

James Torgler
September 25, 2007

CHARLES FERGUSON: Thank you very much for taking the time to do this.

JAMES TORGLER: Sure, not a problem.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Well tell me if you could how you came to be involved in Iraq and what your involvement was?

JAMES TORGLER: Well, OK. We will have to step back in time a little bit. In 2001 and earlier I was a defense contractor in the Pentagon, working Crystal City and Jay Garner was the president of my company. And so I got to know Jay quite well. I had not served with him on active duty, but knew that he had been a great guy.

And so I was working there in Washington and then, in fact, had a meeting scheduled in the Pentagon quite near where the plane hit at that morning and so went through all that tended chaos. At the time I was a reserve Lieutenant Colonel, was commanding a training battalion and I told my wife that I was not going to sit out the war to command a training battalion.

So I talked to some people I had been working with on the Army staff and as a result got put on a team of colonels that was essentially assigned to go around the Army bureaucracy and get the Army ready to go to war.

Fast forward to the summer of 2002, and myself and two other folks were working up the design of the element that was going to end up training the Afghan National Army. And so come January 2003, I am working on that project, I see Jay in the hallway of the Pentagon and he says what are you working on and I told him we had just finished figuring out which units were going to train the Afghan National Army and I told him all about the project and he grabbed my arm and said, you need to go with me.

And he did not tell me where I was going at the time. In retrospect a key piece of information. And he was, he had just, it had been about a week since he had been tagged by the President to run this new thing that would become ORHA.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: And I told him I was working for the Army G3 and so if he wanted me to be with him he would have to talk to General Cody and sort that out. And so that was all I thought of it. I kind of went home and told my wife that I had ran into Jay and he said he wanted me to do this and I do not really know what it is. And then, so this was like the end of January and a week later I got called into the G3's office and told that I would be working for Mr. Garner.

And so I joined the team. I remember it was the 14th of February, because I gave my last briefing on- we had a VTC on how we were going to – what units were go off and do the Afghan National Army and I handed that off and went to the OSD offices and started working for what was to become ORHA, but I am not sure what we were calling it then. It became ORHA just about the first week of March I think. Just about the time we had the big two day table top exercise for lack of a better word, an NDU.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: And so that is how I was originally brought in to be the Chief of Current Operations because they knew that they were going to have this organization of civilian experts and there would need to be some sort of organization around it that took care of it, took care of the feeding and building and just management of its movement here and there. So I was working that piece and that is where I ran into Paul (Hughes), who was a special advisor to Jay for plans, or something like that, I forget what his title exactly was.

He and Gross, what was his first name, the other Colonel who was with him from Indy.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Tom Gross.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes that is it, Tom Gross, great guy.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes, yes.

JAMES TORGLER: And that is where we started bumping or working together was in the Pentagon. So that is how I got involved in that organization.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK. And Paul said that you were involved with, or at least had some exposure to, insight into the relationship between ORHA and the DOD advisory team which was mostly still back in Washington, D.C. headed by Slocombe. And Slocombe came out for an initial trip to Iraq in May for about a week or 10 days.

JAMES TORGLER: Then went away.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Then he went back.

JAMES TORGLER: Flew off to Australia or something.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes, well yes mostly to Washington, D.C. and then came back to Iraq in June 12th. This is what he says.

JAMES TORGLER: Right.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Therefore you had some visibility into, exposure into the mechanics of first ORHA's attempts to recall the Iraqi Army and then the disbanding of the Iraqi Army and how that...

JAMES TORGLER: Oh yes, I saw the train wreck firsthand. I will tell you how it went about. We were in Kuwait, the invasion had begun and it was right about the first week because we had the big sandstorm.

Paul, where was Paul at that time? At some point he had to go back to the States, emergency leave for like a week or so. And I do not have my notes right in front of me, so I am sure my timing may be off by a week or so. But anyway General Strock approached me and relayed a conversation he had had with Jay and basically he told them that we had all the ministries covered except Defense.

And because it makes sense we pulled in Justice, we pulled in State, we pulled in all these people and they are going to work on the ministries that are, that reflect the organization from which they came and we did not have anybody working on Ministry of Defense. So in typical army fashion the guy who discovers the problem wins the prize and so Jay turned to General Strock and said "OK, I need you to work that for me."

Well General Strock was also in charge of taking care of the oil fields and turning electricity back on and his plate was kind of full. So he and I had had several conversations at dinner prior to that and I told him that I had worked on the organizational structural for standing up the training for the Afghan National Army. So he came to me and said, "I need you to work this for me." I said OK, great. Where are we at? And he said that Paul had been working on some of this in the planning fashion and he wanted me to work the operational side. I said great and I looked for Paul, and as I recall, I could not find him immediately. And so I unplugged out of the operation shop and started working for General Strock and we had several discussions.

And about the time Paul came back is when we had the conference call with General Abizaid, Slocombe, Paul, myself and for a brief moment Wolfowitz came into the room while we were talking on his end. And I have got pretty detailed notes on that. But the upshot was General Abizaid wanted to...they were starting to capture or uncover units.

Because if you remember our Information Operations campaign, or our IO campaign, said to the Iraqi military "If you stand aside, if you put down your arms and stand aside, we will go past you and we will stop fighting, we will come back," which is a key point to remember when I talk to Slocombe by the way. And so anyways, we have this conversation, this discussion and Paul felt that we should use whatever forces that we had to secure the boarders and he and I had talked in the '80's I had been in ...

CHARLES FERGUSON: You used Iraqi Army forces?

JAMES TORGLER: We used Iraqi Army forces basically as a trip wire along the Iranian boarder. We were not so much concerned about Turkey because the Kurds had that under control. Jordan certainly was not going to invade, neither was Kuwait. So truly the threat was from Iran and the idea that I had since I had been in the '80's I had been in, for six years in Germany along the East German boarder.

I said, well I think what we do is we use these guys and have them set up basically a series of posts with, you know, radios and small arms and pickup trucks and everything and basically they

patrol the boarder and let us know if there is any issues and we will take care of the rest. That was Paul's and my idea.

General Abizaid felt that we needed to use them for internal security, walking the streets with American soldiers. Put an Iraqi face on it, which in retrospect might have been a good idea but, you know, the number we were talking was around 40,000. And Slocombe as I recall said, yes, great, wonderful idea, yes we have got to do this.

And now he cautioned us that he had not been officially named yet, so anything he had to say was truly advisory. He was not in charge of anything. And we are like, OK, fine. And then Wolfowitz came in and said whatever office he was using and he talked briefly about the fact that, yes, we had all these people and you know we should use them for something. I will have to look at my notes, but there was no push back on creating the security force.

And so at the end of the conversation, General Abizaid asked for a planner from ORHA to go to Cutter the next day and start working with his people and since I was the lowest ranking guy in the room I won the prize. And so I got on a plane and headed to Cutter and started meeting with his folks and talking about OK, how do we do this and at the point, at that time, General Abizaid ...

CHARLES FERGUSON: ... what date, I am sorry.

JAMES TORGLER: He wanted something in place by the end of May and I remember we had like five weeks, so it had to have been the third week of April that we were having this discussion.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Third week of April, so in other words Baghdad had just fallen?

JAMES TORGLER: Yes, it was either about to or just about. General Blunts' forces were probably on the outskirts at the time.

CHARLES FERGUSON: The statue fell on April 9, so.

JAMES TORGLER: Oh OK, so yes, so alright. So they were in already. That would work because before Baghdad fell I was supposed to lead the insertion team from ORHA in to work with McKiernan's headquarters and by the time we got organized Baghdad fell. So yes that would work, that would make sense.

And so anyway, I started working with the same com planners to figure out how do we do this. Because I remember talking to Fitz, Mike Fitzgerald who is their chief planner and he said, hey can we do this and I told him, I said Colonel you know this can work if your headquarters has the will. If every door opens, if everybody makes it so, then we will make it because we already knew, I, one of the things I knew from working Afghanistan is we were going to have to have a DDR process in place.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: In fact, we had a contractor who had developed the concept of what it would take on site and I remember giving Garner and Bates the briefing and saying, OK, this is how you would do it and talking with General Strock we were going to use – there was a division based in the South of 51st Division I think, just outside of Basra that would work. That we would pull these people together.

And so we had plans and so we continued that planning and about the time Slocombe got named and then Gardner, Gregg Gardner was his military assistant and we started talking on the phone and I explained to him where we were going and I got nothing but encouragement, encourage, encourage, encourage.

And then Gardner came in real quick, I do not think Slocombe was with him and we busted up to Baghdad so this was ORHA had been in the palace a week. Because I met Paul there, Paul had just gotten there. The lights were not on, we were still walking about with flashlights and some, we had some temporary lighting.

CHARLES FERGUSON: So this would be like the last week of April?

JAMES TORGLER: Yes, that sounds about right. And we got up and I stayed there for a day and a half. Did some looking around. Looked at the site where we were going to locate Mr. Slocombe and I guess it was the Spanish three star, real quick and there was a third ID unit there and I kind of game them a heads up, looking great, you know, lets look at these buildings. We will have to work out a security and I headed back to Cutter. And I moved up to stay a week later. And I got to Baghdad to

stay I guess the end of the first week in May and started working away, started you know, at that time the whole point was we were going to stand up and the number kept getting bigger of how many.

And then we started ...

CHARLES FERGUSON: Tell me about that.

JAMES TORGLER: We were talking, the 40,000 soon got to be 100,000. How can we do this, 100,000? And well we got it, it is all through put, I mean if you done any sort of military logistics your constraining factor is OK, how much of your product can you move through. And so at that time I was seeing that this is clearly disjointed. Because while there was some COM planners working on, OK standing up this today – and about that time is when we came up with the new Iraqi Army which went, which the acronym was NIC and we said oh OK, you cannot use that.

And Paul and I went for a meeting, one of the first meetings with the Iraqi senior officers. I remember we went out to the north side of town near hospital city.

CHARLES FERGUSON: The officers club.

JAMES TORGLER: Right. At the officers club, the old Republican Guard base and met with those guys and they said, OK, we have got. I think they said they had like 55,000 soldiers that they were concerned about. And the thing that impressed me, military officer to military officer, is we sat down with these guys the first question that they asked us is who is securing the borders of our country, because they fought in the Iran/Iraq war. And the second one is how are we going to take care of our soldiers, how are we going to take care of these people. Their pay had stopped, you know, how do we take care of their families?

So great, we are thinking the same way. And so by this time we had recovered all this money, this enormous amount of money and so the plan was they are part of the military defense, we need to pay them. And I remember a discussion with Jay, I do not remember if Paul was there- Paul must not have been there because he would of lead it since he was a full colonel and I was not yet a full colonel.

But my conversation with Jay, he goes well we are only going to pay the civilian leadership of the Ministry of Defense and I looked at him like he had two heads. I said why would we do that?

Oh, we are not going to pay the army.

I said, do they not work for the Ministry of Defense? Do they not have families to feed?

And he, after the end, he said, well that is, yes that is pretty dumb statement. OK, you are right; we need to pay them too.

OK, fine, thank you and I went away you know believing that that was all there was. And so by the time Gardner had gotten there, what was her name, Shalley, our COM's officer had arrived, female Lieutenant Colonel and she was working to get COM's up in the place where Slocombe was going to have his office. At the time this is where he thought he was going to have his office. As I understand they moved everybody in the palace. Bremer wanted everybody where he could touch them.

At the same time I was talking to members of the Ministry of Military Industrialization, which was essentially the governments contracting arm. And I remember going back to General Strock saying, we have all this capacity, why are not we using it. And the decision had come that we wanted to work from the bottom up rather from the top down, which in retrospect seems rather foolish because these guys knew where all the sub-contractors were and we were doing discovery learning.

So anyway, Paul continued to talk. Mike, I assume you talked to Mike.

CHARLES FERGUSON: No I have not.

JAMES TORGLER: OK, he is the third part of our little happy band. Mike is a member of the Department of State and an Army Reservists. And so, and he is an Arab-American so he spoke pretty good Arabic and he, between Paul, myself and Mike, we were talking to probably three of the major tribes that made up the Army.

This brings us to the meeting at the Assassins' Gate. Did Paul talk to you about that?

CHARLES FERGUSON: No.

JAMES TORGLER: I will have to check my notes but about the second week in May, I think it was the second week in May, my wife sends me an article from the Washington Post that says there was going to be a demonstration of former members of the army who wanted to know what the

Americans were going to do to take care of them. Their families needed taking care of. And it was supposed to be the next day.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: And of course we at ORHA had no idea this was going on so I took the article to General Strock when I heard, you know, communication in the palace was awful. It was by accident that you found out anything on the same day that things were going on.

So anyway, someone knew I was working on the Ministry of Defense, I forget who it was, came to me and said hey, there is this group of army officers up at the north gate, the Assassins' Gate and they want to talk to somebody. So I went to General Strock and said, sir, we have got to go talk to these guys. And, you know, he is looking at his calendar and going, er, uh, er, auh. You really think we should?

And I said, yes sir, I really think we should. So, we all jump in our cars and we drive up there and park. And there is a large crowd, several hundred. And it was peaceful and they had signs in English, you know, help us, a variety of signs on sticks just basically a peaceful demonstration but it had the potential to turn ugly.

So General Strock went up, we found the leader, the six leaders. He sat down and talked with them for probably two hours. And about basically what they wanted was the same thing. How do we take care of our families? How do we take care of our soldiers? What do you want us to do? And they pointed out, you asked us to stand down. Alright, we stood down and it has been a month. What do we do?

And so he talked about, they talked about the problems and then he agreed to meet with them the next day at the military operations center, the leaders, not the whole gang but just the leaders. So the next day, he and I went out, and I have talked to him since about this, he sat down with them and said, you make great points, we have begun our planning, we need to get more details from you. Unfortunately, I have much to do but Colonel Torgler will be happy to sit with you and talk with you

for as long as it needs to be. Of course he did not tell me ahead of time that he was going to do this, but he did this.

And so we sat down and we talked for about three hours. And mostly it was that same theme. OK, we are the senior officers of these units. We have all these people who are counting on us to be taken care of because all these institutions have gone away. We need to be paid. We need to know how to take care of our families.

CHARLES FERGUSON: I assume you know that Walter Slocombe and Jerry Bremer have since argued that one of the reasons that the army had to be disbanded is that it was basically a corrupt Sunni officer core. Corrupt Baathist, Saddam officer core.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes.

CHARLES FERGUSON: And a disgruntled, unhappy, oppressed, abused, Shi'ite, enlisted, draftee, soldier base.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes.

CHARLES FERGUSON: You did not see signs of that?

JAMES TORGLER: No. What Jerry Bremer and Walter Slocombe are telling you is that they did not know anything about the Iraqi Army. When they tell you that, what they are talking about is the Republican Guard. And Walt and I had this discussion. About a week later, I am doing the planning and I talked to the lawyers and I talked to the money guys. We are down to the point where we are trying to figure out how much and where. We are probably 10 days out from going and having this meeting. I talked to these people and they had agreed for \$20, one thin \$20 bill they were going to register, they were going to turn in their weapons and they were going to sign a proclamation that said they were not a Baathists or Fundamentalists and that they recognized the Iraqi state. Because my position was, if I keep them in the army, I know where they are. I can control them.

So Slocombe comes in, gosh a couple of days after that and I have got to look at my timeline because I ...

CHARLES FERGUSON: Fifteen.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes, OK, so about the 15th. So he is getting all these briefings and he casually mentions that it is the administrations position, he did not say who, but the position of them that we needed to get rid of all the Baathists and disband the army. And I think my reaction was one of horror and incredulity – I was stunned. I just looked at him like, I do not think I actually asked him if he was insane, but I, you know, I was still in uniform, a lieutenant colonel. I was a lot less cynical than I am now. But I did not understand what was going on. And he rolled that line out at me, well they are all Baathists and they are all this and that.

And I said no, no. Respectfully, you are dealing with an army that is organized along Soviet lines. And I have some experience in this, being in Germany for six years getting ready to fight the Russians, and talking to these fellas your hard core Baathists are your general officers. But even then you have got to remember, I mean the stories we heard. If you wanted to exist in this society in level of comfort you had to be a Baathist. Yes, I mean I talked to doctors who were required. You know what they did to deserters in the army, they cut off their ears and they used military doctors to do it.

And if the doctors refused, then they killed them and their family. So truly a Hobson's choice. Do I become a Baathist and live, or do I stand on my principals and my entire family is dead in the street, you know.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: There was not a lot of give and take like that. So, I took that whole Baathist thing with a grain of salt. Then as I tried to explain to them, OK if you want to stand up in an army, you are not going to use the lower enlisted because they are all two year conscripts. They were abused. And if you were from the south you were moved to the north and if you were from the north you were moved to the west. I mean the whole point was they wanted to make it hard for you to desert because during your two year conscription your life was going to be very bad.

They had no non-commissioned officer core as such. I mean they had some sergeants but, no. They are not like us. I mean non-commissioned officers in our army run the army, they really do. The operational army from day to day. The officers are in charge of making the decisions, but the guys

who make it run are the NCO's. Then they had warren officers, a small cadre. I talked to a couple of them who were about the equivalent of our staff sergeants, but without the authority, so they were technically capable but were not really in charge of anything.

And then, unlike our army, your lieutenants and captains were the guys who actually did things. I mean if you look at their company grade officers would be our NCO core. So what I told them is OK, you want to chop the head off the snake fine, but you are going to have to keep lieutenants colonels and below. The conscripts are not going to come back. You can put out a call all you want, but conscripts will not come back. They have been treated poorly and who the hell are you anyway.

I said if you are going to create something you have got to win the trust of these guys. The thinkers and the educated people. And then he said, well why would we call them back? They are a defeated army. And that set me off again.

No they are not. We told them, we made a bargain with them that said if you stand down, if you stand aside, you will be part of the solution. In fact, more than one colonel told me that. He did not actually show me the flier because it was written in Arabic, but he said, you told us on the radio that if we stand down, if we pulled our units out of the fight we would be part of it. And they fully expected to be part of the solution, which, OK, I mean, I do not have an ideology as such for this sort of thing so it made perfect sense to me.

And then he said, well we have to get rid of the Baathists. I said, well I am not disputing that. But we have a moral obligation to take care of these people.

Who pays the disabled vets? Who pays the retirees? Who does what? Oh, and by the way, sir, if you disband the army you lose control of 200,000 people with guns. If you DDR them, you register them, you sort out who you want to keep and then life is good.

And at the end of that discussion which he thought was going to take 15 minutes, but by my watch it took about two hours. The last word that he said to me was, OK, continue your planning to pay the army. He got on a plane and flew away and about 36 hours later they put out the proclamation disbanding the army.

And by the way, he did not tell any of us. And so they put it out as I recall on a Friday. Now if you know anything about the Muslim world, what happens on Friday.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes and so on Saturday morning you know, I get this message back on Friday that said, we put this out and do not talk to the Iraqi's any more. What? And so anyway I get this on Saturday morning I had a meeting scheduled and so what I was told to do was go out and meet with them at the gate, read them the proclamation, do not bother to answer any questions, and then go back in.

And so this horse's ass had to go do that. I am a little irritated. Yes and you can probably understand my irritation because the Iraqi's did not react well.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Well, what a surprise.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes, in fact I have an email that I can share with you that I sent my wife. I said I think a lot of people are going to die because of this. Because we have, in their eyes, we promised them something and then pulled it back and did not care and they were humiliated. So. There you go.

Anyway. That is where we were.

CHARLES FERGUSON: So when, forgive me for being nitpicky about this.

JAMES TORGLER: No.

CHARLES FERGUSON: But it actually is important.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes.

CHARLES FERGUSON: When you had your two hour meeting with Slocombe... this was Slocombe's chronology in Iraq was, he arrived in Iraq on May 15th; stayed until the 19th and on the 19th he went to Kuwait for one night; came back from Kuwait on the 20th.

JAMES TORGLER: Right.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Stayed in Iraq until the 23rd.

JAMES TORGLER: OK.

CHARLES FERGUSON: On the – and what he said is that he announced the dissolution of the army on the 23rd at a sparsely attended press conference and immediately there afterwards flew away back to the United States.

JAMES TORGLER: Then it would have been the evening of the 22nd.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK.

JAMES TORGLER: It would have been that night before he flew away and made his announcement.

CHARLES FERGUSON: And prior to that, none of you had any idea that he was going to disband the army?

JAMES TORGLER: It was like a thunderbolt out of the blue. Because the point was I was talking, I mean my first meeting with him was that discussion. I had talked to him on the phone but the first time I had actually been in the same room physically with him was that day when we had that two hour meeting. I talked to his military assistant, Gregg Gardner, many times and he was there through all of that.

We were doing our planning for the new Iraqi Army. In fact, he was building a staff to do that support. I mean and it was like a thunderbolt out of the blue. All of a sudden poof. No we are not doing that.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Did the advocacy know in advance? Did McKiernan know in advance?

JAMES TORGLER: Well you know, I did not really travel in those circles.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Sure, OK, you are not sure.

JAMES TORGLER: But none of his planners knew. Let's put it that the people I was working with, nobody had an inkling it was going to happen. I mean I do not know what the generals knew and when they knew it, but at the colonel level we were stunned.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK. Did Slocombe meet with any of the Iraqi officers that you were dealing with?

JAMES TORGLER: Not to my knowledge. He traveled in his little bubble, his little security bubble. In fact, most of, and I am sure Paul will tell you, most of the DOD inhabitants of the palace rarely left the confines of the palace. There was only a few of us going out and about. Partially because of our own rules for security which in May of '03 they still liked us. I rarely carried a side arm. I was just, I would throw on my flak jacket because there was still an occasional rocket and mortar and what not and I would stroll down, I would walk down to the convention center. It was a pleasant time. It had not gotten terrible hot yet.

Plus we were inside the security of second brigade combat team and they were pretty good. So I felt pretty comfortable. But there were some who, you know, felt that they were still in the front lines. It was rather silly.

CHARLES FERGUSON: And Slocombe was among those who was nervous or ...

JAMES TORGLER: Well no, I mean, he was, he – I do not know if you have ever heard this phrase of “I am a general and you are not” but there are some people who have that attitude and he was kind of one of those. So, security was not his concern because it would be taken care of. I mean, sense of entitlement is that kind of what you would think.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: I mean, he had been an under-secretary so he, he had certain expectations and they were taken care of. So yes, he traveled in his little bubble. In fact, this is a nasty thing to say I doubt that he ever saw an Iraqi. Not to be ugly.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK. And did you ever speak with Bremer about this? Was Bremer involved in this?

JAMES TORGLER: I spoke to some of Bremer's peeps, strap hangers, whatever, his little gang. The same gang who came in and I had one of them, one of his inner circle turned to me when he arrived and said “well you guys had your chance” and my response was “we have been here for 23 days.” They clearly came in, in fact, asked all of us in uniform to leave because they had it under

control until they realized that if all the people in uniform left no one who would keep the lights on and the water running. And then they asked for volunteers to stay. But, we, I was reluctant.

Well after the proclamation came out. I was not going to work for Mr. Slocombe and his organization any more.

CHARLES FERGUSON: You mean the disbanding of the army?

JAMES TORGLER: Yes. Once that happened, after he had told me to continue making plans and then it became clear that he only told me that to get me out of his office and he was going to do what he was going to do. I could not work for anybody that was that disingenuous.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Oh I see, so you are confident that he had already in fact made his decision?

JAMES TORGLER: Well the cause and effect was such that, you know, his last words to me, he looked me in my face and said, OK, continue making your plans to pay, you know, to pay the army and then the proclamation that came out, the kind of bolt from the blue told me that I had wasted my breath it was going to happen. You know, I did not know if it was him or Bremer, but frankly...

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: You know.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: I mean it was clearly that when the CPA got there, they could not wait for people from ORHA to leave. It was obvious the way that they felt we were – we could just clear out so that they could get to working to serious business of whatever they were going to do.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK and after the disbanding order was issued do you know what happened with regard to paying people? What happened to further contact with these officer's groups?

JAMES TORGLER: As far as I know, we dropped them like a hot rock, which did not help anything. I mean, you might talk to Mike. He, because of his language skills, I think he may have maintained a little more contact. But I remember, you know, here is another typical thing, I think it was just before Bremer left, Paul introduced Mike to them as well as myself.

And there was a meeting that, this was I think before my meeting of that evening, they went out to Camp Victory, where McKiernan's headquarters were and they asked Mike if he had a car and Gardner asked them to drive them. Mike was explaining to Slocombe in the car who he had been talking to and whatever and they were very nice to Mike and then when they got there they got out of the car and asked him to, OK well if you can wait over there for an hour we should not be much longer than that and you can drive us back to the palace. Mike, you might understand, was somewhat insulted by this.

Especially as Gardner walked into the palace, he said, hey see if you can grab us a box of that bottled water with the small bottles because the big bottles are hard to handle. And so Mike was a little insulted since he was a Mid-East specialist who spoke Arabic and had been talking to these people for several weeks. But that is OK. And then we came back and Slocombe had his session with me and he flew away the next day. Never to be seen again as far as I know.

CHARLES FERGUSON: But you very clearly expressed opposition to Slocombe?

JAMES TORGLER: Absolutely. I mean, I asked him, I actually said, I looked at him and said how can you disenfranchise 200,000 people? I mean, he said, well you know they just cannot be in the army any more.

I said, well what will they do? There is no economy. Where are they going to go get these jobs? How are they going to feed their families if you disband the army? You loose control and track of these people and they are the very people you want to know.

I said, if you pay them we register them. We understand who they are. We have this entire database of these people. Not interested. I mean they could not see how that could be valuable or at least that was the impression he gave me. It was surreal; it was through the looking glass.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Were any of his staff there or was it just you?

JAMES TORGLER: Oh yes, well it was him and Gardner. If there was anybody else I do not remember them because I was focused totally on him. Gardner was his military assistant and I

understand since he has retired. He may have had one or two other traveling companions but I could not tell you who they were.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK. And on your side it was just you?

JAMES TORGLER: It was just me. I think our COM's officer was there, Lieutenant Colonel Shalley. She may have also retired by now. But yes, Slocombe was, I was supposed to give him a quick update on where we were with the office and which Iraqi's I had been talking to. And in retrospect it is kind of curious why he did not have Paul there, but, I do not know where Paul was.

But we got to talking and yes, when he casually mentioned that he thought, he did not say that they would, he goes, well you know, we are thinking that we might just disband this army because they are this and that and everything else and I was dumbfounded. I was, just kind of stared at him and said, you can not. But, yes, they did.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Paul Hughes got away, he was in the United States that day.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes, OK, alright, yes. Because yes, I remember he came back and was also what the heck happened? How did that happen?

CHARLES FERGUSON: He was dumbfounded.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes. I will have to look, I might have an email where I, where we had talked about it about that time. I saved all of my emails from that in a special folder at which is on Army knowledge online, so they are still there. And I will look and see what I have got from that time period.

CHARLES FERGUSON: I would love it if you could do that. Did you speak with Jay Garner about this?

JAMES TORGLER: By that time, Jay was tough to get to. By the time Bremer showed up, Jay was kind of shadowing him and I think Jay will tell you that Bremer, you know, was giving him the impression that frankly he could not wait for Jay to leave either.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes.

JAMES TORGLER: Because a week later, we had a little meeting, our little party out back. The party of the 200. We did not invite any of the CPA'ers. It was just us. Those that were going to stay, stayed and the rest of us all went home. Because it was clear our services were no longer needed.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Another detail but I think important question.

JAMES TORGLER: Sure.

CHARLES FERGUSON: You said that the conscripts would not return.

JAMES TORGLER: No.

CHARLES FERGUSON: But if I recall correctly, it was mainly conscripts who were registering and who were being given a \$20 payment.

JAMES TORGLER: Sure.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Not primarily the officers.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes, because it was money. If you think about the motivation- if you come and register we will give you \$20. These are people who had nothing. I mean most of them had thrown away their uniforms and weapons and all that other stuff. I mean, but think of the value. I mean if you are starting an army, who do you want?

Do you want a basic guy who basically does not know how to stand in a line or do you want a guy who has some knowledge, who has some education, who can be part of this solution rather than yet another guy who just needs to be ordered around because if you get an army of conscripts, well that is why our generals are resisting a draft. I mean it takes more folks to manage them than if you can get somebody who has some experience and who has some reason to want to belong.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Are the conscripts, are you ...

JAMES TORGLER: I mean yes, I could do that in downtown Tampa if I put out a call for X- whatever. You show up and sign your name on a form, I will give you \$20 bucks. I would have a crowd tomorrow.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK, so – these plans for putting the Iraqi army back to work guarding the borders, providing security and so on. Officers are not going to be doing foot patrols are they? I mean, who are going to be the enlisted man?

JAMES TORGLER: Well ...

CHARLES FERGUSON: Would it be those conscripts willing to return or those conscripts who passed some kind of ability test or trained ...

JAMES TORGLER: Well think about what we are talking about now. If I am talking about specific geographical assignment, whether it was along the boarder or on patrols. If I get as many of the warrants as I can, as many lieutenants and captains and majors, I can organize them into key teams and what I can do is I can put one of those with each American squad and stretch my resources and stretch my knowledge base. So that I got kind of what they were doing in '04 was they were getting an interpreter who knew the area, who knew the people.

I mean, one of the things that Slocombe said that did not ring true was that I think I read in his or Bremer's statement was that the army was discredited. We did not want to put that back on the street. That is true if you talk about the Republican Guard. But every Iraqi I talked to had enormous pride in their army, not the Republican Guard. That was Saddam's thugs.

But the army, the base army, because of the history of that army and what it had been able to do from the '30's on. I mean they did not have a problem with the regular army guys, it was the Republican Guard, the special Republican Guard, all those Neo-Nazi's that worked for Saddam.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK, yes, understood.

JAMES TORGLER: Yes.

CHARLES FERGUSON: But with regard to who was going to be used. So, this force that was initially going to be 40,000 and eventually went up to 100,000 or more in your plans was going to be exclusively the officers or ...

JAMES TORGLER: Well ...

CHARLES FERGUSON: Was it going to be officers plus those conscripts who wanted to come back ...

JAMES TORGLER: Right, right, it was going to be pretty much everybody who came back we would take back and give some money to.

JAMES TORGLER: I got to register them; I want to know where you are from. I want to know where you work. I want to know everything about you that I can find out. However, from that a group would have been called out to do this security work. Another group, I mean, some we would have just paid off and said thank you for your service. I mean, because you know, in any group, every group is a Bell curve.

So the left hand side would have been chopped off and sent home. The right hand side that we could have used that had skills, I mean particularly, what we were looking for were engineering guys so that we could start with some of the de-mining because they still had a big unexploded ordinance problem and I would rather have the Iraqi's do that then our units. We do not have that many units.

So if I can get some engineers. If I can get infantry and armor types I can organize them into units of some size and we would apply. Yes, if we got conscripts that would be great, but frankly I did not expect to get many. I mean we were going to cast a net and whatever got scooped up in it we were going to use the best of what we could use.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Paul said he was negotiating with two different sets of army officers. One the independent military gathering, which is probably the people you met with.

JAMES TORGLER: Right at the Assassin's Gate.

CHARLES FERGUSON: And there was another one who's name I can not recall.

JAMES TORGLER: I can not remember.

CHARLES FERGUSON: And between them they had registered he said by midnight they had registered 137,000.

JAMES TORGLER: Sounds about right. One was 55,000 and then if you add the other, the Assassins' Gate crowd had about 55,000 and the other one had whatever it was. But together that number sounds right.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Well he said the Independent Military Gathering kept registering more and more people.

JAMES TORGLER: Well yes they did because ...

CHARLES FERGUSON: Nationwide career network and eventually he said by May 9, they got up to 100,000 and this other group had about 37,000.

JAMES TORGLER: I remember our first meeting that they threw out the first number that we had 55,000 and were adding to it. I remember writing that down.

CHARLES FERGUSON: And this was mostly officers or mostly conscripts.

JAMES TORGLER: It was a mix. They had put out what we in the army would call a "net call" and everybody was responding, especially with the prospect of getting paid because they had not been paid in- I remember one guy told me they had not been paid in three months. And we were saying OK, let's make plans. You guys get the list together, we will figure it out.

I mean we had talked about, OK where is everybody located, what banks, you know what post offices are we going to have to go to because you have to pay these guys in cash and no electronic banking system. And so, we were getting down to the logistics of how do I do this. How, and as I remember having an explanation with them, of you understand I can not have a line of 50,000 guys. It will take me several days or weeks to get this done. And they thought that through and said yes, you are absolutely right. We can not do that all in one day. So I had thrown back on them, OK, you tell me how, where, what locations do we want to use. How do we bring, I mean we were almost to that level of planning when the proclamation came out.

CHARLES FERGUSON: OK, Slocombe and Bremer also said that they drafted a draft order, a draft of the disbanding order on May 10 and sent it to a number of people including they said to Jay Garner, to Abizaid and to McKiernan.

JAMES TORGLER: Sure, I cannot dispute that. But when Jay tells me he did not know anything about it, I tend to believe Jay.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes. OK.

JAMES TORGLER: So. I mean, yes they may have but once again remember where we were. We were in a palace with intermitted electricity, even then intermitted connectivity. You know if it had truly been important they would have called a meeting and said guys you need to look at this. So, that is just my opinion.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Yes. OK. Thank you sir very, very much.

JAMES TORGLER: Not a problem.

CHARLES FERGUSON: Bye, bye.

JAMES TORGLER: Bye, bye.

END