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Presenter: Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt

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Ask the U.S. Commander in Iraq, BBC

Sovereignty of Iraq will be handed over to a caretaker Iraqi government on June 30. It comes at a difficult time though for the American-led forces with attacks on coalition troops continuing on a daily basis. The coalition's moral authority has also been severely damaged by evidence of abuse at Abu Ghraib prison.

Who should be in charge of armed forces in Iraq? Can Iraq's security situation be improved?

Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, the deputy director of coalition operations in Iraq, was our guest on the Talking Point programme.

Bridget Kendall: Hello and welcome to Talking Point, I'm Bridget Kendall. It's four weeks till the handover of power in Iraq, the security challenges are still enormous. So have the coalition forces helped or hindered in the past year and what will happen after June 30th?

Well who better to ask than our special guest today, who joins us from Baghdad, the chief spokesman for US forces in Iraq - Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt.

General Kimmitt welcome to the programme. And I'd like to say we've already had nearly two and a half thousand questions for you from our global audience on TV, radio and the internet, such as this one that came in via e-mail from Eve Metz in Melbourne, Australia who asks: The coalition has annihilated the only secular regime in the Middle East and created a haven for Islamic fundamentalists, quaintly referred to as terrorists. What do you feel about that? What's your response to that?

General Kimmitt: Well we certainly haven't annihilated the secular regime, what we've annihilated is a brutal dictatorship which held the people of Iraq under its thumb for 35 years.

It was a dictatorship which was bereft of human rights, bereft of any freedoms and democracies that we take for granted in our countries and it certainly wasn't a secular government that was working