping this one particular case, where we went down to the triage station and we saw a mother who was very distraught. Her son had been missing for quite some time. She had a photograph of the young man, and she saw us, as Coalition, and naturally came to us requesting help, knowing that we could help her.

We followed her through, when she eventually got through the process. And we saw again, when we were meeting with the person who was in charge of missing persons -- it was a colonel in the human rights division, and we asked him, we said, well, what do you do in the process? "Well," he said, "well, we take down the information right here and we put it in this book."

And we're like, so you have it all written in a book? And they're, like, "Yes. That's how we track it." And we said, well, then what do you do? And he said, "Well, we check our database." And we said, well, do you check other databases? Do you check the other databases here, here and here?

And what we were finding is that they weren't getting the information that they needed from the people, to cross-reference the other databases throughout the nation of Iraq, or even to assist with the Coalition. So, step-one was, we were like, well, you might want to ask these questions from these people; and you might want to actually -- you know, all of these people, I would say 90 percent of them, come holding a picture.

And I was, like, do you take the picture? And they were, like, "Well, no." Well, right here is a scanner and a computer. Step-one is, how about we scan the pictures; and how about we take this ledger and we transfer it to a database on the computer? And we can teach you how to build this. We won't build it for you, but we'll teach you.

Oh, my goodness. They took such pride and ownership in that, it wasn't even funny. And within a matter of two weeks it was something that they built, and they were proud of it. And they were doing something that was modern, and it was advanced, and it was able to capture the technology that was being -- you know, that they purchased with their money, that they were able to make something that was more productive to help the people of Iraq.

And, as a result of that, it's done nothing but grow and grow and grow, and the capabilities have increased to where we really think that we're getting close to the point to where we could actually start to locate some of these people.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay, thank you, sir.

And we have time for maybe one more question, and then we're going to do some closing comments. So, --

Q Hey, Major, this is Captain Dave Faggard. How are you doing?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: I'm doing great, Captain. How are you?

Q Good. Long time, no talk to you.

Hey, I'm working with the Air Force PA now, and I've got one question for the internal audience. How has this assignment tested you from the leadership side, the PME textbook side, and what could you offer for future officers that are getting ready to go out? Because I know there are a lot more Air Force officers going in traditional -- or in non-traditional training of Afghanis' and Iraqis' roles. Is there anything you can offer, from an on-the-ground perspective?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Yes, without a shadow of a doubt.

I'll be the first to admit this -- and it may sound like I'm towing the party line, but I truly believe in what I'm saying, I have learned and applied more of my Air Force Squadron Officer School and my Air Force Air Command and Staff College training in this assignment, and in my -- and not only in CONUS, but here, that if you truly take what the United States Air Force teaches you in their professional military education, you embrace it, you internalize it, it is something that you can use, without a shadow of a doubt, in any assignment, but in particular here.

And the one that I can tell you right now, off the top of my head, that -- you've gone to Squadron Officer's School, right?

Q Yes.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: Okay, APTEC. What they teach you with APTEC is something that I use daily, and it's something that we're teaching the Iraqis, is: You've got a problem. How are you going to fix it? And a lot of times, just knowing where to start is the best thing. And the things that you've learned in the APTEC application to problem-solving, which is what the United States Air Force teaches our officers, is something that I use consistently here, and it has been a saving grace for me in more ways than one.

And the knowledge that I have learned in my professional military education, throughout my years in the United States Air Force, has assisted me in practically every endeavor -- from the lessons learned from the past, from the teachings of the (Udahloop ?), to the teachings of the Concentric Zone Models, to the teachings of how to go after the center of gravity. Because when you're talking about a center of gravity, and when you talk about (war ?), and when you talk about (void ?), it isn't just in an air war. It is something that can be applied in almost every mission that the United States Air Force and the United States military could put us in in in any situation.

When I go up to these people, I teach them. We've got a problem. First thing we're going to do is we're going to apply the APTEC model and we're going to look at it. Okay, now that you've got it analyzed, now we've figured it out, now we're going to develop a plan.

And you know what we're going to do in that analysis? We're going to find out what your center of gravity is. We're going to find out where, where you have to go to get the biggest bang for your buck. And when you hit that, that's when you're going to find out exactly what you need to do to take this problem out at its knees.

And, more to the point, once we figure all this out, then we're going to try to bust the enemy's (Udahloop ?). We're going to figure out how we can take the precious resources we have; and how we can go after that particular problem that we're having in a proactive manner -- not in a reactive manner, and get to them before they get to us.

And that's what I've been taught as a Security Forces officer. They're the teachings of integrated defense, to where we get to the enemy before the enemy gets to us, before he can render us harm. And that's something that we're teaching the Iraqis here: How can we stop the corruption before it starts?

You start with the basic teachings of the foundations that you need to understand the essential morals, ethics and mores of the society, that what is happening here is wrong. And then, for the problems that currently exist, how do we bust that (Udahloop ?)? How do we get in there, and through our proactive efforts, stop it before the problem starts?

So, I could talk to you for the next three hours about that. Without a shadow of a doubt, my professional military education has assisted me in more ways than one when it comes to the execution of the mission in this theater.

Q Thanks -- thank you. Stay safe. PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And, we've had some great questions and comments today.

Sir, do you have any final comments that you'd like to make?

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: The only thing that I have to -- for final comments, that I'd like to say, is that I feel that we have made extremely large strides here in this theater. And the equation that I'd like to say is, I've told my team -- and we understand, that we're in the fourth quarter of the game, we're perfectly cognizant of that fact -- we're making that stride to where we can set this country up to be successful, and we're making that final push.

They're there. The desire is there. It's our job there to capture that desire, to channel that effort, and to teach them the essential skills and tools they need to be a successful nation in the modern world. And I believe in my heart of hearts that the people are here who want that to happen and they want to learn, and we're willing to teach them.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay, sir. And thank you very much.

Today's program will be available on-line at the Bloggers link on dod.mil, where you'll be able to access the story based on today's call, along with source documents such as their bios, this audio file, and print transcripts.

Again, thank you, gentlemen, and our bloggers and participants.

Thank you, again, sir. Have as good day.

MAJOR MUSACCHIA: No problem. Have a good night.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Bye-bye.

END.