

The Advisor



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Iraqi Army building leaders

Regional Training Center Master
Course graduates 31

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The faces of Iraqi soldiers and police have been altered to protect their identities.

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>> FROM THE COVER

An Iraqi soldier proudly reads his graduation certificate during the Master Trainer graduation ceremony in Taji, Iraq Apr. 13.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Andrew Davis

>> IRAQI POLICE: FOREIGN MILITARY SALES



Photo by Ron Holbrook

Drivers back a new Nissan Patrol SUV off of a loading ramp so that the vehicle can be identified, documented and transferred to the Iraqi Police force. Iraqi Police from Baghdad received these vehicles as part of a 180 vehicle shipment that arrived at the Baghdad Police College in February, procured through the Foreign Military Sales Program.

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Iraqi Army transformed into national force

By Fred W. Baker III

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – In the past year, the Iraqi army has transformed into a national force that has deployed across the country in operations that show its increasing combat capabilities, a senior commander there said Apr. 17.

“There should be no mistake on the behalf of anyone that the Iraqi army is a national army,” said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Robin Swan, commander of the Coalition Army Advisory Training Team. “Just over the past year, it has made a tremendous, tremendous impact in areas throughout Iraq. In as short as nine to 12 months ago, [it was unimaginable] that battalions and a division headquarters from al Anbar province would be utilized throughout ... Iraq. But that is exactly what has happened.”

In a joint news conference with Iraqi Army Chief of Staff Gen. Babakir, Swan cited recent successful deployments by Iraqi forces outside of their home provinces as signs of a growing, mobile, capable army.

“An entire division worth of soldiers deployed to Basra in less than five days. Any army in the world would find that type of deployment a very difficult one to do over the distances, ...” Swan said.

The general said that, together with Iraqi leaders, they are focused on the force generation, replenishment and sustainment of the Iraqi Army.

He said the Iraqi army’s rapid expansion will continue through the end of this year as the service moves toward 52 combat brigades and 13 Iraqi Army divisions. Over the past six months, the Iraqi Army has added five brigade combat teams and is in the process of adding two more that are in training now. Those battalions will be fielded this summer, Swan said.

Speaking on foreign military sales, Swan said the Iraqi Ministries of Defence and Interior have pumped about \$2.6 billion in the foreign military sales program since 2006. About \$900 million in equipment and other items have been delivered to the Ministry of Defence, and about \$300 million to the Ministry of Interior.

Swan said plans are to continue modernize forces within the Iraqi government’s ability to provide funding. The force will be modernized in a sequenced plan that will increase the quality of the Iraqi forces over time.

“A lot of the equipment ... required by the Iraqi Army is for both the internal security of the Iraqi population, as well as at some point in time being able to protect the territorial integrity of Iraq,” Swan said. ■

what key leaders are saying

>> **GEORGE W. BUSH,**
President of the United States



“Iraq is the convergence point for two of the greatest threats to America in this new century - al-Qaida and Iran.

If we succeed in Iraq after all that al-Qaida and Iran have

invested there, it would be a historic blow to the global terrorist movement.”

>> **ABDUL QADIR MOHAMMAD JASIM,**
Iraqi Minister of Defence

“The plan we have designed is clear. It says that Basra and the suburban areas have to be thoroughly searched.

Even the areas lying outside Basra will be searched ...

The most important point to note here is that the people were responsive.”



>> **BARHAM SALIH,**
Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister



“My view is that what happened could well be a turning point in the political alignments of Iraq. What Maliki did in taking on his own constituents can give him the

credentials to be a national leader rather than the leader of a Shia sect.”

Gates foresees fewer troops in Iraq in 2009

By Fred W. Baker III

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Apr. 11 he is confident there will be fewer U.S. troops in Iraq in 2009, but added that the drawdown process has gone somewhat more slowly than he thought it would last year.

This comes as U.S. Army Gen. David H. Petraeus returns to Iraq after a week of testimony and meetings in and around the nation's capital to begin what Gates called a "major force realignment" there. Gates and Joint Chiefs Chairman U.S. Navy Adm. Mike Mullen met with journalists at the Pentagon.

All five surge brigades are expected to be out of Iraq by the end of July, leaving 15 combat brigades in the country.

By the time the surge drawdown is finished by the end of July, the U.S. will have rearranged its forces in Iraq, redrawn its battle lines, reduced its presence in some areas and shifted more responsibility to the Iraqi Security Forces, Gates said. Petraeus then will assess the results of the changes before any other troop reductions are planned.

"The only prudent course of action is to pause the drawdowns for a period of time ... to assess what impact, if any, all this will have had," Gates said. Petraeus asked for 45 days, but President Bush yesterday guaranteed the general "all the time he needs."

Petraeus then will recommend whether to hold troop levels steady or recommend further drawdowns, Gates said. But, beyond Petraeus' evaluation, other officials will continue to evaluate troop levels there, Gates said.

"I certainly hope ... that conditions will allow us to remove more troops by year's end," the secretary said.

But only time will tell, he acknowledged.

"We are all realistic. The history of this conflict has demonstrated that we must always be prepared for the unpredictable, and that we must be extremely cautious with our every step," Gates said. "We cannot get the end game wrong."

Gates testified before Congress that he no longer thinks the United States will be

able to get down to 10 combat brigades in Iraq by the end of this year.

"I think that the process has gone a little slower," he said. The secretary said he came to that conclusion during his February visit to Baghdad, in which Petraeus detailed his planned adjustments. It was then that the general asked for a brief period of consolidation and evaluation after the five surge brigades redeployed, Gates said.

A 45-day pause in troop reductions would yield a mid-September decision point on further troop-level adjustments, Gates noted. "And at that point, it seems to me that trying to withdraw five brigade combat teams [to get down to 10 before the end of this year] would be a real challenge," he said. Petraeus has persuaded him that "probably would be too quick," the secretary added.

As he and other officials have said all along, Gates noted, troop-level decisions depend on what happens in Iraq.

"I think we're going to have to wait and see whether the Iraqi Security Forces will have been able to take on new responsibilities, whether their new battalions are in the fight, [and] whether the political process has continued," Gates said. "I think it really is based on the situation

on the ground, and I think we'll just have to take it a step at a time."

Still, Gates expressed confidence that there will be fewer U.S. troops in Iraq next year.

"I am confident that we will have a lower number of troops in 2009. Again, I am not saying when in 2009, but I believe we will have a lower number troops in Iraq in 2009," the secretary said.

Prime factors in considering further troop reductions are Iraqi provincial elections planned for this fall and whether Petraeus needs the troops there for election-related security.

"The role of democracy in Iraq remains an important part of our goal, and frankly, I think that there has been significant progress in that regard," Gates said.

The Iraqi government has passed a provincial powers law, planned for provincial elections this fall and national elections next year, and there has been greater interaction among the councils, Gates said.

"This looks to me, particularly for a country that has never experienced this kind of governance before, as significant progress. So I think it remains not just a goal, but one that is quite viable," he said.

When asked about the president's commitment for more troops in Afghanistan in 2009, Gates said he believes it's important that the United States commit

See DRAWDOWN, Page 5



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Bailey

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Stuart Sword coordinates with Capt. Abusef, commander of 1st Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, to search for a possible improvised explosive device.



Photo courtesy of Multi-National Division–Baghdad Public Affairs

Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment “Gimlets,” 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conduct inspections at a joint check point with the Iraqi Police in Beni Zaid, west of Baghdad Apr. 6. Soldiers taught the Iraqi Police techniques to search vehicles for weapons and explosives.

From DRAWDOWN, Page 4

to staying in the fight there.

Mullen noted that further troop reductions in Iraq will free up the force to provide more soldiers in Afghanistan. Should the Army not be able to further reduce its presence in Iraq, that could put a crunch on “dwell time” at home stations for troops returning from deployment, he acknowledged.

“The available forces in Iraq, should drawdowns continue, are the ones that offer potential to put more troops in Afghanistan and to build dwell time back here,” Mullen said. He said the United States has the forces to remain at post-surge levels in Iraq for “a significant period of time” if necessary. “[But] we would be unable to fill the requirements in Afghanistan,” he said.

U.S. Marines will fill a NATO requirement for up to 3,500 additional troops in Afghanistan through November. After that, there are no plans to send more U.S. troops yet, Mullen said.

The NATO International Security Assistance Force commander has asked for up to three more combat brigades -- as many as 15,000 troops -- for the mission there. During the NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania, last week, some

NATO allies signaled they would send more forces. Still, officials did not get the kind of commitments they were expecting, Gates said.

Asked if Iran is playing a greater role in training and directing “special group” militias in Iraq, Gates replied that he doesn’t know if there has been an increase or whether “stirring the situation up has exposed more of what had been there, but was not evident.”

“I think that there is some sense of an increased level of a supply of weapons in support to these groups,” he said. “But whether it’s a dramatic increase, ... I just don’t know.”

Gates and Mullen both were asked if Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, whose forces clashed with Iraqi forces recently, was considered an enemy of the United States. Both leaders said that as long as Sadr cooperates with the elected government of Iraq, he is not considered an enemy. Given Sadr’s powerful influence in Iraq, both said they would prefer to work with him.

“Certainly the ceasefire he asked for many months ago ... has had a positive effect, and he seems certainly to have a following that has followed that and significantly impacted on the reduction of violence,” Mullen said. “But he clearly can have the opposite impact, as well.”

“Sadr clearly is a very important and key

player in all this. Exactly where he’s headed and what impact he’ll have long term ... is out there still to be determined,” the admiral said.

Gates said anyone who is prepared to work within the political process in Iraq peacefully is not an enemy of the U.S.

“We want him to work within the political process in Iraq. He has a large following, and I think that it’s important that he become a part of the process,” Gates said.

Gates also fielded questions about the Defense Department’s supplemental funds yet to be approved by Congress. The secretary said officials still are crunching the numbers on what the fiscal 2009 supplemental request will be. It should be ready to present to Congress within weeks, he said. Meanwhile, the department is waiting “patiently” for the remaining \$102 billion in supplemental funds for fiscal 2008, he added.

“The fact is, we begin to run out of money to pay the Army in June,” Gates said. “It would interrupt contracts at the depots for repairing equipment. The implications are significant, and even the delay has consequences for [base realignment and closure] and for family housing, for procurement. ... We really, really need that supplemental as quickly as possible.” ■



Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Meg Harvey

An Iraqi policeman, along with Iraqi soldiers, engage in conversation with U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Brian Snyder, Platoon Sergeant of Comanche Troop, 4th Battalion, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at a security checkpoint.

Master Instructor Course graduates its first and finest

By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Charlene Sipperly

MNSTC-I Public Affairs



TAJI, Iraq – The Regional Training Center Master Instructor Course held its first course consisting of 31 hand-picked Iraqi Army master trainers here Mar. 26 through Apr. 13.

The course produces Iraqi Army master instructors who will in turn either be trainers at the Master Instructor course here in Taji, or be part of a mobile training team that will travel throughout Iraq to regional training centers and provide oversight and site evaluations to instructors at those centers.

“Eight of these graduates are being selected to teach the first Iraqi-taught Master Instructor Course that will be starting here May 6th,” said U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Howard Anderson, Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq, Taji Master Instructor Course, senior noncommissioned officer in charge. “They will have Coalition oversight, but the Iraqis will be doing the instruction.”

The 19-day course is instructor-led for the first six days and then the students lead their own classes and practical exercises with the curriculum provided. The course ends with the students developing and writing their own lesson plans and instructing them.

“This is probably the best course and class (of students) I’ve ever had since I’ve been in Iraq - and I’ve been doing this for two years,” Anderson said.

The mission of the course is to empower Iraqi mentors by providing them in-depth training in effective communication, equal opportunity, training identification, development and execution. The course is hands-on performance oriented training.

“You are the start for this school and the Iraqi Army,” said Iraqi Army Staff Maj. Gen. Bashar, Tactical Training commander, who hand-picked the first attendees of the school. “Every instructor should be proud of what they have achieved and to have been chosen for this school.”

The Master Instructor Course candidates must complete and pass an assessment test done by the regional commanders and must be able to read and write effectively to attend the course. These standards ensure a quality instructor is produced in each graduate.

“The good part of the training is that we applied what we learned, developing the way that we train,” said Iraqi Army Sgt. Joseph Jacob, Master Instructor Course student. “We have learned how to use the combined experiences that the NCOs have in developing and improving our skills.”

The Master Instructor must be continuously developed. The



Photo courtesy of Regional Training Center - Taji

Iraqi Army students from the Master Instructor Course at Regional Training Center - Taji engage in the practical field training portion of the curriculum. The course provides hands-on performance oriented training.

students must complete the Master Instructor Course, conduct the required number of instruction hours per month identified by the Tactical Training Command, perform to the set standard put forth by the TTC, and demonstrate dedication to the responsibility and role of being a Master Instructor.

“You went through a curriculum and training that was second to none in the history of the Iraqi Army for NCO development,” stated U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Robin Swan, Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq, Coalition Army Advisory Training Team commanding general, addressing the students.

“You must take this charge very seriously,” said Swan, speaking to the position of becoming a Master Instructor.

Future graduates will be sent back to their regional training centers to become training NCOs for their centers. They will conduct instructor courses directed to improve the overall quality of training at those sites.

Their goal is to mentor and provide feedback and oversight for their command and its instructors. This will lead to a better quality of instruction and produce a better quality of soldier for the Iraqi Army.

“You will create the foundation from this training for the Iraqi Army,” said Bashar. ■



Photos by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Andrew Davis



Creating Master Instructors

The Iraqi Army Master Instructor Course graduated its first group of hand-picked instructors at the Regional Training Center - Taji Apr. 13. Of the 31 graduates, eight will remain as instructors for the first Iraqi-taught Master Instructor Course starting in May, and will be part of a mobile training team that will travel to Iraq's regional training centers. The remaining 23 graduates will become training noncommissioned officers at their units.



Iraqi Air Force continues to excel

By U.S. Army Capt. David F. Roy

MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD

– Although still in the early stages of development, the Iraqi Air Force has planned, executed, and monitored more than 100 missions in support

of Iraqi ground security forces in the past few weeks.

The Iraqi Air Force has seen a significant increase in capacity and capability over the last 13 months. The number of assigned personnel has increased from 915 in February 2007 to 1,344 assigned personnel in March 2008. The fleet of aircraft has similarly undergone a growth spurt utilizing nine different airframes and reaching a current total of 59 aircraft. The Iraqi Air Force increased the number of sorties by 1000 percent from 30 to 300 per week.

Since January 2008, the Iraqi Air Force has graduated 116 warrant officers and 50 commissioned officers from the Iraqi Air Force Academy located in Taji. These personnel will become the foundation on

which the new Iraqi Air Force is being built.

The Iraqi Air Force was tasked with the mission to support the Iraqi ground forces during recent operations in Basra with personnel transportation, medical evacuation, logistical resupply, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The Iraqi Air Force planned and executed the forward deployment of six rotary winged and five fixed winged aircraft to complete this mission set. The aircraft included four Mi-17, two Huey II helicopters, two C-130 and three CH2000 single engine reconnaissance aircraft.

The CH2000 reconnaissance aircraft executed 53 missions for a total of 91 hours of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance over the Basra battlespace. The efforts of these pilots provided valuable intelligence on enemy concentrations and movements, bomb damage assessment and current status of Iraqi ground units.

The rotary winged aircraft performed 30 missions including logistic support missions moving food, water and medical supplies throughout the area of operations. They also provided perimeter defense, supported several leaflet drops, transported Iraqi Security

Forces to the fight and evacuated the wounded heroes.

“This is a historic milestone in the growth of the Iraqi Air Force to be able to effectively support on-going operations in Basra with critical air mobility and airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities,” said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Brooks Bash, Multi National Security Transition Command – Iraq, Coalition Air Force Training Team commander.

The two Iraqi C-130 Hercules proved once again that it is a rugged and dependable aircraft worthy of its namesake. During various operations, these Iraqi C-130 aircraft and their crews moved 175 tons of cargo including 127 tons of ammunition, 18 tons of food, and eight tons of medical supplies from New al Muthana Air Base in Baghdad to Basra. They were integral in the rapid deployment of over 800 military and civilian security personnel and effected the medical evacuation of 69 Iraqi soldiers from Basra to Baghdad.

“The Iraqi people can be very proud that their air force is making a real difference in the fight against those criminal elements who seek to harm innocent Iraqi citizens and disregard the rule of law,” said Bash. ■

U.S. Airmen mentor Iraqi Airmen in repairing parts of an Iraqi C-130 Hercules aircraft on New Al Muthana Air Base in Baghdad.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Cecilio M. Ricardo Jr.

Foreign Military Sales boosting Iraqi Police capabilities

By Ron Holbrook

Coalition Police Assistance Training Team Public Affairs



BAGHDAD – The Iraq Ministry of Interior has invested heavily in the Foreign Military Sales program in the past year with purchases topping \$181 million to sustain and supply its growing police forces with quality weaponry, ammunition and vehicles.

That figure could increase substantially this year to more than \$590 million as approved Foreign Military Sales cases or orders are implemented.

There are currently nine FMS approved cases pending that total \$272.4 million and six more cases with signed Letters of Offer and Acceptance for \$137 million in purchases for Department of Border Enforcement equipment and support for housing and maintenance at Baghdad Police College and four other police training academies, including those for the national police.

“We wanted to raise the level of our troops and their capabilities and ensure they have the best quality equipment,” said Iraqi Maj. Gen. Abdulameer, Assistant Deputy Ministry for Infrastructure, as one reason the Ministry selected the Foreign Military Sales program. He added that the FMS program also allows the Ministry of Interior to rely on the contracting experience of the U.S. in coordinating such large orders.

The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency operates the FMS program that allows the transfer of defense equipment, goods and services to friendly nations to help those countries defend against aggression, strengthen their security forces and promote regional stability. There are 126 countries that have participated in the program to simplify their acquisition efforts.

“Officials in the Iraqi Ministry of Interior are serious about getting the best quality products from the FMS program,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dan Gilewitch, FMS program manager for Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq Security Assistance Office. “Both Abdulameer and Iraqi Maj. Gen. Jassim, head of the Ministry Of Interior Contracting Directorate, are adamant about receiving timely deliveries of quality FMS equipment so they can issue it to the provincial police forces throughout Iraq; they are constantly asking us questions and forcing the issue when it comes to FMS deliveries and pricing.”

Gilewitch said once a Letter of Offer and Acceptance is received from the Ministry of Interior, the U.S. government serves as a buyer’s agent and solicits competitive bids. It also makes the official contract and tracks the order, freeing up more time for the Ministry of Interior officials to concentrate on other important tasks.



Photo by Ron Holbrook

Nissan Maxima police cruisers and Nissan Patrol SUV police vehicles are staged for distribution. These vehicles were part of a 180 vehicle shipment that arrived at the Baghdad Police College in February. The Ministry of Interior will receive 2,600 vehicles procured through the FMS program this year.

In the past year, the Ministry of Interior’s FMS orders have included 2,600 police vehicles, more than 160 million rounds of ammunition, and thousands of AK-47 rifles and other weapons. These orders have come from Romania, Montenegro, Ukraine and the U.S. as well as component parts from countries all over the world.

One objective of the Foreign Military Sales program, Gilewitch said, is to quickly improve the Iraqi Security Forces capabilities and to facilitate a smooth transition to total Iraqi control of their own security. It also will make them increasingly more self-reliant and capable in the public’s perception as they become a stronger force, he said.

The FMS program is becoming a valuable tool for the Iraqi government, Gilewitch added. It is also a corruption free program because the transactions are transparent and well documented. Another advantage is that FMS procurements are normally delivered in a package concept. “If a country buys vehicles, then spare parts, training, manuals and logistical support is included,” said Gilewitch. “Even shipment and delivery can be provided.”

He added the Iraqi Army and Air Force also rely on the FMS program for major purchases. The Iraqi Air Force has sustained its C-130 fleet through the FMS process for the past two years. Combined, the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence now have more than \$1.3 billion worth of Foreign Military Sales purchases in the delivery pipeline, Gilewitch added.

“I am proud to play a small part in this effort to help supply the police and security forces of the Ministry of Interior as they carry the fight to the insurgents,” Gilewitch said. “It has been a rewarding experience.” ■

Iraqi Army receives new medical equipment

By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Anthony J. Koch

MNSTC-I Public Affairs



TAJI, Iraq

– The Iraqi Army is making progress in the medical field by recently acquiring seven portable oxygen generating units. The oxygen generators have

the capability to take the normal, everyday oxygen from the air and transform it to 95 percent medical grade oxygen.

“Iraq has no medical grade gas at all of any kind – particularly oxygen,” said U.S. Army Col. Richard Ellison, Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq assistant chief of staff of health affairs. “A lot of people don’t consider oxygen as medication, but it is the most basic form of medication that exists.”

Medical grade oxygen is used for breathing treatments, surgical procedures

and various other forms of patient care.

Iraqi medical soldiers attended a three day course taught by Task Force 62, 541st Medical Logistics Company on the oxygen generators at Camp Taji earlier this month. The class covered the proper safety, maintenance and procedures used when operating the oxygen generators.

“A lot of people don’t consider oxygen as medication, but it is the most basic form of medication that exists.”

U.S. Army Col. Richard Ellison,
*Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq
Health Affairs assistant chief of staff*

“The generators take the 21 percent oxygen from the air we breathe by compressing it and filtering all other non-essential gases to produce the 95 percent pure oxygen that is ready for medical use,” said Ellison. “They can fill up four ‘D’ size oxygen cylinders at one time.”

The Iraqi Army has currently received seven oxygen generators with 24 more machines on the way. The 541st Medical Logistics team worked with the army to first install the system and then create the proper training required to use the system.

The generators are going to be distributed to the various clinics throughout Iraq. They will be going to three surgical sites, field hospitals and the multiple level two clinics – clinics that have the capabilities to provide services beyond basic care to include labs, x-ray and pharmacy.

Currently the Ministry of Health is working on getting more of these capabilities through creating a medical grade oxygen plant.

“We have helped them with medical grade oxygen, but this is the first time they have been able to produce it,” said Ellison. “It is all very exciting.” ■



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Eric J. Martinez

Kliman Hermis, interpreter, Task Force 62nd Medical Brigade, shows Iraqi army attendees how to use the oxygen generator in Taji, Iraq.

MAN ON THE STREET

What have you done for the Iraqi Security Forces that you’re most proud of?

U.S. ARMY SPC. MICHAEL ANDERSON,
Headquarters Commandant / Supply

“I support them in by supplying the interpreters with vests and helmets that they use to complete various missions.”



U.S. AIR FORCE TECH. SGT. JOSEPH PEERY,
J1 / Rest and Relaxation



“The biggest thing I do is help with the morale issues of the coalition forces here at MNSTC-I which in turn helps the troops to deal better with the Iraqis.”

U.S. ARMY SGT. 1ST CLASS JOHNNY WELCH,
Coalition Army Advisory Training Team / Fielding

“I supply the additional units and supplies the Iraqis need that they will need to complete the rebuilding of Iraq.”



Iraqi Army discovers IED materials during clearing operations

BAGHDAD – During a clearing operation in Mahmudiyah, Iraq, in support of Operation Marne Piledriver, Iraqi soldiers from 25th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division uncovered five weapons caches Apr. 15.

The caches contained two 155 mm artillery rounds, one oxygen tank rigged as an improvised explosive device, a Katusha rocket launcher, two oxygen tanks, two 82 mm mortar tubes, a 3-foot tube of homemade explosives and multiple pressure strips.

Marne Piledriver is taking place in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), area of operations. While the focus of the operation is on capacity building, Iraqi Security Forces will simultaneously target remaining insurgent pockets with the help of Coalition forces.

–Multi-National Division – Center Public Affairs

Sons of Iraq lead MND-C Soldiers to weapons cache

TAMEEM – Sons of Iraq led Coalition soldiers and Iraqi policemen with 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police Division to a large weapons cache in Tameem, a town east of Baghdad, Apr. 14.

The cache was buried approximately 500 meters from the national police headquarters in Tameem.

The cache contained 389 82 mm mortar rounds, 96 125 mm tank rounds, 172 57 mm anti-aircraft rounds, 38 60 mm mortar rounds, 30 130 mm artillery rounds, 17 122 mm mortar rounds, 15 100 mm rockets, seven 155 artillery rounds, five 100 kg aircraft bombs and four 120 mm mortar rounds.

–Multi-National Division – Center Public Affairs

Iraq Security Forces kill seven, detain three suspects

BALAD – Seven al-Qaida in Iraq fighters were killed during an operation conducted by Tikrit Iraqi Police, Coalition forces and a Tikrit Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics Team Apr. 12.

Iraqi Security Forces conducted the operation to disrupt AQI operations in the Jazeera region of the Salah al-Din province. During a sweep of the objective area, enemy fighters engaged ISF, resulting in numerous firefights which left seven of the terrorists dead.

While searching the bodies of the enemy combatants, a suicide belt detonated, leaving four Coalition soldiers with shrapnel wounds. The wounded soldiers were immediately evacuated for medical treatment.

During the operation, ISWAT also seized a truck containing a suicide vest, several mortar rounds, rockets, detonation cord, a PKC rifle and 5,000 rounds of ammunition. Three suspected AQI terrorists were detained for questioning.

–Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs

Iraqi Security Forces detain 2 criminal leaders, 10 others in Basra

BASRA – Iraqi Security Forces detained two criminal leaders wanted by the Government of Iraq in separate operations Apr. 14 in Basra.

An Iraqi Emergency Response Unit captured the suspected leader and three other members of an improvised explosive device cell operating in the Basra area. Intelligence reports indicate the cell has been involved in multiple attacks against Iraqi and Coalition forces and the distribution of IEDs and illegal weapons.

In another operation in Basra, a Hillah Special Weapons and Tactics team detained the suspected leader of a criminal cell. The cell is responsible for attacks against Iraqi and Coalition forces. Seven suspected members of the cell were also detained.

The detaining of these men will disrupt criminal operations in Basra, likely decrease IED attacks and potentially lead to information about other cell leaders and activities in the area.

–Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs

Kirkuk transfers security from Iraqi Army to Police

KIRKUK – Responsibility for the traffic control point in Kirkuk was handed over from the Iraqi Army to the Iraqi Police in a ceremony at the Irbil traffic control point Apr. 14.

The ceremony signified the official transition for overall Kirkuk security to the police, and marks a critical shift from Marshal Law to the Rule of Law enforced by the local law enforcement authorities.

At the ceremony, the Kirkuk governor, Provincial Director of Police, Emergency Special Unit commander and the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division deputy commander spoke on the significance of the transfer from the Iraqi Army to the Iraqi Police. The four-week process of slowly transferring from IA to IP met its conclusion at the Irbil TRAFFIC CONTROL POINT as the last TRAFFIC CONTROL POINT transferred to the IP and the ESU.

–Multi-National Division – North Public Affairs

Iraqi Army Quick Reaction Force secures Quibla

QUIBLA – Soldiers from Quick Reaction Force 1 of the 1st Iraqi Army began a highly successful house-by-house search for illegal weapons in the town of Quibla, Apr. 12.

Quick Reaction Force 1 deployed from al-Anbar Province on Apr. 1 in support of Operation Charge of the Knight.

In the past two weeks, these response forces and local police, along with elements of the 14th Iraqi Army Division, cordoned off the city and established strategic points on the Quibla perimeter.

Operation Charge of the Knight is the first large-scale push into known strongholds of local militias and other criminal elements.

–Multi-National Division - South East Public Affairs