

## USF-I COMMANDER'S WEEKLY ASSESSMENT

### **Mr. Secretary, Chairman, Jim:**

Key security ministries remain vacant as Prime Minister Maliki seeks consensus on the nominees. On 17 March, the anticipated submission of nominations to the Council of Representatives (COR) from Maliki did not occur. The next opportunity to submit nominations will be when the COR reconvenes 27 March.

The situation in Kirkuk deescalated as Peshmerga forces continued to withdraw personnel and equipment out of positions around the city. We are monitoring the redeployment which is scheduled to be complete by 26 March. USF-I remains engaged with Government of Iraq (GOI) and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) leaders while preparing to conduct a tripartite security assessment of Kirkuk.

We continue to assist the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to develop their conventional capabilities by improving their ability to conduct training. In addition to our focused collective training efforts as part of Tadreeb al Shamil, USF-I is working with the 8<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division to execute Operation Eagles Rising, a four-month training event focused on maneuver tasks in support of external defense objectives.

Muqtada al Sadr called for protests this week to show support for the Shia uprising in Bahrain. Protests in Iraq were peaceful and small and security trends continue to improve.

### **Political**

Prime Minister Maliki did not submit nominations for the security ministries to the COR as expected because he is attempting to build consensus on the nominations with other GOI leaders. KRG President Barzani, Dr. Ayad Allawi and COR Speaker Nujayfi were critical of Maliki this week for the continued delay.

There is discussion but no agreement on the defense minister nominee. Ibrahim al Jaafari, president of the National Alliance, said that his bloc had no objections to former defense minister Abdul Qadir or Khalid al Ubaydi. Maliki also supported these two candidates and was supposed to submit them to the COR. Ubaydi appeared to be the frontrunner, but in our meeting with Allawi he stated that he and Barzani are opposed to Ubaydi. Therefore, Allawi has submitted a new letter to Maliki with two candidates previously nominated: Falah Naqib and Salim Dilli Hamid Salih. Maliki and Allawi have not discussed the nominations in person, further complicating progress on filling the position.

Dialogue on the interior minister nominee remains contentious and determining who will be the minister is speculative. Ibrahim Mohammed al-Lami, an independent and former deputy in the Office of the Commander in Chief, is reportedly a nominee. There are reports that the National Alliance may nominate Ahmed Chalabi despite Jaafari's inference to us that he was not a nominee. We have also seen reports that LTG Muhsin, Director of Border Enforcement, is a potential nominee. We continue to watch the nominations and press the Prime Minister and GOI leaders to finalize the cabinet.

The COR addressed the delivery of essential services this week and Deputy Prime Minister for Services Saleh Mutlaq spoke to the COR about the need to combat corruption and pass key legislation to improve the service sector. The COR also concluded debate on the Supreme Court Law, recommending an 18-member court be composed of judges, scholars, and experts representing all provinces and without regard to party affiliation. In support of demonstrators in Bahrain, the COR voted to suspend the agenda during its last session and adjourned until 27 March.



There were three regional developments this week that affect Iraq. First, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari announced that Iraq will pay the remaining \$21 billion of the compensations it owes Kuwait. The payment should satisfy the United Nations' demands and result in the removal of Chapter VII restrictions, though it is unclear how and when the Iraqis will complete this action. Additionally, COR Speaker Nujayfi visited Kuwait on 19 March to help foster partnership between the two nations. In another development, the Arab League announced its annual summit will be held in Baghdad 10-11 May; a 2-month delay as a result of public protests throughout the region.

Lastly, the situation in Bahrain has the potential to impact the delicate balance between Sunni and Shia in Iraq and the region. Iraqi religious and political leaders voiced concerns about the uprisings and security response in Bahrain; the majority Shia population of Bahrain look to the Najaf, Iraq hawza for their spiritual guidance and direction, not the school in Qom, Iran. Prime Minister Maliki expressed concern that aggression by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) force on the Shia in Bahrain could complicate sectarian tensions. Muqtada al Sadr called on his supporters to gather for protests in solidarity for the uprising in Bahrain while Grand Ayatollah Sistani urged the Bahraini Government to stop violence against unarmed civilians. 18 March saw the most protests for the week with twenty-one demonstrations and 12,750 participants nationwide. The largest drew 5,800 in Sadr City. All remained peaceful.

USF-I supported the Embassy engagement with GOI leaders to discuss how the issues in Bahrain could migrate to Iraq and affect Iraq's reintegration into the region. To alleviate any fears of an impact on the security situation in Iraq and the region, U.S. Embassy officials promoted the need for stability, an end to violence, and dialogue between all sides in Bahrain. Shia political and religious leaders were pleased with U.S. statements and believed they helped quell concerns in Iraq.

In Kirkuk, the provincial council chair and governor resigned; the first significant change to Kirkuk's leadership since 2005. Speculation about the governor's replacement indicates it could be a Turkomen or prominent PUK member, raising concern that a deal was struck possibly at the expense of Arabs. The Ambassador and I are engaging key leaders to lessen political and security tensions in this vital city.

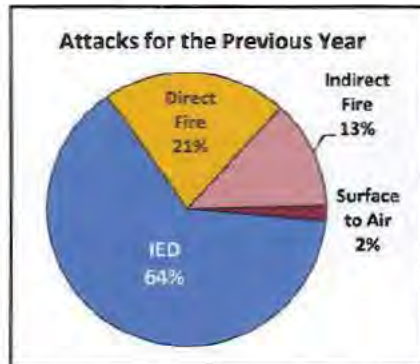
### Security

Despite political tensions in Kirkuk, progress is being made as Peshmerga forces continue withdrawing in accordance with the agreement reached on 11 March. Additional vehicles and troops redeployed throughout the week after the initial movement on the evening of 13 March. Based on the agreement, the withdrawal is to be complete by 26 March. In coordination with the GOI and KRG leadership, we are also preparing the tripartite threat assessment team to determine if more Iraqi police are needed to secure Kirkuk.

There were 127 security incidents during the reporting period, a slight decrease from last week but just above the 12 week average of 123. The number of casualties increased to 139 (32 killed, 107 wounded), up from last week but below the 12-week average of 165. There were no U.S. Forces casualties.

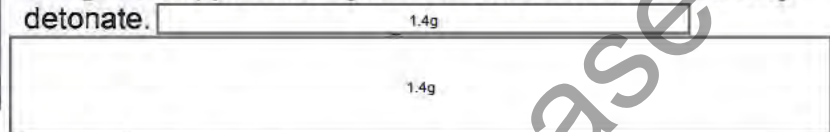


On 16 March, a vehicle borne IED (VBIED) attack targeted local nationals near a hospital in the politically tense city of Kirkuk, causing 40 casualties (3 killed, 37 wounded). We assess a Sunni insurgent group conducted this attack as part of an information operations campaign to influence the Iraqi population and exploit the current Arab-Kurd tensions.

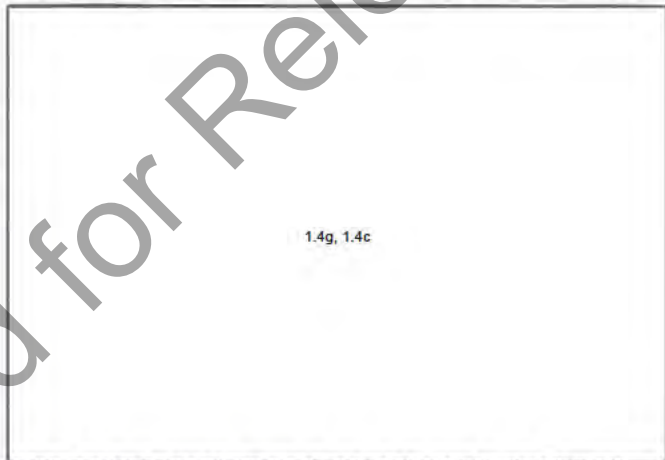


IEDs remain the primary attack method, accounting for sixty-four percent of all attacks over the last year. The recent trends in IED attacks indicate extremist groups are more active after the recent demonstrations and are testing the GOI and ISF response, in addition to continuing attacks on U.S. forces on our supply routes.

One way USF-I is successfully countering IEDs is by using the Copperhead system to detect them before they detonate.



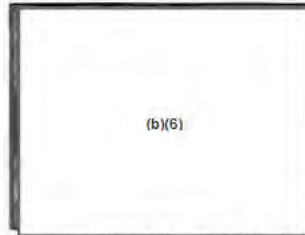
In one recent successful interdiction on 14 March, Copperhead identified a command wire IED on Route Tampa; our main supply route from Baghdad through U.S. Division – South. To protect Iraqi citizens and U.S. forces, ground forces blocked traffic from both directions while airborne ISR assets searched for and identified three extremists near the wire. Citing an imminent threat, U.S. forces cordoned off the area and captured the three extremists before the IED could be detonated.



Partnered counterterrorism (CT) forces conducted 26 operations resulting in the detention of 28 extremists. Operations had significant impact on networks in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Diyala. In Mosul, high level AQI detainees included the military emir of West Mosul and the Sharia emir of Mosul. Both detainees have direct links to senior leadership in the city. In the vicinity of Kirkuk, we captured three individuals from an AQI cell and an AQI operative associated with VBIED production and linked to a 9 February VBIED attack in Kirkuk. We are exploiting intelligence from him to continue targeting the network. In Diyala Province, joint forces captured three extremists from an AQI operations cell and two mid-level AQI operatives who may lead us to bed down locations for the AQI emir for Diyala. These captures are expected to lead to targetable intelligence on key AQI figures in addition to helping neutralize the AQI network throughout northern Iraq.

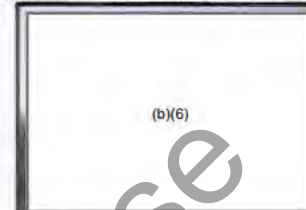


## ISF Development





In previous reports, I highlighted USF-I training programs that foster a culture of training in Iraqi Army (IA) divisions beyond the Tadreeb al Shamil (TAS) initiative. The 8th IA Division, which is responsible for security in the mid-Euphrates area, has designed their own training program called Operation Eagles Rising which in many ways mirrors TAS. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment's support to Operation Eagles Rising over the next four months will focus on

improving the 8<sup>th</sup> IA's ability to plan, resource, and execute maneuver training. The training will include individual soldier skills, company collective training on maneuver essential tasks, and culminate in a two-day defense scenario designed to test operational proficiency and the headquarters' ability to command and control operations.



Our partnering approach to training the Iraqis is increasing the quality of the training and accelerating the IA unit's proficiency. I had the opportunity to see this first hand on a visit to 3<sup>rd</sup> IA Division's training in U.S. Division – North. By partnering a U.S. unit with an IA unit, we are able to leverage the capabilities of the leadership, staff, and resources to enable multi-functional training for the Iraqis. This training included medical, logistics, sustainment, and maintenance operations. Through partnership we are improving the IA's operational proficiency.

USF-I enabler units are also building a baseline training capability in their Iraqi counterparts. The 103<sup>rd</sup> Expeditionary Support Command (ESC) has undertaken an extensive partnership with the Iraqi Logistics Operations Center (ILOC) to advise Iraqi officers on logistics operations, while also training them to use automated logistics communication systems to order, track, and receive parts. 103<sup>rd</sup> ESC has instituted quarterly logistics conferences to assist Iraqi logisticians as they develop their processes and systems to sustain their force.

Country	Tanks 	Armored Personnel Carrier 	Artillery 
Iran	1,613	640	2,320
Syria	4,850	1,500	2,480
Saudi Arabia	765	3,000	370
Jordan	1,245	2,069	453
UAE	388	253	412
Kuwait	368	321	113
Iraq	259	696	142

USF-I efforts to equip the IA with sophisticated ground capabilities continues. Twelve additional M1A1 tanks were recently delivered to the Iraqi Army bringing their current total to 87. In addition, twelve M109A5 self-propelled howitzers and twelve M198 towed howitzers arrived. The Iraqi Army has received all but one M109A5 (23 of 24), with the final howitzer scheduled to be delivered in April 2011, and now has sixteen of the planned 120 M198s. The fielding of the M198s is scheduled to be complete in May 2012. When the fielding is complete, the IA will have sophisticated ground weaponry but will still lag quantitatively behind its regional neighbors, limiting their ability to provide for an external defense. The IA will still need to execute combined arms and joint training to integrate all these capabilities together to be external defense capable.



### Transition

USF-I worked with U.S. Central Command and Embassy planners to conduct the initial mission analysis of the Iraq Country Plan (ICP). The ICP sets the groundwork for how defense department elements will support Embassy mission sets in 2012. The combined mission analysis allowed better understanding of resource requirements, U.S. government programs and agencies working in Iraq, and areas where increased inter-governmental coordination is needed. Planners will meet in Washington D.C. in early April to further refine the components of the plan with other governmental agencies.

### Economic and Energy

Iraq's oil industry is showing resiliency after two recent attacks. Damage to the Iraq-Turkey pipeline was repaired quickly and oil is now flowing from the northern oil fields after a five-day delay. A Honeywell technical team visited the Bayji Oil Refinery (BOR) 14-15 March, conducted a technical assessment, and provided assistance to BOR engineers. On 15 March, the BOR produced 170,000 barrels per day; only 20,000 barrels short of pre-attack levels.

In response to the attacks, USF-I discussed BOR and pipeline security with the Oil ministry and Iraqi Oil Police. Our engagement has led to increased security at the BOR and a promise from the Minister of Oil (MoO) to support security infrastructure improvements to include cameras and fences. As a result of the Iraqi National Security Council's recommendation to secure Iraq's oil pipelines, the MoO and Oil Police Chief are working through the COR to obtain authorization and funding for an additional 12,000 oil police.

The GOI continues to make efforts to improve power distribution by importing additional electricity from neighboring countries and increasing hydrocarbon export capacity (Iraq-Turkey pipeline) to generate revenue for capital investments. Recently, the GOI purchased 40 generators capable of producing 280 MW of electricity from Jordan for Salah ad Din Province (where the BOR is located). Heavy fuel oil from the BOR will power these generators. The GOI Ministry of Electricity (MoE) has also contacted the Syrian government to authorize passage of electricity from Turkey to Iraq through Syrian territory. The MoE reached a tentative agreement with Turkey for an additional 200 MW of energy for the upcoming summer.

Next week a congressional delegation consisting of Representatives Thomas Marino, Marsha Blackburn, John Sarbanes, and Michael Grimm will visit Iraq.

Respectfully,

