USF-I Commander's Weekly Assessment

Mr. Secretary, Chairman, Jim:

President Talabani held a meeting on Saturday to continue discussions on a potential post-2011 U.S. Force (USF) and finalizing government formation. Ayad Allawi participated; however, Kurdistan Regional President (KRG) Barzani was not able to attend. Political bloc leaders did not reach agreement on a post-2011 U.S. force presence. Iraqiyya reportedly refuses to consider such an agreement until there is progress on the Irbil Agreement, specifically the National Council for Higher Policy (NCHP) and the appointment of security ministers. The blocs will form committees to consider these matters and will meet again in two weeks.

The number of security incidents, casualties, and attacks against USF rose this week. We attribute this rise to an increase in extremist group activity. AQI conducted a number of attacks producing a significant number of civilian casualties and Shia extremist groups (SEG) resumed their recent level of attacks against USF after the conclusion of the Shia pilgrimage to the Khadamiyah Shrine in Baghdad.

We have initiated the transfer of 206 detainees to government of Iraq (GOI) custody. The transfer was initially delayed in order to receive security assurances from the GOI. On 4 July, National Security Advisor Falih al-Fayad sent a letter conveying the assurances requested by the U.S. Embassy. Detainees will be transferred incrementally; the last group will be transferred on 13 July.

Political

President Talabani held a follow-on meeting between the political blocs on 9 July. KRG President Barzani was unable to attend due to his mother's illness; however Ayad Allawi was there. During a meeting earlier in the week, Allawi informed the Ambassador and me he preferred not to discuss a post-2011 USF presence until the Irbil Agreement is fully implemented. We strongly advised him against this course of action, since the time for action is dwindling due to the limited number of Council of Representatives sessions prior to the commencement of Ramadan on 1 August. At the meeting, however, he informed bloc leaders that progress on the Irbil Agreement
must precede agreement, even in principle, on a future USF presence. The political blocs will form committees to deliberate on the NCHP, security ministers, and post-2011 U.S. forces. President Talabani announced he will convene another meeting in two weeks to discuss the committees' findings.

Allawi also informed us he has another candidate for minister of defense and will discuss the matter with President Barzani and members of Iraqiyya before presenting the nomination to Maliki. Again, we encouraged prompt action. The potential nominee is a current minister; Allawi opined this may make him an amenable choice for the Prime Minister.

Maliki announced he will streamline his cabinet from 46 to 20 positions by eliminating some ministries and combining others. Although the public supports the move, most politicians publicly acknowledge the need to reduce the government, we assess the initiative will be contentious as political blocs jockey to maintain their current proportion of ministerial positions.

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi visited Iraq this week, accompanied by over 200 government officials and members of Iran's business community. The visit was meant to showcase an increase in cooperation on cultural, political, economic, and other matters. We assess the visit may have been an effort to counterbalance opportunities offered by the U.S. - Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement.

### Security

During the reporting period, there were 183 security incidents, an increase from the previous week and above the 12-week average of 164. The number of casualties was 258 (79 killed, 179 wounded), a sharp increase from last week and above the 12-week average of 210. The number of attacks against USF increased from 24 to 39. Two U.S. service members were killed in action and seven were wounded in action.
This week's rise in casualties was commensurate with an increase in AQI activity. On 4 July, AQI conducted three attacks targeting Iraqi police. The attacks took place in Fallujah, Haditha, and Baghdad and occurred within a 20-minute period. The following day, AQI conducted a complex attack consisted of two vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED) and a personal-borne IED. The attack targeted government buildings in Taji, killing 29 and wounding 44. On 6 July, AQI detonated a suicide-VBIED in Diyala, resulting in 4 killed and 18 wounded.

After a slight decrease in activity due to the recent Shia religious observance, SEGs resumed their increased pace of attacks against USF (see below). The majority of these attacks employed IEDs and included a significant increase in the use of explosively-formed penetrators (EFP). On 7 July, an EFP detonated on a convoy in Baghdad, killing two U.S. soldiers and seriously wounding one.

![Weekly Attacks Against USF](image)

We remain focused on conducting operations targeting SEG networks and made notable progress this week. These efforts are supported by multiple lines of effort: an increase in unilateral operations, an increase in partnered operations targeting SEGs, further interrogation of detainees, and the exploitation of forensic evidence gathered at the sites of previous attacks.

We conducted eight unilateral operations this week, resulting in the apprehension of three SEG operatives, including a high level AAH operative in Baghdad with access to leader of the AAH Karkh network, and a member of the Nasiriyah network who held a security position at the Basrah Airport and had contact with senior leadership. The information we obtain from these detainees will strengthen our knowledge of these networks and enable our pursuit of AAH and leadership in Iraq.

In addition to our unilateral operations, partnered U.S. and Iraqi Special Forces conducted 17 operations resulting in the detention of 18 Sunni and Shia extremists. Detainees include three AAH operatives and one operative. We assess that two of these
individuals were directly involved in the 6 June IRAM attack on FOB Loyalty. Joint CT forces also detained a Promised Day Brigade operative, two AQI leaders and numerous lower-level operatives involved in conducting assassinations, kidnappings, and IED attacks. The ISF conducted five independent operations, resulting in the detention of three AQI operatives and a member of Jaysh Rijal Tariq al-Naqshabandi (JRTN) responsible for recruiting JRTN operatives and storing weapons caches.

Further questioning of an AAH operative captured last week continues to yield valuable targeting information. We have discovered this individual frequently traveled to and escorted SEG operatives to advanced IED and rocket training there. He has maintained close contact with a senior official and has close ties with a senior Sadrist COR member. We are also pursuing leads based on forensic exploitation of the vehicle used in last week's IRAM attack on FOB Shocker. We obtained a fingerprint that belongs to a member of a IRAM cell in Baghdad. We are utilizing all available resources to build actionable intelligence on this individual.

The ISF continues security preparations for the Shia pilgrimage commemorating the birth of the 12th Imam next week. We estimate over one million pilgrims will travel to the Imam al-Hussein Shrine in Karbala. Heightened security measures will be in effect from 10-19 July and include additional checkpoints, patrols, and controlled access to main thoroughfares.

The Arab-Kurd High Level Committee (HLC) meeting scheduled for 6 July was postponed until August by the Prime Minister due to unresolved issues related to the combined security area (CSA) boundaries in Kirkuk. However, the Senior Working Group (SWG), which provides a forum to prepare the HLC for key decision-making, took place as scheduled. The SWG continues to make steady progress on Arab-Kurd issues. All participants agreed that remaining trilateral combined checkpoints in the CSA should transition to bilateral operations no later than 1 August. U.S. personnel would continue in an advisory role at combined coordination centers until the September/October timeframe. We reminded them they need to carefully consider how they will operate after our forces begin departing this fall.

**ISF Development**

USF-I continues to train and equip security forces managed by the Ministry of Interior (MOI). Recent examples of equipping include the issue of three explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) bomb transport trailers to the General Counter-Explosive directorate. Since early May, we have provided over 570 ISFF-funded vehicles to MOI forces, including armored security vehicles, light armored vehicles, armored buses, and various pieces of heavy equipment. This equipment was distributed to a number of agencies across the ministry including the General Counter-Explosive Directorate, Federal Police Sustainment Brigade and Engineering Company, the National Emergency Response Team, and the Oil Police. The distribution of this equipment will improve the capability and capacity of the ministry to support and sustain operations of fielded forces across Iraq.
As part of the effort to improve rule of law in Iraq, the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) recently provided three weeks of training to a core group of qualified Higher Judicial Council (HJC) security professionals who will become the nucleus of the HJC’s judicial police. The HJC envisions this force will grow into an organization that will function much like the USMS and provide judges with personal security and courtroom security.

**Transition**

After a slight delay, the transfer of 206 detainees currently held at Camp Cropper began on 9 July, when the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) took control of 15 detainees. Over the following three days, 156 will be transferred; the final 34 will handed over to the MOJ on the 13th. USF-I will provide overwatch until the end of the month and continue to engage senior GOI officials to ensure the proper accountability, transfer, and jurisdiction of detainees. In addition, USF-I detention operations personnel have provided training for 119 Iraqi correctional officers.

Deputy Secretary of State Nides, Denis McDonough, and Tony Blinken conducted a number of sessions with USF-I and Embassy personnel and will depart the AOR on Sunday. We are looking forward to your first visit to Iraq as Secretary of Defense.

Respectfully,

[Signature]