

answers. The fact remains that we don't have those numbers, we don't keep those numbers. For example, any time we have a terrorist attack inside the city of Baghdad we rely on the Ministry of Health and their persons to go to the city hospitals to try to make the adequate determination. But that is a role and a responsibility for the Iraqi Ministry of Health and as a result we don't track those numbers and we look to the Ministry of Health for the publishing of those numbers.

Bridget Kendall: But it would help to increase confidence in the coalition forces, wouldn't it. We have this e-mail from Dr Hisham al Bakri who's in Iraq and he says: I want to ask General Mark Kimmitt does he believe his forces have behaved in a civilised

General Kimmitt: My answer to that would be - in the vast majority of cases the American soldiers, all the coalition soldiers, have treated the people of Iraq with dignity and respect.

We try to conduct all our operations recognising that we not only have to achieve our military objective but it doesn't make any sense at all for us to conduct our military operations if we're not extremely sensitive to the people of Iraq - their desires and their concerns. We are attempting to build a partnership between ourselves and the people of Iraq.

Bridget Kendall: I think the point of view that we've been getting from the e-mails and calls we've had is that we hear in meticulous detail about American deaths but then we don't hear much detail about Iraqis. This is Will Smith in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia who asks: Do you treat the death and injury of an Iraqi as seriously as the death or injury of an American?

Bridget Kimmitt: Well of course we do and we dread and we grieve every time we lose a friend and we lose a fellow military member or we lose a civilian that is working for us and working with us.

What I would just hope and what I just wish is that people would recognise that we have great respect for life, whether it's an Iraqi life or whether it's those of our own citizens. And I would ask them to contrast that with the terrorists in this country who intentionally go and put car bombs in the middle of crowds, put car bombs near schools, put car bombs and other explosives inside large crowds during celebrations for the specific purpose of creating death. And I would suggest that they are the ones who don't respect the citizens of Iraq, don't respect the people of Iraq, don't respect the civilians of Iraq.

We go out of our way in excruciating detail to plan our operations so that we minimise the amount of collateral damage. By contrast those that we fight here in Iraq go out of their way to create collateral damage, to create the shock value and the terror value by killing civilians and children and women.

Bridget Kendall: But on this issue of collateral damage we've had a lot of people get in touch with us about the American military raid that took place a couple of weeks ago, the so-called "wedding massacre" - people who believe that there was a wedding party which was bombed, that there were civilian casualties - women, children - seen in hospitals afterwards. And let's go now to a caller who has