

you're leaving now, what the state of the insurgency is; you know, how active it is and what you think will be required to eliminate it.

Swannack: Actually, in our varied responsibility out in the west, the insurgency is pretty much in disarray, I think is the best way to describe it. Systematically we have captured or killed the individuals directing the insurgency, most specifically with Khamis Sirhan being captured back in January. We continue to go ahead and remove the financiers and facilitators of the attacks by what I call anti-coalition factions out there trying to create and sustain this insurgency. And it's very minimal. Attacks are down. Attacks on coalition forces out there are down. Serious injuries and fatalities are down this month. And I just don't see much substance occurring in terms of the insurgency. So that's why I say it's in disarray.

More so, the popular support we're garnering daily is a definite way ahead to go ahead and break this insurgency. My greater concern right now is on terrorist organizations getting established out west. We do still work very hard to secure the borders with Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. We still need some equipment and means to do that better, even though we stood up those border police. And I believe right now our biggest fight is in regards to disallowing terrorist organizations to get established out there in the west.

Any follow-up on that?

Q: No, sir.

Swannack: Okay, thank you.

Back in the back, back there.

Q [Through interpreter.]: Thank you, General. (Name inaudible.) -- from the BBC. I have two questions.

First question, concerning the operation of -- rotation of the division you are leading: There are -- (Inaudible.) -- and evidence that the operation zone is a very dangerous zone which needs very skilled forces, like the Marines, who have experience in fighting in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

A second question, concerning the zone of operations, which extends over three neighboring countries: These three countries, as you said -- (Inaudible.) -- most of the infiltration comes through these countries. What are your measures? What are the steps that you have taken during these months? Have you stopped these operations? Have you captured -- you have captured many detainees, but you didn't publish their names. You didn't reveal their names. Thank you.

Swannack: Okay. Regarding the future, out in the west, with the transition of force to the Marines, Marines are a very combat-capable force, as you've described. I'm very proud of the force that I've commanded out in the west, which include Afghanistan veterans and twice now Iraq veterans.

And so I just pray and hope that the Marines will have as much success and move Al Anbar province forward, as we have. I say that because we're going to go through a very systematic process of having the Marines replace us. Whereas they come in now, we will continue our operations, with them observing and participating. Then we will go ahead and have them, the Marines, actually undertake the operations under our tutelage and certification, and then, after they're certified, will we turn over the battle space to the Marines -- very systematic relief in place and transfer authority. We've gotten good in places like Bosnia, Afghanistan and Kosovo at this process.

And so I feel very, very good at turning over Al Anbar province and the security requirements out there to the United States Marine Corps and a good friend of mine, Major General Jim Mattis.