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CONFIDENTIAL

LTG David Petraeus
Multinational Forces Commander-IRAQ
APO 09316
BAGHDAD, IRAQ

Dear General Petraeus:

Sir, it has been some time since we were last together at the Marshall Foundation Senior ROTC Awards Seminar in Lexington, Virginia. I hope you will forgive my direct candor, and let me say at the outset of this letter, I know of no other person better suited for snatching victory out of the jaws of the mess that has become Iraq than you. However, having said that, I'm not at all sure that you are fully aware of the second, and possibly far more dangerous, insurgency that no one is dealing with in CONUS; and which has a direct impact on your operations in Iraq.

It should be no big secret to you that Civil-Military Operations, and in turn Civil Affairs, is suffering from severe neglect, and has been for quite sometime. As a result its mis-application has contributed significantly to our inability to transition to Post Conflict Stability Operations in Iraq, and win the Peace.

There are several significant factors that have prevented Civil-Military Operations and Civil Affairs from being the force enhancement tools that they truly were designed to be. First, and foremost, there is a "Warfighter" insurgency within the U.S. Army that is highly resistant to conducting anything but kinetic operations. Despite DOD Directive 3000.5, and the other directives that preceded it, pre-deployment training, effectively using CA-CMO to conduct training in Phase IV operations, has been consistently minimized to the point where we now find ourselves in the position of not being able to transition to Post Conflict Stability Operations in Iraq, or anywhere else for that matter. Quite simply, we can't train the Iraqis to secure the Peace, because we aren't training the U.S. Army to do that either.

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So the end result is that while the Army “Warfighters” pay great lip service to DOD Directive 3000.5, they continue to actually avoid providing the training necessary to stand up a successful Phase IV campaign. Not only do current CTCs not provide in-depth Phase IV training, but the ability to plan for Phase IV operations simply just does not exist Army wide.

Secondly, to be even more candid, according to current doctrine, Combatant Commanders still have two main responsibilities, i.e.: (1.) To fight and win our nation’s wars, and (2.) To conduct Civil-Military Operations, using the main doctrinal tool allocated for that task---Civil Affairs. The Army does an outstanding job at fighting and winning this nation’s wars, but it is failing miserably to properly use its Civil Affairs assets to win the Peace in Iraq. This failure, quite simply, is because the Army doesn’t understand how to conduct, or truly wants to conduct, Civil-Military Operations, it consistently mis-uses its Civil Affairs assets. Civil Affairs soldiers are not trained to pull base security, to escort convoys or deliver supplies. They are highly trained for two missions—to enhance the Combatant Commander’s ability to conduct successful Civil-Military Operations, aid in paving the way for a smooth transition to civil authority and to help secure the Peace.

In 2004, then in my capacity as CMO Chief at the JRTC, I wrote General Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff Army, outlining these various problems at the JRTC, also describing the same issues at NTC and the other CTCs. (See attached). The only person to take that letter seriously was the CJCS. However, by the time he got someone down to the JRTC the Warfighters had become quite adept at smoke screening. So, miraculously, the shortfalls disappeared under the surface, but still exist there today. The last guidance a BCT Commander hears as he leaves JRTC is “Go Kinetic is your best first response.” These same commanders are literally told “do not worry about this CMO stuff; everything will fall into place when you get in country.”

Thirdly, the fault for this mis-use of Civil Affairs/Civil-Military Operations assets does not rest solely with the “Warfighters.” It is also shared by USACAPOC, and that organization’s inability, or unwillingness, to market its skill sets to the Army at large. When some organizations are attached to a BCT they immediately go to the Combatant Commander and brief him on the skills that they can bring to the table, and how those skills can best be used to enhance the Commander’s mission.

USACAPOC has been consistently unable, or unwilling, to successfully do that type of marketing. This inability has contributed significantly to the failure of the rest of the Army to fully understand how to use Civil Affairs, or conduct Civil-Military Operations. Civil Affairs long association with the SOF community has not been compatible with the work that Civil Affairs needed to be doing with/for the rest of the Army. In truth, Civil Affairs would have been far more effectively used under the U.S. Army Reserve Command from the start.

In addition the way USACAPOC assigned Civil Affairs units to BCTs created further divisions between the Civil-Affairs Operators and their host BCTs. The Civil Affairs units were pooled in country, and doled out to the BCTs as they arrived in country. USACAPOC was extremely resistant to assigning the Civil Affairs unit to the BCT prior to pre-deployment training. As a result the Civil Affairs units assigned to the BCTs in country were expected to bond with that BCT in a hurry, and often under fire,

thus creating more friction; and increasing the potential for Civil-Military Operation mission failure.

The standard USACAPOC response to almost every question put to that command, for several years now, has been wrapped in the increase in operational tempo and the shortages of trained personnel. Irregardless of the fact that USACAPOC created the majority of their own personnel problems, years ago, their responses are quite reasonable and very valid in the 2007 operational environment. The op tempo is high, and their personnel resource shortages are verging on the critical. This is all the more reason for the Army to learn how to garner and use those assets to the best effect.

In the current issue of the Marine Corps Gazette, FEB 07, Colonel Jeffrey D. Vold, USMCR, has written a well targeted article entitled “ Civil Affairs Integration— What you should know about Civil Affairs.” In that article he clearly points out that “Civil Affairs Groups (CAGs) should not deploy as an independent unit. Like artillery liaison teams and other attachments, CAG teams should join units 4 to 6 months prior to deployment and participate in all pre-deployment training with that unit. At all levels these Civil Affairs teams should not be viewed as a separate entity but, instead, should be embedded into the staff of the supporting unit. This is especially true at the Task Force level. Being part of the supported unit staff would ensure that staffs continue to integrate CA into their planning processes and give all commanders an additional tool to use and consider during pre-deployment training.” (See attached article.)

While USACAPOC has been a major player in the U.S Army’s inability to win the Peace, its culpability pales in comparison to Senior Army Commanders, within FORSCOM and TRADOC, who have long turned a blind eye to the ongoing “Warfighter” insurgency within the Army, an insurgency which has had a direct correlation to the ever increasing numbers of killed and wounded returning home to a U.S. Army Medical Command that seems equally ill prepared to care for them.

As for USACAPOC, even if you overlook years of colossal personnel mismanagement, the propagation of highly questionable Unit Status Reports (USR), a total internal failure to coordinate the USACAPOC WARTRACE Plan with the Department of the Army, and sub standard training & equipment, (despite belonging to USASOC, which gave them access to an extensive and creative budget to be spent on equipment), at the end of the day Civil Affairs soldiers still face “Warfighter” commanders who don’t know how to use them, or want to use them—except as just extra infantry soldiers.

I have every confidence that you will continue to make great progress, but at some point in time the weight of force of arms will have to lift and a transition to Phase IV civil authority will have to take place. The permanent success of that transition will depend largely on our ability to conduct Post Conflict Stability Operations, and how well we train the Iraqi’s in maintaining their own Peace and Stability.

Sir, it isn’t rocket science. It seems like we might want to be preparing ourselves to provide effective CMO training. Deploying 2,500 extra Military Police in Iraq are just what the doctor ordered for locking down neighborhoods, but Civil Affairs is still the Combatant Commander’s best tool for helping those same neighborhoods recover to stand up responsibly on their own.

There is every indication here that the USACAPOC Commander is heading for Iraq to help you conduct successful Civil-Military Operations. There is every wide spread hope that he will be able to accomplish operationally what seems to have evaded him during his time as the USACAPOC Commander.

The bottom line on all of this is that there's plenty of blame to go around as to why we are in the mess we are in over there. There is a fix still available, and a shrinking window of opportunity in which to use it. It will be the Army Reserve and National Guard who will be called on to bear the brunt of snatching victory from the Jaws of Defeat. Without effective, in-depth, training in the use of Civil-Affairs, to conduct effective Civil-Military Operations, they will accomplish little more than sustaining the problem, rather than affecting a permanent solution.

In closing, I tell you in all honesty that no one is paying any attention to this Warfighter insurgency, not OSD, DA, the Congress, Senate, the President or even the media. There have been a host of military academics, Serving Officers, Senior NCOs, and DA Civil Servants who have tried, since shortly after 9/11, to brief national decision makers of the perils of allowing this insurgency to continue, and its continuation has brought us directly to the critical point that we find ourselves at today. This leaves you in the position of truly fighting that two front war that the U.S. Army has been preparing for all these years. It is a sad thing indeed that one of the major insurgent groups is within your own Army.

Thank you very much for your consideration in this matter. If there's anything that I can do to support you, in any way, my parachute bag is always packed.

Sincerely,

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"Soldiers are not the enemies of Peace. They go in harm's way to do our bidding, and to pay the price for our ambitions, and our mistakes."

Gwynne Dyer

* Charter Member Friends of West Point