



(U) General Zahner's View from the Front

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(U//FOUO) It was a packed house in Friedman Auditorium on Friday afternoon, 6 June 2003. Employees from across the Agency filed in or tuned in to listen to Brigadier General Richard P. Zahner's reflections from IRAQI FREEDOM. General Zahner took a strong, yet humble approach as he discussed his accomplishments, and the impact that the NSA workforce had on the successful outcome of the war in Iraq.

(U//FOUO) General Zahner's presentation began with expressions of gratitude as he thanked the members of the workforce who continued successfully to prosecute targets across "the rest of the world." He then thanked those who focused their efforts directly on CENTCOM, ultimately advocating the teamwork across the Agency that was clearly visible and necessary in order to make this military effort a success.

(TS//SI) General Zahner spoke of the importance of the coalition forces, noting that the support given by the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Germany was integral to the victorious outcome. His in-depth discussion of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM was coupled with an introductory analysis of the differences between the campaign in Iraq and the previous campaign in Afghanistan. He noted that Afghanistan represented a different perspective due to the large-scale conflict. He remarked that the "Shock and Awe" campaign attributed to Iraq actually resided with the conflict in Afghanistan; it was a different strategy and had different operational importance. In particular, General Zahner specified the SIGINT contributions to the campaign in Afghanistan that led to the distrust amongst Afghan troops, which proved immensely successful for the American effort.

(TS//SI) General Zahner then steered his discussion specifically towards the campaign in Iraq, noting the role that careful intelligence analysis played in Iraq. He spoke openly about the tendency of the United States "to paint a picture of the worst nightmare." He noted that the purpose was to ensure preparation for anything, but that the result was diverted attention, a loss of agility, and missed opportunities caused by a flogging away at the "bad dreams." He illustrated the concept of preparing for the worst as he discussed fears of being sprayed with gallons of chemical weapons. Zahner noted the military complexity of the embedded members of the Republican Guard, but claimed that due to the combination of efforts from the US, the UK, and Australia, the obstacle was overcome. He discussed the difference in threats, specifying that in Iraq, one's neighbor often represented the most significant threat.

(TS//SI) General Zahner spoke emphatically about the importance of taking risks. He stated, "Victory does not come to the timid." He argued that we must take accurate and prudent risks, for without them success will not be achieved. Furthermore, he advocated for an investment of personnel and wealth, categorizing this investment as part of the risk-taking process. He claimed, "If you don't take a risk, you're not going to get there!" General Zahner spent the last few minutes of his presentation answering questions. Finally, he was presented with a plaque from the Iraq Issue Managers Team in gratitude for his success and demonstration of excellence throughout the Iraq Campaign.

(U//FOUO) If you missed today's presentation, or would like to hear it again, please request a copy of the broadcast from [REDACTED] nsa (DL [REDACTED] from an NT). Be sure to specify the name and date of the program.

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