

No combat-related deaths in December

CNN News

BAGHDAD – December was the first month since the beginning of the Iraq war in which there were no U.S. combat deaths, the U.S. military reported.

“That is a very significant milestone for us as we continue to move forward, and I think that also speaks to the level of violence and how it has decreased over time,” said Army Gen. Ray Odierno, the top U.S. commander in Iraq.

Since the beginning of the war more than six years ago, 4,373 U.S. military members have died – 3,477 from hostilities and 898 in non-combat incidents.

Combat fatalities have decreased significantly since June, when the United States started withdrawing troops from Baghdad, Iraq’s capital, and other urban areas. The United States also started a troop drawdown in 2009 from about 160,000 to the current level of around 110,000.

The U.S. military suffered double-digit combat-related deaths in February, April, May and June 2009. The highest was 17 in May. There were also eight



Courtesy photo from Gettys Photos

Soldiers from the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, take cover behind a bombed-out vehicle.

non-combat deaths in May, making for the highest monthly total in 2009.

Since July, U.S. forces have suffered no more than five combat-related deaths each month. There were five in July, three in August, four in September, two in October and four in November.

Non-combat deaths outnumbered combat fatalities in

March, September, October, November and December. The last U.S. combat death in Iraq reported by CNN occurred Nov. 22, when Sgt. Briand T. Williams, 25, of Sparks, GA, died in Numaniyah after insurgents attacked his Army unit.

Casualties also have decreased among Iraqis, with Interior Ministry officials reporting in late November that

the civilian death toll fell that month to its lowest level since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

According to the Interior Ministry, 2,773 civilians were killed and 8,900 were wounded in 2009. In addition, 242 Iraqi soldiers were killed and 612 were wounded in 2009.

Daily violence has drastically dropped across the country over the past two years.

US, UK close Yemen embassies over al-Qaida threats

By Anne Gearan and Lee Keath
Associated Press

SAN’A, Yemen – Western embassies in Yemen locked

up Sunday after fresh threats from al-Qaida, and the White House expressed alarm at the terror group’s expanded reach in the poor Arab nation

where an offshoot apparently ordered the Christmas Day plot against a U.S. airliner.

President Barack Obama’s top counterterrorism adviser,

John Brennan, cited “indications al-Qaida is planning to carry out an attack against a

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Joint training in Iraq refreshes knowledge

By Capt. Christopher Ophardt
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – American Soldiers and Airmen assigned to the 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division were afforded a unique opportunity to train with F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter jets and AH-64 Apache helicopters, Dec. 29, east of here.

“The purpose of today is to refresh the Joint Tactical Air Controllers and Joint Forward Observers on close air support and close combat attack procedures,” said Senior Airman Jacob Torwick, a JTAC with the 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

JTAC’s are Airmen who are

trained to communicate with and control fixed wing aircraft, directing them to engage enemy targets that are in close proximity to friendly ground forces.

These ground pounding Airmen are a critical asset to the Army and Air Force and shortly after the war began, it was identified that there are not enough JTAC’s to go around.

To help bridge this shortage, the Army organized the Joint Forward Observer Course located at Fort Sill, Okla.

“I attended the two week course at Ft. Sill and am excited to refresh my memory on CAS,” said Spc. Charles Danna.

During the training, the radio crackled as Apache pilots from the 1st Cavalry Aviation Brigade came on station, ready and willing to deliver their lethal fire.

After the CCA report was sent, and the Apache’s started their approach, the final step was executed.

“Cleared for engagement,” said Danna, a native of Madisonville, La., over the radio.

On the ground, the anticipation built as the attack helicopters launched their rockets toward their intended target.

The explosive boom from the rockets’ impact was followed by a second explosion – one of cheers from the

Soldiers and Airmen watching the scene.

“The whole point of being out here is to see and engage targets,” said Capt. Michael Holl, a F-15E pilot currently serving as a air liaison officer with 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

Not to be out done by their rotary wing counterparts, two F-16 fighter jets roared on station, ready to participate in the training, although because of range restriction strafing runs would have to be dry.

On their final run of the day, the F-16’s came out of the sun, low and fast, reminding everyone of the supporting firepower in the sky.

Odierno: U.S. troops will leave Iraq on schedule

By Rebecca Santana
Associated Press

FORWARD OPERATING BASE COBRA, Iraq - The nearly two-month delay in holding Iraq’s nationwide elections will not keep American combat troops from leaving the country as scheduled by the end of August, the top U.S. commander in Iraq said yesterday in an interview.

“The plan that I put together originally gave me plenty of flexibility, and part of that flexibility was that the election would be delayed, so I built flexibility into our plan,” Gen. Ray Odierno said at a military base in Iraq’s Diyala province. “I feel comfortable that we’re on track.”

Iraq was originally scheduled to hold key elections in January that

will determine who will lead the country as American forces go home, but political wrangling over how to apportion votes in a law needed to carry out the balloting delayed the vote until March 7.

Under a U.S. plan, all combat troops are to leave Iraq by the end of August. The remaining 50,000 U.S. forces would do non-combat operations such as training.

Around early May, if the country is on stable footing, Odierno will begin moving troops out of Iraq. There are currently about 110,000 U.S. forces in Iraq, and Odierno said that by March 7 there would be roughly 100,000 troops.

“We have it well planned out. They have excess equipment that is leaving now ahead

of time. . . . It’s four months, and what we really plan on doing is 12,500 [troops] a month, and that should see us through,” he said.

When asked why the United States needs to keep 100,000 troops – more than the number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan – in a country that has seen such an improvement in security, Odierno said the U.S. troop presence would provide psychological and physical support for Iraq as it goes through what he described as vital elections.

“This is, in my opinion, the most important election that has been held to date in Iraq,” Odierno said. “We want to come down in such a way that it is deliberate, and in such a way that

Iraqis are gaining confidence in themselves to provide their own security.”

The United States has been consolidating bases around the country as it draws down forces. Under a security pact signed with Iraq, all U.S. forces are to be out by the end of 2011.

The general said he would be looking at whether there is a significant increase in violence after the election or major problems seating a new government when he makes his decisions about whether to continue with the drawdown as scheduled.

However, he said he did not expect the Iraqi government to actually be seated by May. No single party or political bloc is expected to gain an outright majority in the March vote, so there will likely be a prolonged period of negotiation.

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target” in the capital, possibly the embassy, and estimated the group had several hundred members in Yemen. Security reasons led Britain to act, too; it was not known when the embassies would reopen.

The U.S. is worried about the spread of terrorism in Yemen, a U.S. ally and aid recipient, Brennan said, but doesn’t consider the country a second front with Afghanistan and Pakistan in the fight against terrorism.

As to whether U.S. troops might be sent to Yemen, Brennan replied: “We’re not talking about that at this point at all.” He pledged to provide the Yemeni government with “the wherewithal” to take down al-Qaida.

Britain and the United States are assisting a counterterrorism police unit in Yemen as fears grow about the increasing threat of international terrorism originating from the country.

The Obama administration claims that the suspect in the plot against the Detroit-bound plane was trained and armed by the al-Qaida affiliate in Yemen. Brennan blamed a series of what he called lapses and human errors in U.S. intelligence and security defenses for allowing a Nigerian man to board the plane with explosives. He tried to detonate them as the aircraft approached Detroit on Dec. 25.

The Transportation Security Administration announced Sunday that, starting Monday, passengers flying into the United States from Nigeria, Yemen and other “countries of interest” will be subject to enhanced screening techniques, such as body scans and pat-downs.

Yemen is a poor, decentralized and predominantly Muslim country on the Arabian



Courtesy photo by Yahya Arahah/EPA

The U.S. Embassy in Yemen was closed Sunday due to threats by al-Qaida. The British Embassy was also closed.

Peninsula. It is the ancestral homeland of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, and the site of the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole, which killed 17 U.S. sailors. A 2008 attack on the U.S. Embassy killed one American.

Given the active threat from al-Qaida, “we’re not going to take any chances,” Brennan said from Washington during appearances on four Sunday talk shows.

The Yemeni government, which issued no official comment on the embassy closures, is friendly to the West but the population is often mistrustful of Western motives and influence. Yemen has pledged to clamp down on militancy, but government control is weak outside the capital and the country has a history of freeing some alleged militants and tolerating others.

The Obama administration is growing more vocal about both the threat and the San’a government’s limitations. Brennan said Westerners are

at risk in Yemen until the government gets a better handle on extremism.

U.S. officials say terrorists are seeking new places to operate, including Yemen, Somalia and Southeast Asia, in part because of pressure on their previous sanctuaries in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Gen. David Petraeus, the U.S. general who oversees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, made a surprise visit to Yemen over the weekend. Following meetings with President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Petraeus announced that Washington this year will more than double the \$67 million in counterterrorism aid that it provided Yemen in 2009.

The U.S. and Britain are funding a counterterrorism police unit in Yemen, and Britain plans to host an international conference Jan. 28 to come up with a strategy to counter radicalization in Yemen.

The United States has in-

creased military cooperation with Yemen, with intelligence and other help to back two Yemeni air and ground assaults on al-Qaida hideouts last month that were reported to have killed more than 60 people. Yemeni authorities said more than 30 suspected militants were among the dead.

The U.S. has stepped up intelligence, surveillance and training aid to Yemeni forces during the past year, and provided some firepower, a senior U.S. defense official has said. Some of that assistance may be through the expanded use of unmanned drones, and the U.S. is providing funding to Yemen for helicopters and other equipment. Officials, however, say there are no U.S. ground forces or fighter aircraft in Yemen.

On Thursday, the U.S. Embassy sent a notice to Americans in Yemen urging them to be vigilant about security.

On This Day In History

January 5, 1957

Eisenhower proposes new Middle East policy

In response to the increasingly tense situation in the Middle East, President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivers a proposal to Congress that calls for a new and more proactive U.S. policy in the region. The "Eisenhower Doctrine," as the proposal soon came to be known, established the Middle East as a Cold War battlefield.

The United States believed that the situation in the Middle East degenerated badly during 1956, and Egypt leader Gamal Nasser was deemed largely responsible. The U.S. used Nasser's anti-western nationalism and his increasingly close relations with the Soviet Union as justification for withdrawing U.S. support for the construction of the Aswan Dam on the Nile River in July 1956. Less than a month later, Nasser seized control of the Suez Canal. This action prompted, in late October, a coordinated attack by French, British, and Israeli military on Egypt. Suddenly, it appeared that the Middle East might be the site of World War III.

In response to these disturbing developments, President Eisenhower called for "joint action by the Congress and the Executive" in meeting the "increased danger from International Communism" in the Middle East. Specifically, he asked for authorization to begin new programs of economic and military cooperation with friendly nations in the region. He also requested authorization to use U.S. troops "to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations."

Eisenhower did not ask for a specific appropriation of funds at the time; nevertheless, he indicated that he would seek \$200 million for economic and military aid in each of the years 1958 and 1959. Only such action, he warned, would dissuade "power-hungry Communists" from interfering in the Middle East.

The "Eisenhower Doctrine" received its first call to action in the summer of 1958, when civil strife in Lebanon led that nation's president to request U.S. assistance. Nearly 15,000 U.S. troops were sent to help quell the disturbances. With the Eisenhower Doctrine and the first action taken in its name, the United States demonstrated its interest in Middle East developments.

MND-B Pic of the day!



Army Photo by Spc. Kelly LeCompte, 30th HBCT PAO

BAGHDAD – With hats and noise makers, Soldiers of the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team ring-in the New Year on board a C-130 aircraft on their way to Kuwait as the first iteration of brigade Soldiers beginning to return home from deployment, Dec. 31.

FAMOUS FEATS OF CHUCK NORRIS



DID YOU KNOW?

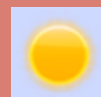
Sticks and stones may break your bones, but a Chuck Norris glare will liquefy your kidneys.

Quote For Today

“You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him.”

-James D. Miles-

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today
69° F | 48° F



Tomorrow
66° F | 46° F



Thursday
68° F | 48° F

TRIVIA TIME!!

Germ warfare was first used in what war?

Last Issue's Answer: TRAVELLER

Cav Round-Up radio newscast available

USD-C PAO

BAGHDAD – The Cav Round-Up is a three-minute radio newscast from Baghdad covering military units and events across Multi-National Division – Baghdad. For this newscast, please contact the Media Relations Staff with DVIDS at 678-

421-6612 or e-mail news@dvidshub.net.

Today's Cav Round-Up # 234 was produced by SFC Brian Scott, MND-B Public Affairs Office.

This newscast includes the following stories:

1. Soldiers from the 2/52 Combined Arms Battalion

extend the bonds of friendship outside the wire

2. Three soldiers for the 16th Engineer Brigade survey team lend their skills to the Iraqi Field Artillery School at the Joint Security Station Constituion.

<http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=general/general>

search/ppphp&table=audio&query=Cav+Round-Up&type

Check out other MND-B products, such as the weekly First Team Update video news program, and the latest print stories at the 1st Cavalry Division's homepage: www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv/

Trigger's Tease

		7	4		3	5		
	1		9		6		3	
	5						2	
1				3				7
3			7		8			5
4				1				2
	4						7	
	3		5		9		4	
		2	3		1	8		

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow: **Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.**

Every Sudoku game begins with a number of squares already filled in. The more squares that are known the easier it is to figure out which numbers go in the open squares. As you fill in the squares correctly, options for the remaining squares are narrowed and it becomes easier to fill them in.

Yesterday's Answers

2	6	3	4	8	1	5	9	7
5	8	4	3	9	7	2	1	6
7	9	1	2	5	6	8	4	3
8	5	9	6	7	4	3	2	1
3	7	6	8	1	2	4	5	9
1	4	2	5	3	9	6	7	8
6	3	7	9	4	5	1	8	2
9	2	5	1	6	8	7	3	4
4	1	8	7	2	3	9	6	5



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