

Q Sir, if I could ask you a question on another topic, you talked about how you had forces in some of the cities in your sector. With the discussion of the Strategic (sic) of Forces Agreement talking about pulling U.S. forces out of cities by next -- by June 30th of 2009, how do you see that timeline in the way your -- things are going in your sector right now?

COL. WHITE: Yeah, I am not read into exactly what this agreement is going to come down to between the Iraqi government and the United States government, and then of course Multinational Forces-Iraq. So I can't speak to that.

But what I can say is that our combat outposts and our forward operating bases are all on the periphery of our two major and larger cities, which are Jisr Diyala and Salman Pak. What we've done is the Iraqi army and the national police have reinforced, per se, the Iraqi police in the inner cities for now. Until I -- if I was told today to move further out into the desert and get away from the cities, we would be able to do that and continue operations. We would move most of our forces here to FOB Hammer, which again was a surge base that was built for 33 ID. And I don't think we would have a problem here in the Madain doing whatever our higher chain of command asked us to do, if Iraqis truly wanted us to get out of the cities.

MR. JIM TURNER (Defense Press Operations Deputy Director): Any more questions?

Okay, Colonel, it looks like that's about it. So with that, would you care to make any closing remarks?

COL. WHITE: Yeah, I would.

I'd like to thank all of you for this opportunity to share with you the progress of what's going on out here in our small little portion of the overall mission in Iraq.

I'm truly honored to be serving with the soldiers and leaders of the Iron Brigade. You know, every day I'm amazed by their accomplishments and commitment to a cause that is as challenging as any generation has faced in our history.

I'm humbled by the tremendous sacrifice of the Iraqi people.

And to the American people, I just want to thank them. We couldn't do our mission without your support.

And then I'd like to close it out thanking our families and the families of our service members for their continued sacrifices and support because we truly do draw our strength from them.

And again, thank you very much for your time, and I hope I answered all your questions.

MR. TURNER: Thank you, Colonel White, for that update, and we hope to hear from you again sometime soon.

COL. WHITE: Thank you.

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