



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

HEADQUARTERS
MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS – IRAQ
BAGHDAD, IRAQ
APO AE 09342

Counterinsurgency Guidance

We have entered a critical period in the war for Iraq. Together, Coalition and Iraqi forces must work with a sense of urgency to protect the Iraqi populace. Between now and the end of 2007, we must reduce the level of violence and provide a more secure environment, creating time and space for the Government of Iraq to make progress toward the long-term goals it shares with the Coalition. Our efforts will allow Iraqi leaders to seize perhaps the last opportunity they have to make visible, definitive strides toward national reconciliation and sustainable security. At the strategic level, the fight in many ways belongs to the Iraqis. Those in power must tackle the tough political issues that, once addressed, may lead to a stable and ultimately self-reliant Iraq. There is nothing easy about the challenges they face. What is certain, though, is that the delicate tasks of building governmental capacity and gaining the confidence of the people will not be accomplished in an environment characterized by chaos, violence, and fear.

This is where you come in. In this complex conflict, there are plenty of problems beyond your capability to solve. A lasting solution in Iraq will be a political one, subscribed to and brokered by the Iraqis. Nevertheless, achieving this strategic goal won't be possible without those of you walking point in the counterinsurgency fight. We must secure the population. This is our focus. It is the clearest, most visible demonstration of excellence in the practice of counterinsurgency. Your actions at the tactical level resonate throughout the communities you protect and are amplified beyond – shaping how audiences across the world perceive the state of progress in Iraq. What you do, how you do it, and how people view it – everyday – matters.

To secure the Iraqi people, we must coordinate our actions closely with each other, as well as with our Iraqi partners. For this reason, I am issuing counterinsurgency guidance for all forces operating in Iraq. What follows is not a complete list of “how-to-do-COIN.” Instead, these ten points lay out key, mutually reinforcing principles that I expect you to think through, talk about, and operationalize based on the unique challenges that define your operational environment.

1. Secure the people where they sleep. Population security is our primary mission, one that will take time, and one we must carry out deliberately. Most extra-judicial killings occur at night and in people's homes, while most spectacular terrorist attacks occur during the day, where people shop, work, and play. These key areas must be secured. Once secured, they cannot be abandoned – or else the enemy will return to kill or intimidate those citizens who may have supported us. If that happens, we will have gained nothing for our efforts. Instead, we seek to control and retain the areas we clear, maintaining a persistent, “24/7” forward presence among the population through Joint Security Stations, Coalition outposts, and active patrolling – day and night. Of course, improvements in security cannot be sustained without the training and integration of Iraqi Security Forces, particularly police recruited from the local area. I know we can't be everywhere. Assess your AO and identify priority areas. Work to secure them first, and then expand deliberately into other areas.

2. Give the people justice and honor. Iraqis value justice and honor. In the counterinsurgency fight, we want the hands that bring security to be the hands that help bring justice and honor as well. In this complex ethno-sectarian struggle, strive to act justly and be the “honest broker.” As a rule, treat Iraqis with genuine dignity and respect so as to earn their trust. Deal with complaints and abuses quickly and

publicly; never walk away from a local citizen who believes he or she has been treated unjustly. Whenever possible, help Iraqis to retain or regain their honor. Whenever possible, work to bring justice in a timely – but not arbitrary – way.

3. Integrate civilian and military efforts – this is an interagency, combined arms fight. Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams now operate directly alongside many military units, bringing cultural, political, and economic expertise to the tactical commander’s overall counterinsurgency effort. PRTs possess unique skills and savvy to conduct extended engagement with community leaders. To exploit their capabilities, we must purposely synchronize efforts to improve local security with initiatives aimed at making progress in governance and economic development. This requires fully integrating our civilian partners into all aspects of our operations – from inception through execution. Close working relationships, mutual respect, and personal interaction between BCT/RCT commanders and PRT Team Leaders are critical to achieving “interagency combined arms.”

4. Get out and walk – move mounted, work dismounted. Vehicles like the up-armored HMMWV limit our situational awareness and insulate us from the Iraqi people we intend to secure. They also make us predictable, often obliging us to move slowly on established routes. These vehicles offer protection, but they do so at the cost of a great deal of effectiveness. HMMWVs are necessary for traveling to a patrol area, conducting overwatch, and maintaining communications. But they are not squad cars. Stop by, don’t drive by. Patrol on foot to gain and maintain contact with the population and the enemy. That’s the only way to dominate urban terrain.

5. We are in a fight for intelligence – all the time. Intelligence is not a “product” provided by higher headquarters, but something we gather ourselves through our own operations. Tactical reporting, from civilian and military agencies, is essential: there are thousands of eyes in your area – all must act as scouts, knowing what to look for and ready to report it. Units should deploy analytical capacity as far forward as possible, so that the analyst is close to the commander he supports. Our presence in communities could lead to a flood of unsolicited tips about the enemy. In some cases, units must create opportunities for the local population to provide intelligence. As you build trust with the people, be prepared to receive information. Leaders and staffs must learn how to sort through reports, separating the plausible from the fictitious, combining multiple forms of intelligence, and finally recognizing “breaks” into the enemy network. Once you find a break, exploit it for all it’s worth. Most actionable intelligence will come from locally produced HUMINT, tactical reporting, follow-up of IED and sniper attacks, detainee interrogations, and SIGINT. Work with what you have.

6. Every unit must advise their ISF partners. Developing a capable, credible ISF remains central to establishing sustainable security, and partnership is the key to this effort. In a partnered relationship, Coalition and Iraqi units live, work, and fight together in a combined effort to protect the population. Using a teach-coach-mentor approach, partnered units – together with transition teams – enforce ISF standards, enable performance, and monitor for abuses and inefficiencies. Although we establish partnerships with Iraqi units facing the toughest security situations, we must recognize that any Coalition unit working with ISF will be studied and emulated – for better or worse. We are shoulder-to-shoulder with the Iraqis throughout the battlespace. Thus, we must always set the example – regardless of whether the relationship is habitual or not.

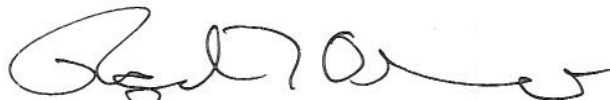
7. Include ISF in your operations at the lowest possible level. When it comes to language capacity, cultural awareness, and a having a “feel” for what is normal in the local environment, Coalition forces are at a natural disadvantage. In contrast, ISF units possess all these abilities but lack our combat power. Working together with the ISF and the local populace, we are a quite powerful combination; working unilaterally, we can be defeated piecemeal. Thus, units should operate with an ISF presence at the lowest practical level – probably at squad- or platoon-level. Moreover, we must move beyond ad hoc

arrangements, striving to give combined operations true synergy. Operate as cohesive teams with the Iraqis – from planning through execution.

8. Look beyond the IED – get the network that placed it. Every IED provides a window into the network that placed it. If properly exploited, this window can be used to damage and “roll up” that network, ultimately defeating the threat. Units must look beyond the actual IED site to detect early-warning observation posts, firing and assembly points, and infiltration/exfiltration routes. Commanders should map IED patterns and use friendly convoy movement to trigger enemy action, having first pre-positioned SIGINT and reconnaissance assets to identify IED teams moving into position, and to listen for communications between OPs and firing teams. Lastly, use UAVs to trace enemy firing teams back to caches and assembly areas. Units that adopt a proactive, creative approach that synchronizes all available reconnaissance and surveillance systems will degrade IED networks in their area and thus protect the force.

9. Be first with the truth. Since Soldier actions speak louder than what PAOs say, we must be mindful of the impact our daily interactions with Iraqis have on global audiences via the news media. Commanders should communicate key messages down to the individual level, but, in general, leaders and Soldiers should be able to tell their stories unconstrained by overly prescriptive themes. When communicating, speed is critical – minutes and hours matter – and we should remember to communicate to local (Arabic/Iraqi) audiences first – U.S./global audiences can follow. Tell the truth, stay in your lane, and get the message out fast. Be forthright and never allow enemy lies to stand unchallenged. Demand accuracy, adequate context, and proper characterization from the media.

10. Make the people choose. Some in the Iraqi civilian population want to “sit on the fence” and avoid having to choose between the insurgents and the government. We must get the Iraqi populace off the fence – and on the side of the GOI. Having done this, we must make this choice a binding one by having citizens declare their allegiance in some demonstrable way. It is true that, in the eyes of many Iraqis, this government has little appeal and seems to offer no promise. Because of this, leaders must find creative means to apply leverage and influence this choice. Concentrate on getting Iraqis to choose to be part of the solution at the local level. Be their advocate as the Coalition works with the GOI to improve its responsiveness and capacity. Above all, protect the people who – for whatever reason – have made the irrevocable choice. Iraqis exercise choice collectively, not just individually; win over local leaders to encourage the community to shift to the side of the new Iraq.



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