



Austin highlights security developments in Iraq

Story by
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Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commanding general, Multi-National Corps – Iraq spoke to members of the press from Camp Victory Sept. 22 regarding the current security situation in Iraq.

Austin touched on the low levels of violence in recent months, mentioned the Iraqi government taking responsibility for thousands of Baghdad Sons of Iraq members in October and expressed his confidence in the growing progress of Iraqi security forces.

“We have experienced continued low levels of violence, with 15 of the last 16 weeks remaining below 200 attacks per week,” Austin said. “In Baghdad, which is a city of roughly 6 million people, we have averaged less than 4 attacks per day for the last 13 weeks. This is truly remarkable and would have been hard to imagine just six month ago.”

Austin attributed the security gains to the hard work of the coalition and growing capability and development of the ISF.

“Iraqi security forces have improved tremendously,” Austin said. “They’re making great strides and have been busy fighting AQI and Shiite extremists and are increasingly in the lead.”

Austin also spoke about the upcoming transition of thousands of Sons of Iraq to Iraqi control. Next

week, the Iraqi government will take responsibility for 54,000 of the 98, 000 Sons of Iraq members. The Baghdad province SOI will be



Austin

transitioned first, followed by those throughout the rest of the country.

“We will be working with the government to provide job skills and training for those interested, and will ensure civilians are properly transitioned into civilian employment,” Austin said. “We’ll work through all the details to see that all individuals are paid and get meaningful jobs.”

Approximately 20 percent of Sol members will be integrated into the Iraqi security forces, with more than 9,000 having already transitioned into the police force. Others will be employed doing work for the ministries or rebuilding the countryside, Austin said.

“I think we’ve achieved a great measure of success,” Austin said. “The Government of Iraq will have a great opportunity next month to make some great progress, and MNC-I will stand side by side with them every step of the way.”

Austin noted the significant progress U.S. and Iraqi forces have made in reducing the presence of al-Qaeda and reducing the flow

of foreign fighters in the country, especially in Mosul, Diyala and Ninewa provinces, where joint operations began approximately two months ago.

Iraqi Security and coalition force operations in the north, west and in Baghdad have put al-Qaeda in disarray, Austin said.

“We have been fairly successful in the north and south in interdicting the flow of foreign fighters,” Austin said. “In Ninewa, we continue to pressure the al-Qaeda networks in and around Mosul. We’re having great effects in our efforts.”

In the end, Austin clearly stated although there is much work to be done, U.S. and Iraqi forces have made many improvements, noting the Sol transition and recent transition of Anbar province to Iraqi control

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and their government.

Austin closed by thanking servicemembers and civilians for their tremendous efforts as well as thanking the Polish contingent for their service in Iraq. The unit will cease operations on Oct 1 after five years of service in Iraq and redeploy home by the end of the month.

“They have been an outstanding Coalition partner and we will miss them greatly,” said Austin.

Navy promotes sailors to chief petty officers

**Story and photo by
Spc. Samuel J. Phillips**

MNC-I PAO

The ranks of the Navy's chief petty officers grew Sept. 15 as 35 sailors were presented with their anchors during a chief petty officer pinning ceremony at Hope Chapel on Camp Victory.

"This is something you work toward for your entire career," said Chief Petty Officer Karen J. Campbell, legal research cell noncommissioned officer in charge, TF 134. "It's a great honor to be selected for chief. Some people retire before they ever make it to chief."

"Each of you is doing something far more important than simply pinning on anchors, changing your uniform and donning a new cover," said Rear Adm. Garland Wright, commander, Task

Force 134. "You are accepting new responsibilities and new privileges, ones that no other service grants, and ones that have been part of the Navy for over 115 years."

More will be expected and more will be demanded of the new chiefs, Garland said. They have not merely been promoted one pay grade. As the chief petty officer creed states, their entire way of life will change.

"I know, however, that none of you are overwhelmed by these newfound expectations or increased demands," Garland said. "Each of you has been raised and trained well by the scores of individuals who also assembled charge books and helped write the 115 year history of your ranks, chiefs whose line you now join and extend."

"You just have to keep doing what

you know is right," said Chief Petty Officer Kristina L. Montgomery, information systems technician, Multi-National Corps – Iraq C3. "Always put your people first and when it seems that you have nothing left to give, give more."

Chief petty officers are the standard bearers for the Navy, Garland said. Their choices are the ones that will most significantly define, clarify and reinforce our Navy values. It is their integrity that will directly result in sailor's trust of leadership. They are the primary drivers in teaching and inspiring the next generation of leaders.

"Now, it is your turn to write the next pages in our Navy's history," Garland said. "I am confident that you will make this an exciting and worthwhile chapter."



Rear Adm. Garland Wright, commander, Task Force 134, speaks during a chief petty officer pinning ceremony at Hope Chapel, Camp Victory, Iraq Sept. 15 as the chief-selects stand in formation in front of the crowd.



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Soldier inspires others with spirit, attitude

Specialist deploys despite losing limb in motor accident

Story by
Cpl. Frances L. Goch
MNC-IPAO

Peers and supervisors describe Spc. Kisha Makerney as a fighter, an inspiration and a future leader – but the only thing the 23-year-old Soldier strives for is a normal life.

In 2005, Makerney lost her left leg in a motorcycle accident shortly after returning from a tour in Iraq.

Her main concern after the accident was the effect losing a leg would have on her military career.

“When I walked in the door of her hospital room she didn’t even tell me hello,” said Spc. Nicasia Phillips, assistant non-commissioned officer in charge, 45th Rear Operations Center, who has also been Makerney’s “battle buddy” for the past five years. “She looked right at me and said ‘find out what this means for me in the military and if I have to get out because of it!’”

Phillips turned right back around and spent the rest of the day trying to find the answer.

That day marked the beginning of Makerney’s journey to try to achieve normalcy.

“She does not like being treated differently and does not like being labeled as disabled,” said Phillips. “She fights every day to be ‘normal.’”

Since recovering from her accident, the Fort Towson, Okla., native

dove into physical activities. She has taken up rock climbing, rappelling and even tried sky diving.

She also hasn’t let go of her positive attitude or given up her dream of making the Army a career. She plans on putting in her packet to become a warrant officer and wants to become a rotary wing aviator.

“I’ve always wanted to be in the Army,” she said. “I love my country and I believe in it.”

Makerney is back in Iraq, now attached to 45th, and is a combatives instructor and an instructor for the Iraqi Correctional Officer Training Academy’s two-week course. In the NCO course, she teaches the Iraqis about human rights, accountability, leadership and how to lead the other Iraqi correctional officers.

“I love teaching them,” Makerney said. “When they graduate, you know you have made a difference.”

Makerney’s passion and spirit has also made a difference in the lives of the people she has met.

“When Makerney is walking around the FOB or at the gym working out, she can’t help but inspire those around her to do more,” said Sgt. Matthew Washburn, 45th ROC ICO village day shift leader and Makerney’s NCOIC. “She lives and breathes the Army values and sets the example for the future Soldiers that will serve alongside her. She is the type of Soldier every organization needs.”

Makerney has also visited Iraqis who have lost limbs because of attacks from suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices.

“They just happen to be at the wrong place at the wrong time,”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Erik Wolf

Spc. Kisha Makerney is assigned to the 45th Rear Operations Center and is serving in Iraq as an instructor for the Iraqi Correctional Officer Training Academy. She is one of the nearly three thousand Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldiers deployed in their largest mobilization since the Korean War.

said Makerney. “Seeing me and that I can still be in the Army gives them hope.”

According to her even though most people would view her accident as a tragedy, she sees it as a blessing.

“I have met so many different people and I am way more determined because of it,” said Makerney. “To know that I motivate people, motivates me to continue what I do. If you just hang on to God and keep pushing He will give you the strength to keep fighting and that’s all I do.”

New policies streamlines dress uniform

The Army announced the implementation and bridging strategy for the transition to the blue Army Service Uniform.

The Army Greens and older ASUs are authorized for wear until 2014. Initial entry soldiers will start receiving the new ASUs in 2010.

The Army includes a series of stipends in this annual clothing allowances towards the replacement of the dress uniform and all basic clothing bag items. For enlisted Soldiers, the blue service uniform is an optional wear item, purchased if desired, and worn on appropriate occasions.

Commissioned officers are given a one-time stipend when commissioned to purchase their required uniform items. Officers then must maintain proper fit and appearance of their uniform items throughout

their career. The Army currently requires officers to purchase and maintain both the green and blue service uniforms. Now they will have only one to maintain.

The new ASU will include a coat and low waist trousers for male Soldiers and coat, slacks and skirt for females Soldiers. The new fabric for the ASU is heavier and more wrinkle resistant over previously manufactured uniforms and will consist of 55% wool and 45% polyester material. The new ASU coat will have a tailored, athletic cut, to improve uniform fit and appearance. The ASU will include a new improved heavier and wrinkle resistant short and long sleeved white shirt with permanent military creases and shoulder loops. The Army anticipates the new ASU items available for purchase in Military Clothing Sales stores in near the end of 2009.



Both the beret and service cap are authorized for wear with the Army Service Uniform.

The Combat Service Identification Badge is authorized for wear by women on the right side of the shirt parallel to the waistline.

Women may still wear either trousers or skirts.

Only enlisted Soldiers may wear a distinctive unit insignia

The Combat Service Identification Badge is authorized for wear by men on their right breast pocket.

Overseas Service bars are authorized on the jacket sleeve for both enlisted Soldiers and officers.

Soldiers who wear green, tan or maroon berets, Soldiers assigned to air assault-coded positions and military police on duty can blouse their trousers with the black leather combat boot.

