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**Presenter: Commander, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, December 15, 2006 9:00 AM EST  
Col. David Sutherland**

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**DoD News Briefing with Col. Sutherland from Iraq**

BRYAN WHITMAN (Pentagon spokesman): (In progress) -- again welcome you and thank Colonel David Sutherland, who is the commander of 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. His brigade recently began operating in Multinational Division-North area of operations. He's speaking to us today from Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Baqubah. And as is our tradition here, he's going to give us a brief overview of what his unit has been doing and then take a few of your questions.

So Colonel, with that, let me turn it over to you.

COL. SUTHERLAND: Thank you very much. And as I was introduced, I'm Colonel Dave Sutherland, commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat, 1st Cavalry Division. The Grey Wolf Brigade has been responsible for the Diyala province for seven weeks. And since our mission assumption on November 3rd, since then we have partnered with the 5th Iraqi Army Division, trained with the Iraqi police and assisted the government of Diyala to improve safety and security across the province.

Our focus is twofold. First and foremost, our mission is to conduct counterinsurgency operations to assist the Iraqi security forces in defeating the enemy. Second, we are conducting stability and reconstruction operations to help the people of Iraq build a new life and a stable and secure environment. We are working hand in hand with the Iraqi army and the Iraqi police force to achieve these goals. This is a cooperative relationship. Coalition forces provide assistance and planning, logistics and operations, but increasingly, it is the Iraqi security forces that are in the lead.

Let me give you a brief orientation to the area and the people of Diyala before we go into details about the enemy we face.

Diyala is a province about as large as the state of Maryland. It covers approximately 30,000 square miles. Diyala has 13 cities ranging in size from 10,000 people to the largest at about 300,000 people in the provincial capital of Baqubah.

There are two major rivers running through our area, the Tigris and the Diyala River, and one large lake that's to the northern part of the region. These bodies of water are critical to the largely agricultural economy of the province. Diyala maintains a 170- mile- long border with Iran. This border is secured by a brigade of 1,390

soldiers from the Department of Border Enforcement and includes a formal port of entry and a number of traditional, informal trade routes through the province. Baqubah, the capital of Diyala, is located approximately 25 miles to the northeast of Baghdad.

Diyala has approximately 1.5 million people; 55 percent are Sunni, 30 percent are Shi'a and 15 percent are Kurd. This statistic is deceiving, as each city has an ethnically diverse population. Unique to Diyala is that we have 25 major tribes with over 100 subtribes in the province.

Agriculture is the main industry in the province. Diyala has had a good date harvest. Last year, it was up 75 percent from the year before, and the rice harvest this year was up 50 percent from last year.

Diyala's diversity is reflected in its government. The provincial governor is a Shi'a, while the deputy governor and one of the two assistant governors are Sunni, and the second assistant governor is of Kurdish descent. The provincial council, Diyala's legislative branch, is split with 20 Shi'a, 14 Sunni and seven Kurdish members. This means that politics are alive and well in Diyala, as each bloc must compromise and cooperate to accomplish its work.

Markets are open in Baqubah. There are stalls of fresh vegetables and meat. The government is at work and going about the business of the province. I attend a variety of security and governance meetings weekly, while my officers attend similar meetings at all levels of the government. I attend weekly tribal conferences in towns such as Muqdadiyah, where as many as 70 sheikhs from across the province discuss their issues and ways to incorporate their traditional sources of power into the government's activities. Governor Ra'ad is ultimately involved in this -- intimately involved in this process. He attended a tribal conference in Baghdad just this week and is actively trying to engage the various groups and political process. This sort of initiative is critical to the long-term stability of the province.

I want to shift gears now and talk to you a bit about our problem set.

Many recent reports have made it seem that Diyala is a haven for terrorism, one so violent that people are afraid to go out of their homes. The reality is something different. Though there have been -- and I repeat, have been -- numerous incidents of violence, the government has not shut down, the security forces are standing their posts, and people walk the streets.

Diyala is a convergence of ideals, political, religious and tribal. It is often referred to as "Little Iraq" because of its diversity. Public perceptions of corruption, inequity and fear are the driving force behind support to terrorist organizations. These are not new problems in Iraq, but problems that developed out of a desire for personal and financial gain. This desire is born from years of oppression under the former regime.

Some political groups and tribal leaders are turning to terrorists and insurgent organizations for protection. This sort of unity only worsens the sectarian divide and encourages further violence. The key to security is separating the insurgents from the terrorists, and bringing the insurgents into the political process while defeating the terrorists with intelligence-driven operations. As the Iraqi army increases the pressure on the terrorists, their reaction has been to incite sectarian violence to discredit the government and the coalition. They will ultimately fail.

It is important to remember that despite the positive trends I have noted, there is still violence in Diyala. In June of this year, Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, was killed in the town of Hibhib, just five miles from where I'm talking to you now. Diyala was an important part of the caliphate, or fundamentalist Islamic state, that he declared in Iraq. As such, the province is a natural draw for al Qaeda, but also for other terrorist and insurgent organizations such as Ansar al-Sunna, the 1920s Revolutionary Brigade and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Diyala is the forefront of the battle with the terrorists. However, it does not mean that they have won the

battle here; in fact, far from it. The enemy is trying to disrupt progress and derail democracy in this province. They are doing this through the use of IEDs, snipers, kidnappings, and less violent but no less effective methods such as phone threats, posters and graffiti. They are targeting Iraqi soldiers and police stations, but they are also targeting schoolteachers, bank tellers, government officials, hospitals and mosques.

The Iraqi people are responding with great courage. I sat on a checkpoint with a small squad of Iraqi policemen under small-arms fire the other day.

These men were low on ammunition, food and water, but they did not break. They stood their post, stood their post diligently. Just last week, a terrorist detonated a car bomb in front of the hospital in Khalis, again about four miles from where I'm talking to you. Three civilians were killed and four wounded. The hospital is still providing care to the people of Khalis and were doing so the very next day.

The soldiers of the Grey Wolf Combat Team are equipped with the latest in armor, weapons and sensors to ensure that they remain the best-equipped army in the world. Training never stops. We continue to build upon the base of knowledge we developed at home in Fort Hood because this environment is continually changing. Enemy tactics evolve, political dynamics shift, and the skills of the allies improves.

Since assuming authority of the province, we have conducted 24 named, deliberate operations and over 2,845 combat patrols, most of which were conducted with Iraqi soldiers and policemen. Our soldiers are coordinating over 290 projects to improve the infrastructure and economy of this region. In short, they are making a difference, and they are making a difference in this province every day.

The Iraqi security forces are working to develop new tactics that emphasize narrowly focused and evidence-based operations to defeat terrorist networks. The Grey Wolf Brigade continues to work with the Iraqi army and police to improve their training, intelligence, logistics and command skills in order to enable these tactics.

In Baqubah, for example, the Iraqi police are going through a pilot training program that emphasizes marksmanship, police skills, explosives recognition, and the values and ethics of a professional force. We are dedicated to helping the Iraqi security forces become a professional force that treats people with respect and enforces the rule of law, a force that is non-sectarian, professional and devoted to the safety and security of all Iraqis in the province.

This is a dynamic period to be in Diyala, full of opportunities to improve the quality of life for the people of this province. The efforts of our combined patrols on the streets of these cities are only half the story. We are working closely with the Department of State's Provincial Reconstruction Team and the government of Diyala to rebuild the infrastructure that has suffered greatly from decades of neglect and strengthen the governmental institutions that have decayed from misuse.

Developing a democratic ethos in a land that has lived in an autocratic society for generations is not easy and it takes time. However, these men and women are working every day to train today's leaders in how to be good representatives working on behalf of their people.

Before I turn this over to you for your questions, I want to thank you for this opportunity. I say it every day along with my command sergeant major, Command Sergeant Major Felt, there is greatness in our formations. The soldiers of this team are working daily with the brave men of the Iraqi police and the army to ensure a better life for the Iraqi people. They continue to show confidence in their mission, competence in their skills and discipline to do what is right when no one is looking.

It is an honor to serve with these men and women, and I am confident we will accomplish the mission that lies ahead during our time in Iraq.

Thank you very much, and I'll now take your questions.

MR. WHITMAN: I think we've fixed our technical problems, but I just want to make sure you can hear me okay.

COL. SUTHERLAND: Can you hear him on that? We can hear you on the speaker. We'll turn it up and turn off the phone if that's all right.

MR. WHITMAN: Okay thanks. All right. Let's go ahead and get started then.

Mr. Burns.

Q Colonel, this is Bob Burns from AP. I'd like to ask you about the use of U.S. adviser teams embedded with the Iraqi forces. I didn't hear you mention that, but I'm curious how you're using those teams. And are you in position to expand the use of those teams? That's being discussed here a lot in Washington.

COL. SUTHERLAND: Yeah, we use the MiTT teams. I work with a U.S. Army colonel who is partnered with the 5th Iraqi Army Division commander, and then each brigade has got a MiTT team, transition team. We also have transition teams down at battalion level with the Iraqi army.

Now, to expand on this, we also have transition teams working with the Iraqi police and the district border elements as well. These teams conduct operations with the Iraqi army. They provide advice, they roll up their sleeves and don't just ask leading questions. They actually participate in assisting the Iraqi security forces with their ability to conduct operations.

Right now, the -- every battalion has got a MiTT. There is operations that we conduct; every operation we have been conducting has been coordinated with the use of the MiTTs to be right there during the operations.

MR. WHITMAN: Pam, go ahead.

Q Colonel, this is Pam Hess with UPI. Can you tell us if you're going to be adding numbers and how many soldiers originally you'll be able to contribute, if at all, to your expanded MiTT teams? And would you also expand a little bit on your opening statement, when you said that some political groups are turning to terrorists or militias for security? Can you say -- explain to us why they're not turning to Iraqi security forces for security? What's the problem there?

COL. SUTHERLAND: Yeah, I'll -- let me address the MiTT question first. Right now, we continue to partner our forces with the Iraqi security forces. So if a patrol is conducted with an Iraqi unit, if they go out and conduct a patrol, normally we have a platoon or a company along with them.

That's our way right now of conducting operations. There is discussion and we're in the works with expanding of the size of the MiTT teams, and we're developing courses of action along with MND- North of how we'll adjust that. Those will be internally resourced with our forces right now. We will use our forces, our internal folks to internally resource those MiTTs and expand them from the current operating base to make them more robust.

Now, as far as the second question about turning to security forces, that goes back to the comment that I made -- there is a public perception of inequity, corruption of the Iraqi security forces and the way they conducted operations. Since the -- we've been conducting operations with them, the operations are based on intelligence and evidence-based. However, previously, there were some operations that were wide-cast, and that created disillusion towards the Iraqi security forces, wide-cast operations where they would detain multiple people rather

than just those that they had evidence against, and that created a great deal of disillusion towards the security forces that were operating. So they would turn to other elements that they felt could protect them more, and those other elements happened to be terrorist organizations.

Q Colonel, this is Dave Wood from the Baltimore Sun. Could you tell us a little bit more about these evidence-based operations, and in particular, how good is your on the ground, local, tactical intelligence? And sort of on a scale to 10, give us a sense of how well you think you're doing on that score.

COL. SUTHERLAND: Yeah, let me give you several examples.

The -- a couple days ago we did an operation in the southern part of Baqubah. It was directed towards specific targets within the city called Katoon, which is the southern portion of Mufrek. The brigade combat team -- a battalion from the brigade combat team was able to cordon the area, and then Iraqi -- or elements from 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division went inside the cordon and they struck five different targets in that area. At those targets, they were able to capture large caches of weapons and ammunition, IED-making materials. They detained 29 people, 14 of which were high-value individuals or high-target individuals that we have been looking for for a time, and they also rescued a hostage that we had reports of that were in the area who had been kidnapped about a week prior, and we had reports specific to where he was. This is what I'm talking about of intelligence-driven operations. Instead of going in and just doing wide-cast operations, we have specific targets that we're able to provide -- or that is based on intelligence; we go in and we conduct the operations there at those locations.

The same thing happened a few days ago in Mujima, north of Baqubah, or just to the northern portion of Baqubah, where we had reports of IED-making material. We cordoned the area with coalition forces, and the Iraqi army conducted a raid to several specific houses, and they were able to find what we determined to be a(n) IED-making factory, and we were able to seize several thousand pounds of fertilizer and IED material used for the explosives. And this is what I'm talking about -- they did this without disrupting the population. They did this in a very respectful manner to the people that surrounded the houses -- or living around the houses. And by doing this, what they're conducting is -- or doing is changing that perception that we talked about earlier of the people. They are not conducting anything that could be perceived as sectarian operations focused on one sect or another sect; they're focused on individuals, target houses or those that we have evidence on. Once we detain those people, then they're turned over to the Iraqi judicial system and -- with the evidence and then the judicial system takes over from there.

MR. WHITMAN: Gordon.

Q Hi, Colonel. Gordon Lubold from Army Times. Back to your opening statement when you talked about the province being a kind of little Iraq and how, you know, the players are all a combination of everybody, can you talk about -- it seems like a kind of lower-lever version of political reconciliation that we hear about a lot. Can you talk about how that has contributed or not contributed to the fact that you still have a lot of violence in the province?

COL. SUTHERLAND: Let me make sure I understand what you're asking me.

The government -- the actions by the government could be increasing the violence. Is that what you're asking?

Q No, not -- I mean, it sounds like you have everybody kind of working together on some level in the government, and I'm just wondering -- you know, we hear a lot about it's a political solution in Iraq, not a military one. I'm just wondering how that has contributed or had any effect on the violence and the stabilization within the province. Does it make any sense?

COL. SUTHERLAND: Within Diyala itself, I believe that a big part of this is a political solution, taking those elements that feel like they are not part of the political process and bringing them into the political process.

What you have to understand about Diyala is this is, as I talked about in my opening statement -- there are multiple elements to the problem set: 25 different tribes, 100 sub-tribes associated with those.

The Kurdish element that's over on the eastern side, that wants to gain political power and gain resources. There are the Sunnis and the Shi'a that have looked at the performance of the Iraqi security forces in the past and look at those as sectarian in nature.

And so during the political process, all of that comes up in discussions and all of that comes up in debate. And we have had instances where the Islamic -- Iraqi Islamic Party was ready to walk away from the political process because of their disgust with the way the Iraqi security forces were being conducted. The government stepped up, they got back into the debate, the Iraqi Islamic Party returned to the provincial council and are participating in committees at this point.

What we have to do is still reach out to those groups that are looking for political power using violent means. And again, the method of violence is not going to solve the problem. They see inequity, their perception of inequity, because the easy solution to why some projects are going into one province or one region other than another is because of the Shi'a governor. Well, that's not the solution and that's not the problem. The problem is, is that we have to discuss and we have to determine where the projects should go, based on the provincial councils' perceptions. And again, the demand right now that I'm working with on the Sunni side -- because 60 percent are Sunni, 30 percent are Shi'a -- is they want elections right now, and in this province, the elections are going to happen on the timetable established by the government of Iraq, not by the coalition forces.

Q Sir, it's Kristin Roberts with Reuters. I'm hoping you can talk to us a little but about the sectarian tensions within the Iraqi security forces. We've heard reports that the ISF was focusing on Sunni insurgents and turning a blind eye, if you will, to Shi'a death squads. Is that happening?

COL. SUTHERLAND: Yeah, it is. Since I've been here, it has not been happening. Again, we're going into areas that are diverse, and some areas are primarily Sunni, some areas are primarily Shi'a. But where we conduct -- who we're detaining are criminals, who we're detaining or bringing to justice are terrorists.

Now, let me address the make-up of the Iraqi security forces.

I will agree that they are not representative of the province, and so there are more of one sect than the other. There are more Shi'as than Sunnis.

What the 5th Iraqi Army Division commander and the provincial chief of police are doing is a recruiting drive, and that's one of the reasons that we're engaging the sheikhs throughout the area, is because to get their tribal members to join the Iraqi security forces. In Baqubah itself, they have started a recruiting campaign just the other day, and in that time, 88 packets have come in. And the recruiting campaign is geared towards these areas that are either Sunni or Shi'a, and from those packages, 88 packages, two-thirds have been Sunni and one-third have been Shi'a.

And key to this is, that wasn't happening a few weeks ago because of the perception of how the Iraqi security forces were conducting operations. The perception was that Sunnis were not allowed to join the Iraqi police. They started their campaign, their recruiting campaign, and inside of Baqubah, you're seeing the belief now that the individuals can join the Iraqi police, and so we're seeing packets, or people applying for jobs with the Iraqi police, that is commensurate with the demographics of the areas.

And that's what we need to do. We need to get the IPs with policemen from the neighborhoods, from the

neighborhoods. If it's a Sunni neighborhood, then that's who needs to be conducting the operations. If it's a Shi'a neighborhood, then that's who needs to be in there. They know the people, they know their -- they understand the people. And if it's a mixed neighborhood, then bring in people from that neighborhood to be part of the police force. And that's what the provincial chief of police, under the direction of the governor, is doing, and they're making a push for that right now.

One of the issues that we've got to work through here is the lack of local media. That lack of local media creates rumor -- rumors which run rampant, and hysterics. And so with the local media, if we can get local media here, that will help us with the recruiting campaign that the provincial chief of police is trying to do.

It will also help us explain to the people how the Iraqi security forces are conducting operations, display for them how they're doing it, not indiscriminate but intelligence based and target driven, and then just as importantly, make them and the Iraqi government transparent to the people of Diyala. Right now, all information -- the majority of information is on rumor, which creates unwarranted hysteria. That unwarranted hysteria adds to the terrorist base. And so those intimidating phone calls that are made by an individual to a bank teller or to a police officer can't be turned off because we have no media or very little media program here.

MR. WHITMAN: Well, we're a little over our time, but with our technical difficulties, if you'll indulge us we'll take just one or two more.

Do you have the time for that, Colonel?

COL. SUTHERLAND: I'm at your disposal. In fact, I would encourage any of you to come to Diyala. We like the company.

MR. WHITMAN: I see a lot of smiling faces. I'm sure they'll be joining you soon.

Let's go over here to Garamone.

Q Colonel, this is Jim Garamone from American Forces Press Service. You've mentioned the tribes a couple of times now. What kind of power do they wield and how important are they to a solution in Diyala?

COL. SUTHERLAND: I think that the tribes are a big part of the solution. In the culture that we're in right now, it's family first, tribes second, clan next, sect, and then nation. And so if you rely on your family, you rely on the tribe. They turn to each other, they feed off of each other, they support each other.

And so if we can go to the tribal leaders and get them to recognize first off that al Qaeda's going to be defeated in their area, al Qaeda's going to be defeated in Iraq, they will assist us. Bringing them to the table, telling us what projects they need. I could go out all day long and say these are the projects that need to take place in Diyala. But having the tribal leaders come back and tell us what projects they need -- speaking for their people, speaking to the mayors, and speaking to the governor -- is much more important and where we need to go. They are a big part, in my opinion, of helping us achieve a great deal.

Now, a lot of our tribes -- and this is of note -- a lot of the tribes in Diyala are a mixture of Sunni and Shi'a. And that plays in how we can also dispel and decrease any sort of sectarian violence, because again, they take care of each other and they help each other. So the sheikhs are a big part of this solution.

MR. WHITMAN: Mike?

Q Colonel, it's Mike Mount with CNN. Earlier in your opening statement, you gave us a little story about you at a checkpoint with some Iraqi forces. You said they were underarmed or low on ammunition, low on food, low on water, which isn't a terribly uncommon story there. How common, though, is that in your section, and is

that kind of an overarching problem? Do you see that as a problem in the future as you try to stand up the forces, kind of get them on their own?

COL. SUTHERLAND: Yeah, it is a ongoing problem.

I have actually -- because this is -- the logistics of the Iraqi police is a problem, my deputy brigade commander is actually working with the provincial chief of police to try to help them solve this. We also have the embedded police liaison officers that are working with the Iraqi police at each station trying to assist them. They have the supplies that they need at the provincial level. Their problem is first managing it and having some sort of supply distribution program from the regions on down to the individual police officer, and all this goes to having a system in place to control the chaos, the chaos of the supply distribution center -- taking the -- assisting them and developing those and getting them computer systems, getting them generators for the police stations and then making sure that the distribution is managed, and if somebody quits the police force, that he turns back in his weapon, he turns back in his uniform. All those have to go with supply discipline that we wrestle with in the Army and they're developing systems with as well.

It also goes to the leadership. The leadership of the police going out and checking the individual policeman, going out and checking the capabilities of what he's carrying. In some police areas or cities we find a great deal of well-equipped, well-manned, well-disciplined police officers. I was in Jadidah the other day visiting the commander of the police force in that city, and they were out on their post. They all had magazines, they all had ammunition, they all had AK-47s, correct weapons. They were disciplined and at their post, and it wasn't just because the senior coalition force commander on the ground was there visiting, because they didn't know I was coming. It was because their commander -- the colonel at that site inspected, and he went out and he visited. And he got out from behind his desk and out from his office, and he went and checked them. And there are success stories like that throughout the region, throughout the province.

There are some problem areas, and the distribution center -- or distribution of those supplies is the biggest issue right now that we're wrestling with. And I know I put that in my statement upfront, but I was hoping that you all wouldn't catch that because I don't want my mom to know that I was under fire out there.

MR. WHITMAN: Colonel, we'll make this the last one. Pam is very anxious to get another one in. So we'll let you finish it, Pam.

Q Colonel, it's Pam Hess again. And I'm hoping, actually, to be out with you in February, so I'll get in touch with your office.

I'm curious on this situation that you said with the police and the Iraqi army. How long was that able to go on that they were sort of going off and freelancing? And how was that able to happen? Don't you have MiTT teams with them and PTT teams who are supposed to be reining that sort of thing in? And how long do you think it will take before that perception is turned around?

COL. SUTHERLAND: Yeah, those operations took place -- there was one operation where it took place. It was during Holy Ramadan. And it was after the 5th Iraqi Army Division commander took over. It was a five-day operation. The first day went very well, and the remaining four days is where things got out of control and the wide sweep operations took place.

It was before I took over. What we have done since then, and working with my predecessor on his recommendations to how that was able to happen, was we are in a retraining plan, retraining operation with the Iraqi police, making sure they understand the rule of law, making sure they understand the respect and values application.

The Iraqi army, now we have gone back and told them and gone through their tactics that they use,

looked at it with them and showed them how this created more enemies than it did friends. The tactics of Saddam, that they understood those were correct tactics, are what we are changing.

The MiTT teams were there; the MiTT teams did have discussions with them. They did go through. But the Iraqi army is also a force that works for the Iraqi government. And the way they conduct operations, we will try to coach, teach and mentor them on how to do them properly. And that's what we did when we explained to them, showed them that these type operations created more enemies than they did friends.

In this culture, the more you kill, the more enemies you make. The more you treat with disrespect, the more enemies you make. And we were able to show them, not subjectively but objectively, how that happened and what it created. And so since then and since I've been here, every operation is controlled, every operation is disciplined. We've gotten 1,300 new recruits that are trained on values as part of their integration process into the Iraqi army. So as we coach and mentor them and show them that's what it takes -- it's actions speak louder than words. And so when we can show them the results of their operations, that goes a great -- goes a long distance. And when we show them the response of the people to how they were conducting operations -- recently, the atmospherics we got, the feedback that the people were out on the streets -- that went a long way in confirming for them that they had to do evidence-based operations.

Q Was it just that the training -- (audio break from source) -- off too soon? (Pause.) I'll repeat the question. Was it that the training wheels were taken off too soon off the IPs and the IA?

COL. SUTHERLAND: Yeah, I can't really tell you that. That was before I got here, whether the control was released. The Iraqi army still works with us. I don't have the perspective to be able to tell you that specifically.

MR. WHITMAN: We really have extended the timeline here, and we appreciate you hanging in there with us with the technical difficulties.

But let me just turn it back to you in case you have anything that you'd like to tell us before we bring it to a close.

COL. SUTHERLAND: Yeah. First off, I do appreciate the opportunity to talk to the people back in the United States. Our soldiers in my brigade as well as all the soldiers in the coalition forces that are over here are doing a(n) absolutely phenomenal job. They are very confident in what they're doing, and proof of this goes to their belief in a very noble cause. Every day is a new opportunity. They provide me clarity on what they're doing, but every day is a new opportunity for them to make a difference, and they believe this, as evidenced in the numbers that are reenlisting, as evidenced in their -- the way they go about their function very professionally. They believe that they can make a difference.

And -- (audio break from source) -- the holidays are coming up. We look at that as a great opportunity as well; new beginnings, continuing operations. But there is absolute greatness in this formation, and the noble, noble, decent actions that they do every day is phenomenal.

And we appreciate your time with us not just as -- probably more than you appreciate the time with me.

Thank you.

MR. WHITMAN: (Off mike) -- Colonel. And we hope that in the next few months we can have you back and get another update in terms of what you're doing.

COL. SUTHERLAND: This is a brigade commander's dream come true. I'd be happy to. (Laughter.)

MR. WHITMAN: And we'll start filling out the paperwork to get these folks over there to see you right after

this.

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