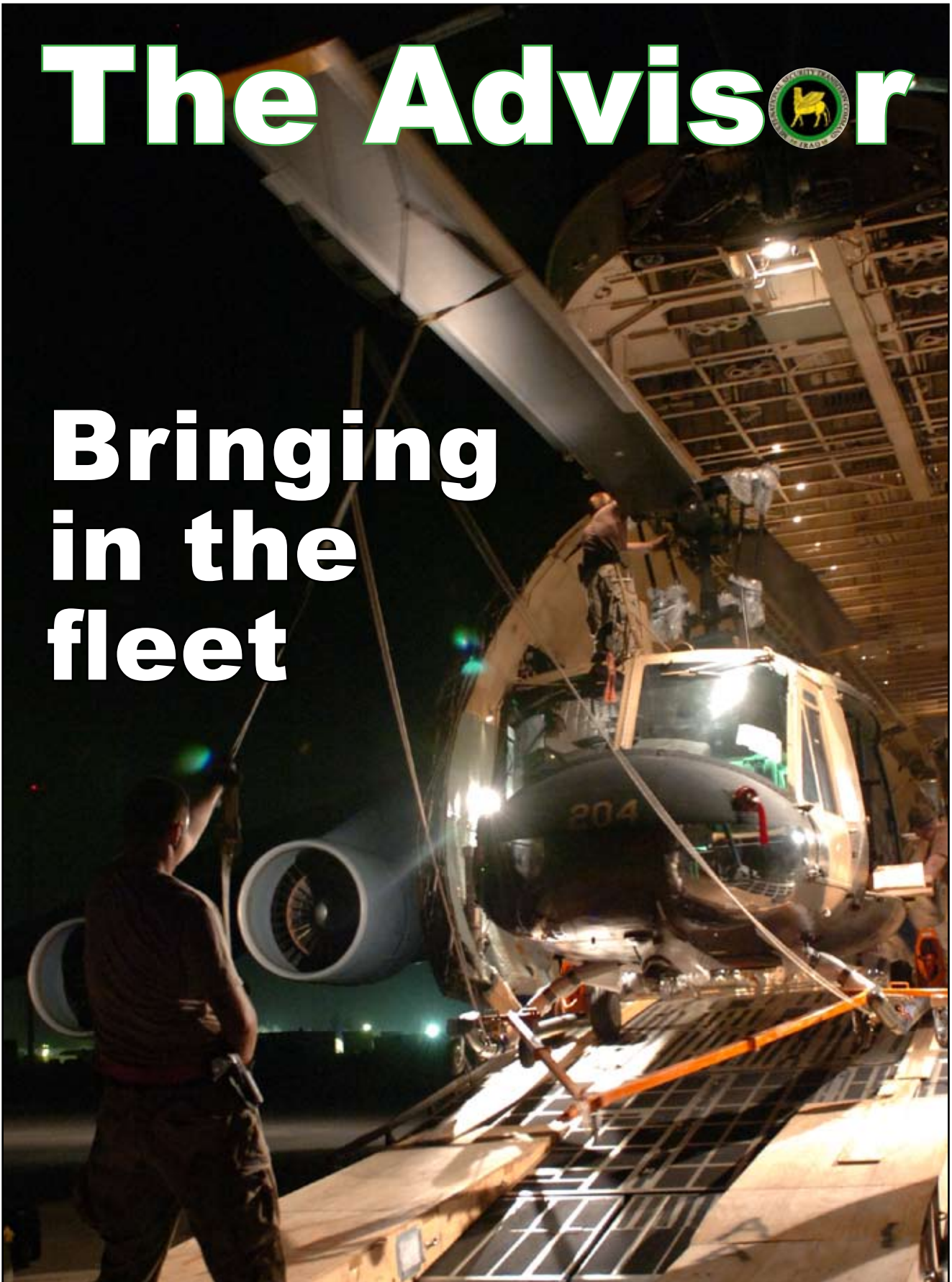


The Advisor

Bringing in the fleet



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

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ON THE COVER

A U.S. Air Force loadmaster guides one of five Huey II helicopters that were delivered to the Iraqi Air Force May 2 at New Al Muthanna Air Base in Baghdad.

Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz



DoD photo by Cherie A. Thurlby

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates speaks with Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi after meeting with Iraqi leaders at the Presidential Palace in Baghdad, Iraq, April 20.

Improved security will help Iraq's political progress, ambassador says

By Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The ongoing surge of Iraqi and U.S. security forces into Baghdad and parts of western Iraq is designed to tamp down insurgent violence and provide enough time for the fledgling government to sort out pressing political issues, the senior U.S. diplomat in Iraq said May 1.

"Security buys time," Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker told reporters at a Baghdad news conference. However, he emphasized, any improvement in security must go hand-in-hand with Iraqi government efforts to bring together disaffected elements of the population, namely the Sunnis and Shiites.

Crocker previously served in Baghdad as the first director for governance for the Coalition Provisional Authority between May and August 2003. He succeeded Zalmay Khalilzad as ambassador to Iraq on March 29. Khalilzad is now the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Achieving security in Iraq is "not an end in and of itself," Crocker explained. The Iraqis, he said, need time to institute "a political process to move forward with meaningful national reconciliation, which is why we pay so much attention to issues like de-Baathification reform, constitutional reform, hydrocarbon legislation, and so forth."

Crocker's principal mission in Baghdad, he said, is to assist and

support the Iraqi government's national reconciliation efforts. The more numerous Shiite Muslims within Iraq's population were systematically persecuted under the regime of the late dictator Saddam Hussein, who was a Sunni Arab. Much of today's violence in Iraq is staged by Sunni insurgents who lost power after Saddam's government collapsed during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Achieving reconciliation between Sunnis and Shiites will greatly assist the Iraqi government "to move ahead with the fulfillment of what they and we have all worked so hard for, which is a democratic, stable, secure Iraq that is a source of positive development in the region and beyond," Crocker said.

Meetings between Iraqi and neighboring-country ministers slated this week in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, are "critically important to Iraq's long-term success, as well," Crocker pointed out. The United States' top diplomat, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, also will be in Sharm El Sheikh.

"I'm encouraged by the fact that all of Iraq's neighbors have agreed that they will be at the table at a senior level in Sharm El Sheikh," Crocker said, noting that representatives from 60 countries are expected to attend.

The behavior of Iraq's neighbors "will have a crucial bearing on what happens inside Iraq," Crocker pointed out. And, it's therefore desirable, he added, that Iraq's neighbors "commit themselves to constructive roles and not destructive ones."

Helicopters land in Baghdad

Additional Huey IIs expand capabilities for Iraqi Air Force

By U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The Iraqi Air Force just added more muscle to its air capabilities – five more Huey II helicopters arrived at New Al Muthanna Air Base May 2. This delivery brings the number of helicopters to 10 out of a scheduled 16 that will make up the Iraqi Air Force 2nd Squadron's helicopter fleet. The Huey IIs are scheduled to be flown to the squadron's home at Taji Air Base.

Col. Mohammed, Iraqi Air Force headquarters staff, who requested his name be changed for security reasons and a 25-year air force veteran, described his feelings during the event.

"I am very happy to see these new helicopters," Mohammed said. "We are building a new Iraqi Air Force and this aircraft is very important because it will help us conduct combat and anti-terrorist operations."

This configuration of the helicopter is for battlefield mobility – to move troops in and out of the combat zone while directing fire on a target. The Huey II is capable of carrying 10 passengers, including two pilots and two gunners. "It's a versatile aircraft," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joe Sanders, Coalition Air Force Transition Team, director of program management.

Sanders explained that the Huey IIs delivered to the Iraqi Air Force are based on 1960 era Huey I airframes, which have been retrofitted in the United States with a new engine, transmission and upgraded avionics. The modification zeroes out the life of the aircraft. "It's like getting a rebuilt motor with a warranty," he said.

See HUEYS, Page 4



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Five Huey II helicopters packed into a Lockheed C5 Galaxy cargo aircraft prior to their unloading at New Al Muthanna Air Base in Baghdad May 2. The helicopters are scheduled to be flown to the Iraqi Air Force 2nd Squadron at Taji Air Base once assembled.



Photos by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Iraqi Air Force personnel hang on to a Huey II helicopter as it is towed away to its hanger after it was delivered to New Al Muthanna Air Base.

Iraqi Air Force adds helos to their fleet

From HUEYS, Page 3

He also said there is another need for the Huey II – there will be a counter-terrorism configuration introduced in the near future.

According to Sanders, the Huey II model brings with it something other than battle capabilities. It also helps develop Iraq's workforce by training personnel for the new equipment. The air force continues to train personnel with new skill sets to perform maintenance and upkeep on the helicopters. And the Huey II, aside from providing troop support during combat or reconnaissance operations can also be used for natural disasters like flooding.

This is the first time in the Iraqi Air Force's history that the Huey II platform has been used in its fleet of growing air power which includes the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, Mi-17 helicopters, Cessna Caravan, SAMA CH2000, Seabird Aviation Seekers and Hawker-Beechcraft King Air 350s.

"We are starting our air force with modern equipment which takes the Iraqi Air Force in the right direction," Mohammed said. "These helicopters

will not only help our security like the Baghdad Security Plan but also anywhere else, wherever they are needed."

Mohammed explained the five helicopters were partially disassembled so they could fit inside the Lockheed C5 cargo plane for their trip from the United States into Baghdad.

"It will take us two or three days to reassemble and test-fly the Huey IIs before we fly them to Taji," said Iraqi Air Force Warrant Officer Hamid who was present for the delivery.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Jeremy Brown, CAFTT Helicopter Program Manager, described another benefit of the Huey II - boosting the morale of the Iraqi population.

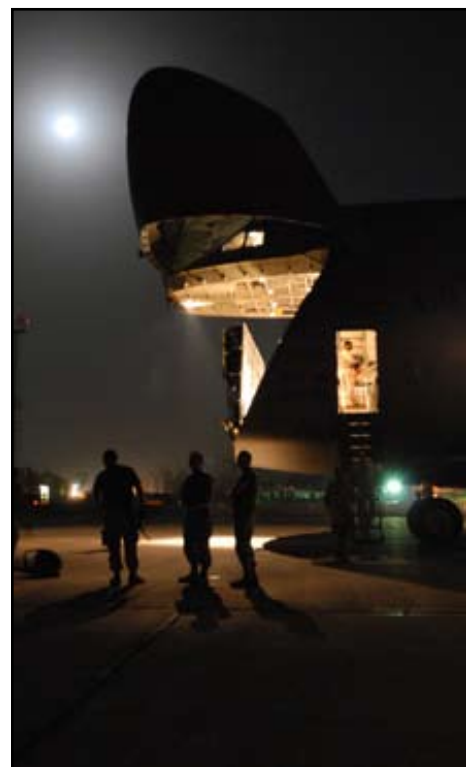
"The Iraqi people can see a helicopter they know belongs to them, because it has their flag on the tail, as well as the Iraqi Air Force emblazoned on the side," Brown said.

For now Hamid talks about the arrival of the new aircraft but he also looks toward the future of his country.

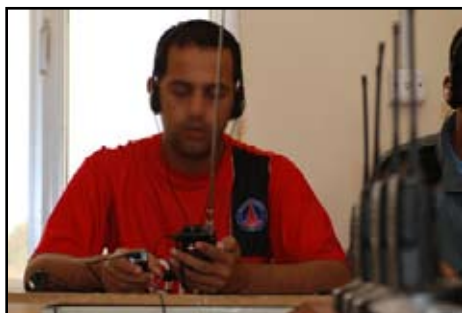
"I see Iraq getting saved – and people working happily together and working together with the other countries," Hamid said.



U.S. Air Force personnel prepare equipment to unload the five Iraqi Air Force Huey II helicopters.



The nose of a Lockheed C5 Galaxy aircraft opens for the unloading of the aircraft.



Photos By U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Christie Putz

Military intelligence steps up at Taji

By U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Christie Putz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq – A recent rewrite of the Iraqi Military Intelligence Academy's curriculum is giving students the knowledge they need to conduct operations in modern Iraq, the school commandant said.

"Before we taught intelligence for military people who were confronting another military army," Commandant Faisal said. "But now, because the Iraqi people and Iraqi region suffer from terrorists, we have put more focus on insurgents' work."

The terrorists are using different avenues to influence the population and thus gain their support in the fight, he said. The media has been used to sway opinion, as well as promised resources, such as medicine or access to clinics.

"We have to get every student and instructor informed well on how to tackle these opponents," the commandant said.

The school teaches students how to conduct intelligence operations on several fronts necessary to fight the insurgency: neutralizing enemy combatants, information operations, identifying damaged civil infrastructure and gaining population support.

The changes to the curriculum, while driven by outside influences, were designed and implemented by the cadre at the school.

Iraqi curriculum review committees developed the changes, with direction from their Coalition cadre and contractors, said U.S. Air Force Maj. Wade Mueller, a Coalition advisor at the school. The instructors were then given the requirements to meet the course's objectives and altered their lessons to incorporate the changes.

"These changes will affect the standards of education of the students here and those who are expecting to come here," Faisal

said. "The standard of the students will be much more powerful than before."

Previously, a disconnect was found between what was being taught at the school and what was being done once the soldiers made it out into the field, Mueller explained. A curriculum development committee convened to assess the effectiveness of the training and review critical tasks.

Their results showed that students suffered from a lack of solid doctrine, or organizational structure, he said. The team then defined the duties of each of the soldiers, and created additional guidance to assist in this area.

Academically, the resulting changes included adding another week of specialty training after the Basic Military Intelligence Course, as well as doubling the length of a cumulative field training exercise at the end of the course.

The current class is the first to go through the course with the revised material. However, Faisal said, this will not be the last time the curriculum will change. Instead, it will be continuously updated to keep up with current threats.

"Just recently the terrorists are using chlorine to poison people," Faisal said. These types of attacks, as well as other current events, are being used to positively affect the direction of the course.

The cadre is able to analyze the events, including what led up to them, to see how the intelligence community can possibly prevent future attacks by recognizing signs and devising counter tactics. These findings can then be relayed to the soldiers through updated lesson planning.

More than 1,300 students have passed through the course since its inception in August 2005, with 802 students in 2006 alone. The school currently has 27 Iraqi instructors and is scheduled for transition of authority from Coalition forces on June 1.



Top and bottom: Students of the Intelligence Academy's Low-Level Voice Intercept class demonstrate their ability to receive, analyze and record communications over airwaves. This is one of several intelligence specialty courses offered.

Iraqi military takes charge of training

By U.S. Air Force
Senior Airman Christie Putz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq — The Iraqi military is a few steps closer to training and managing their forces this week.

The Taji Regional Training Center, Iraqi Signal School and Taji Engineer School are now officially run by Iraqi forces, following transition of authority ceremonies at each location May 1.

“This marks an important day for us,” said Maj. Gen. Mohammed Najim Al Naqshbande, the commanding general for the Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command, during the first ceremony of the afternoon. “Cutting this ribbon is a simple act, but the meaning is much deeper.”

The transition shows progress in the way Iraqi forces are trained, he explained.

The general has seen the progress at the school first-hand.

“In September 2003, I came here and was asking myself whether or not one day this place could be rebuilt again,” he said. “And I can see now that this training center has been reestablished in the proper way.”

Over the course of the past year, Coalition advisors have continuously performed training readiness assessments on the schools to evaluate their ability to conduct operations.

The assessments provide insight to the school’s manning, equipping and facilities, as well as the level of training of their cadre. It provides information necessary to determine deficiencies in any of these areas, as well as areas where they may be excelling.

When the Iraqi commanders and Coalition advisors jointly determine that the school is ready for transition, and the assessments support that decision, an official transition of authority ceremony will occur.

“I would like to point out that the advisor’s role hasn’t changed significantly,” said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Terry Wolff, MNSTC-I Coalition



Photos by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Christie Putz

The commandant of the Iraqi Engineer School shows Maj. Gen. Mohammed Najim Al Naqshbande, the commanding general for the Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command, photos in the school’s “hall of history” during a Coalition to Iraqi forces transition of authority ceremony May 1.

Military Assistance Transition Team commanding general.

After transitioning, Coalition advisors remain in place but become more of an observer than a manager, and are available on an as-needed basis. By the time of the actual transition ceremony, however, most advisors are already playing this role, said Wolff.

The commandants of the schools and the training leadership each expressed their excitement about taking on the new responsibilities with the change of authority.

“I am quite sure that they will go forward and be successful,” the Iraqi general said.

Likewise, the Coalition advisors were confident in the school’s Iraqi leadership.

“Colonel Mohammed has come to the RTC with a very proactive state of mind,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Walter Easter, RTC Coalition advisor. “We have discussed how in the future it is important that this school continues to train its instructors so that they can be at the highest level of education possible. I feel sure that Colonel Mohammed will accomplish that task.”



Al Naqshbande and U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Terry Wolff, MNSTC-I Coalition Military Assistance Transition Team commanding general, discuss concerns at the Iraqi Signal School.



Senior leaders at the Taji Regional Training Center walk back into their building following the transition.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi SOF detain six suspected al-Qaida members during raid in Radwaniyah

RADWANIYAH — Iraqi Special Operations Forces captured six suspects linked to the al-Qaida network in Radwaniyah, who carried out attacks on local civilians and troops, during an operation conducted May 4. The operation was aimed at disrupting al-Qaida operations responsible for vehicle borne IED attacks in Baghdad.

During the raid of several residences in Radwaniyah village nine miles west of central Baghdad, ISOF detained their primary targets without incident. Seven other suspects were also detained during the operation.

The primary targets of this operation are allegedly involved in an insurgent network responsible for conducting attacks against local civilians, Iraqi Security Forces and coalition forces in the surrounding Radwaniyah and Baghdad areas.

ISOF also destroyed a vehicle believed to contain a VBIED. All civilians were cleared from the area prior to detonation.

No Iraqi or coalition forces were injured during this operation.

— *Multi-National Corps — Iraq Public Affairs Office*

Iraqi soldiers detain 3, find weapons cache

LUTIFIYAH — Iraqi forces detained three suspected terrorists and discovered weapons and ammunition in Lutifiyah April 30.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army

Division detained the suspected terrorists and found the cache during a routine combat operation.

While conducting a search of a Lutifiyah neighborhood, the soldiers discovered the weapons in a house.

The items captured included two hand grenades, two AK-47s and four magazines.

The suspects are being held for further questioning.

The items were destroyed during a controlled detonation conducted by the explosive ordnance team.

— *Multi-National Division – Center Public Affairs*

Suspected death-squad leader captured

BASRAH — Iraqi Special Operations Forces detained Sayyid Sallih Al-Jezzaani, an individual believed to be the leader of a rogue element of the Jaysh Al-Madhi militia near Basrah during a raid April 30.

Al-Jezzaani is allegedly linked with death squad activities and attacks against forces in Basrah.

He is suspected to have been responsible for providing insurgents with funding and weapons and assisting in the recruitment of new militia members. Additionally he is said to be linked to the Feb. 2007 murder of two Iraqi interpreters who worked with Coalition forces.

Seven other individuals were also detained during the operation. No Iraqi or Coalition forces were injured during this operation.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Physically training the forces

Iraqi army privates, or junoud, run the rain-soaked streets of the K-1 Iraqi Army Base near Kirkuk. The soldiers are entering the last of eight weeks of basic training at K-1's Regional Training Center.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Tuttle



Photo by U.S. Army Cpl. John Androski

Practice makes perfect

An Iraqi soldier from 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, exits a Bradley fighting vehicle during a joint raid with Coalition forces in the Ameriyah district of Baghdad. During the operation troops detained eight suspects and confiscated two assault rifles, one rocket-propelled grenade launcher and two RPG rockets.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi forces conduct intel driven operation

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Security Forces conducted an operation to capture several high-value individuals who were reportedly meeting in the Kadamiyah area April 29.

The targeted operation was conducted after receiving specific intelligence about the meeting.

Coalition forces established a security cordon around the area while waiting for Iraqi forces to get in position. Shortly after setting up the cordon, Iraqi and Coalition forces began receiving small arms fire.

Insurgents began burning tires in the streets south of the Al Sadr Mosque and near a children's hospital. The mosque and hospital did not catch fire, and later, emergency responders were able to extinguish the fire.

Several individuals were detained as a result of the operation and were turned over to the Iraqi security forces. Coalition Forces did not enter the mosque and withdrew from the area with the Iraqi forces after conducting the operation.

— *Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs*

Iraqi Security Forces launch raid seeking capture of suspected death squad leader

BASRAH — Iraqi Special Operations Forces have launched a raid aimed at the capture of a key individual linked to alleged death squad activity and attacks against Coalition forces in Basrah.

He is believed to be a rogue member of the Jaysh-Al-Madhi militia in the Basrah area.

The detainee is also alleged to be responsible for providing JAM with funding and weapons and assisting in the recruitment of new members.

The Iraqi SOF initiated the raid with coalition forces present as advisors.

More details on this operation will be released as they become available.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Seven suspected terrorists detained during central Baghdad raid operation

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Special Operations Forces conducted a morning operation on April 27 in Baghdad, capturing three suspects believed to be involved in insurgent activities.

Iraqi forces raided several residences in the Yarmouk neighborhood of central Baghdad and detained their targets without incident.

Iraqi forces also detained four other suspicious individuals who were present during the operation. Two vehicles containing explosives were destroyed. All civilians and detainees were cleared from the area before detonation.

The primary targets of this operation are alleged to be responsible for conducting insurgent activities in the Yarmouk area, for civilian kidnappings and murders as well as attacks on Coalition and Iraqi forces.

No Iraqi or Coalition forces were injured during this operation.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*