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USF-I Weekly Assessment 10 - 16 July 2011

USF-I COMMANDER'S WEEKLY ASSESSMENT

Mr. Secretary, Chairman, Jim:

Following President Jalal Talabani's meeting on 9 July, representatives from the political blocs met twice to discuss a number of issues, including the appointment of security ministers and formation of the National Council for Higher Policy (NCHP). The subject of a post-2011 U.S. Force (USF) presence was not discussed due to Iraqiyya's unwillingness to address the topic until all provisions of the Irbil Agreement were addressed.

On Thursday, Dr. Ayad Allawi informed the Ambassador and me that he would be willing to consider the appointment of an Iraqiyya member to be *acting* minister of defense. This compromise brings us one step closer to clearing the way for discussion on a continued USF presence. Bloc representatives will continue to meet throughout the week; a meeting of bloc leaders is tentatively scheduled for the end of next week after Maliki returns from his trip to China. The Ambassador and I will engage various GOI leaders to continue emphasizing the need for timely resolution of these issues.

The overall number of security incidents and casualties decreased; however, Iranian-backed militants continued to target U.S. Forces (USF). On Wednesday, Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) launched over 40 rockets at FOB Garry Owen in Maysan Province. An additional 17 rockets were discovered at the point of origin. All rounds impacted off the base, resulting in no casualties. The high number of rockets utilized in the attack demonstrates explicit intent to kill as many Americans as possible. On 16 July, four improvised rocket-assisted munitions (IRAM) were launched at Garry Owen. Again, all rockets impacted off the base. The distance between the point of origin and the points of impact was over two kilometers, indicating the possible development of new IRAM capabilities.

During a meeting with Prime Minister Maliki on Thursday, I requested that he convey a message to the [1.4b] they should not be confused by USG restraint and should take recent statements of senior USG leaders seriously. The Prime Minister informed me he had sent a message to the [1.4b] leadership two days earlier that his government would not accept attacks on USF in Iraq. He is sending his national security advisor to [1.4b] to reinforce this message and to convey that the GOI will not accept continued [1.4b] support to the Shia militants.

The Prime Minister and I discussed our recent unilateral operations. He expressed some concern and asked that we only conduct operations that are partnered with Iraqi forces. I made no commitment on this. We also discussed the continued deterioration of the security situation in the South. I expressed my displeasure with the performance of the ISF. Maliki acknowledged my comments and reiterated his intent to focus his forces on the problem. On Saturday, the Prime Minister reportedly directed senior ISF leaders to begin operations in Maysan Province immediately. If true, this is an encouraging sign. We will engage with ISF leaders to discuss operational parameters and encourage them to execute the mission more aggressively than the earlier operation in late June.

~~SECRET // NOFORN // 20210717~~

SECRET # NOFORN # 20210717

USF-I Weekly Assessment 10 - 16 July 2011

Political

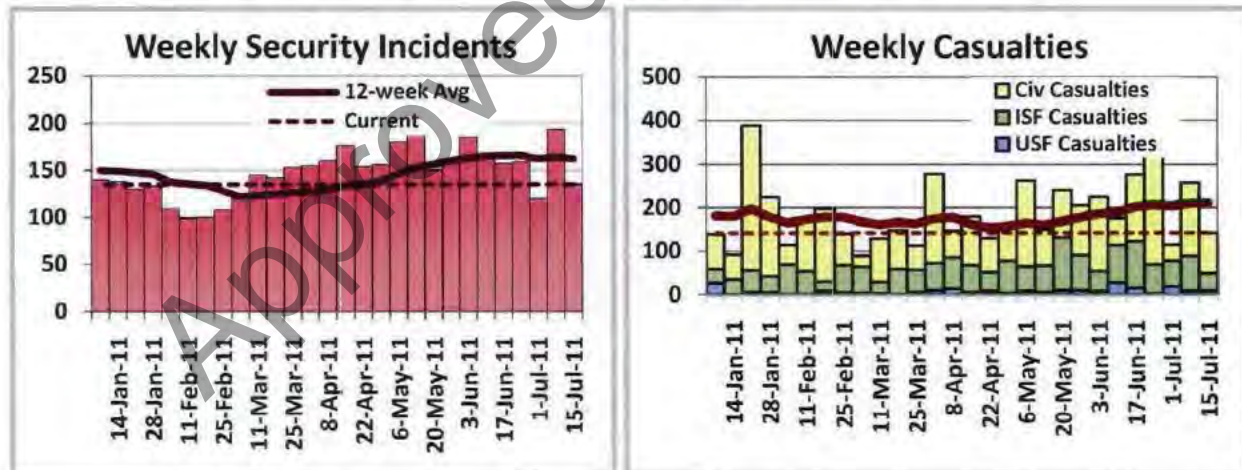
Representatives of the political blocs met twice since President Talabani's 9 July meeting. Discussions centered on the appointment of security ministers and the NCHP. Iraqiyya submitted a list of candidates for minister of defense, including the current minister of science and technology, who is a member of Iraqiyya.

During a meeting with the Ambassador and me on Thursday, Ayad Allawi signaled his willingness to have a member of Iraqiyya appointed on an interim basis until the blocs agree on a permanent minister. This is a positive step and removes one of Iraqiyya's preconditions for discussing a future U.S. military presence. The other is submission of NCHP legislation to the Council of Representatives (COR). Iraqiyya continues to insist that the chair of the council be confirmed by the COR, which was not part of last November's Irbil Agreement.

There will be a follow-on meeting of political bloc leaders after Prime Minister Maliki returns from a trip to China, perhaps on 24 or 25 July. In the meantime, the Ambassador and I will continue to engage GOI leaders to encourage progress on government formation and post-2011 USF discussions.

Security

During the reporting period, there were 135 security incidents, a decrease from the previous week and below the 12-week average of 162. The number of casualties was 141 (28 killed, 113 wounded), a decrease from last week and below the 12-week average of 211. The number of attacks against USF decreased slightly, from 39 to 37. Two U.S. service members were killed in action and seven were wounded in action.



Although overall security trends improved this week, attacks against USF remained elevated (see below). Nearly two-thirds of the attacks were conducted by 1.4b

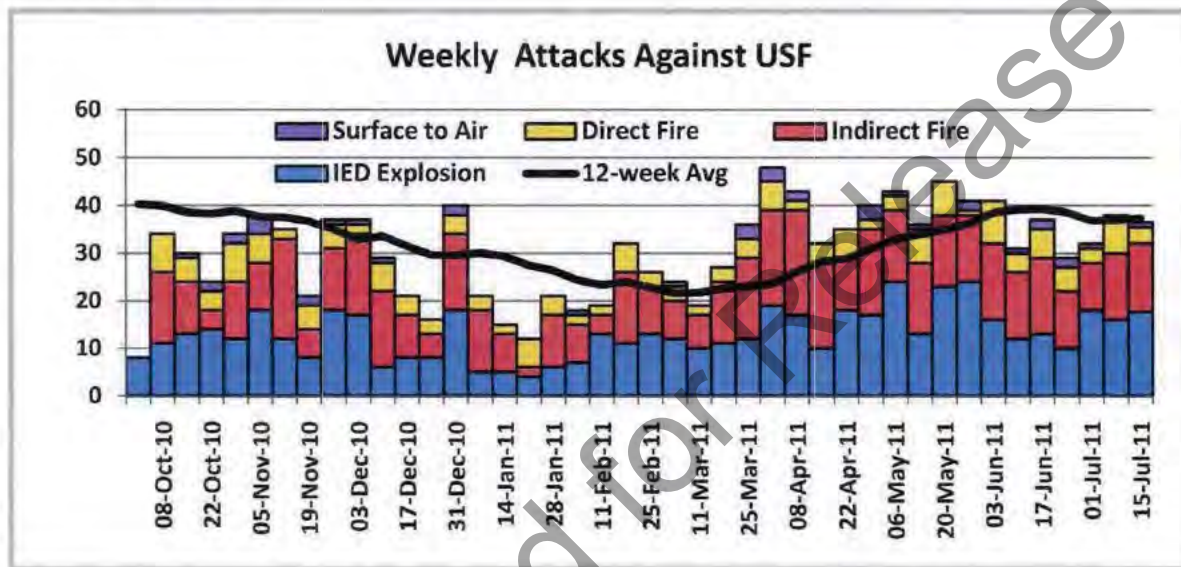
1.4b On 10 July, one soldier was killed and two were wounded when two 107mm rockets impacted on FOB Garry Owen in Maysan Province. Two days later, extremists fired over 40 107mm rockets at Garry Owen. An additional 17 rockets were found at the launch site, making it one of the largest single indirect fire (IDF) attacks

SECRET # NOFORN # 20210717

~~SECRET // NOFORN // 20210717~~

USF-I Weekly Assessment 10 - 16 July 2011

since the beginning of Operation New Dawn. Remarkably, there were no casualties or damage due to poor execution causing all rounds to impact off the base. AAH claimed responsibility for the attack, which was clearly intended to produce mass casualties. On 15 July, an explosively-formed penetrator (EFP) detonated on the lead vehicle of a counter-IDF patrol in Basrah Province, killing one U.S. soldier and wounding four. On 16 July, there was an IRAM attack targeting Garry Owen. All IRAMs impacted off of the base; however, the distance between the point of origin and the points of impact was over two kilometers, indicating these groups may be refining their tactics and developing new capabilities.



I had a productive meeting with Prime Minister Maliki and National Security Advisor Falih al-Fayad on Thursday. I asked the Prime Minister to convey to 1.4b that its attacks on USF in Iraq are unacceptable and that its government should not be confused by U.S. restraint. He informed me he had sent a message via the 1.4b Ambassador earlier in the week, calling 1.4b in Iraq an affront to the GOI. Maliki said 1.4b officials responded with assurances that they did not want the attacks to continue. Needless to say, I am highly skeptical.

The Prime Minister and I also discussed our recent unilateral operations. Like many members of the GOI and ISF, Maliki understands of our right of self defense. However, he said our operations were putting him in a difficult position politically. He requested we cease unilateral operations and work alongside the ISF. I made no such commitment. We will continue to target 1.4b unilaterally in order to protect our forces.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister repeatedly stressed that the success of the U.S. mission in Iraq was very important to the GOI. I thanked him, but expressed concern that the increase in 1.4b group attacks on USF in Iraq threatened that success. I urged him to address the lack of resolve of ISF forces in the South and to hold corrupt officials accountable. He assured me he would address the matter. We received word Saturday that the Prime Minister has directed the ISF to immediately begin

~~SECRET // NOFORN // 20210717~~

~~SECRET # NOFORN # 20210717~~

USF-I Weekly Assessment 10 - 16 July 2011

operations in Amarah (Maysan Province). We'll stay engaged with senior ISF leadership to follow these developments and offer advice and the appropriate level of assistance.

We continue to vigorously pursue those responsible for attacks on our forces. This week we conducted five unilateral operations resulting in the detention of four 1.4b militants. Using the forensic evidence I mentioned last week, we were able to apprehend the 1.4b operative connected to the 29 June IRAM attack on FOB Shocker. We also detained a 1.4b operative suspected of facilitating the flow of lethal aid and funding from Iran to networks in Najaf and Baghdad, and a Promised Day Brigade (PDB) operative responsible for IDF and IED attacks against USF. Finally, we detained a member of AAH who plotted to kidnap an American in retribution for the detention of an AAH associate earlier this month.

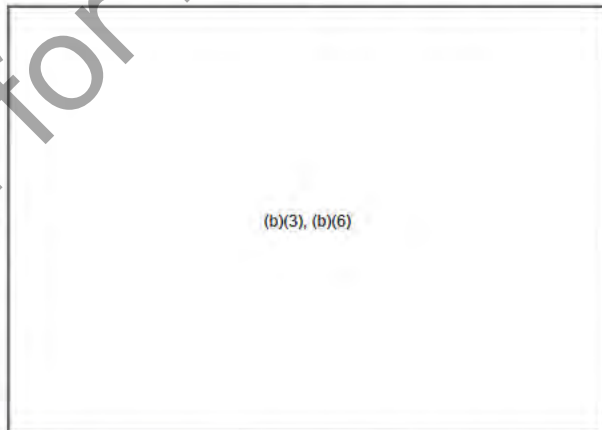
In addition to our unilateral operations, U.S. and Iraqi CT forces conducted 21 partnered operations resulting in the detention of 16 Sunni insurgents and 2 Shia extremists. Shia detainees include a PDB operative and a leader of an AAH cell in Karkh who we assess has high-level contacts in Iran, including the overall AAH leader Qays Khazali. This individual has thus far provided valuable information during interrogation, allowing us invaluable insight into AAH 1.4b networks. Iraqi Special Operations Forces conducted nine independent operations resulting in the detention of 20 extremists (19 Sunni, 1 Shia).

The Arab-Kurd Senior Working Group (SWG) met 14 July to discuss the ongoing transition of the 22 combined checkpoints (CCPs) in the Combined Security Areas. To date we have transitioned 2 of 5 CCPs in Diyala and 7 of 11 CCPs in Ninewa from trilateral (Iraqi Army, Regional Guard Brigade, and USF) to bilateral (IA and RGB). The SWG approved transition of the remaining Diyala and Ninewa CCPs and these are on track to be complete by 1 August. Transition of the six CCPs

located around Kirkuk city has been somewhat contentious. These CCPs are currently bilateral (IP and USF); the intent was for them to transition to unilateral (IP only). This option was rejected by the Iraqi Ground Forces and Federal Police Commanders, who felt the IP-only force would not be ethnically balanced. SWG members have agreed CCP security could be provided by the Golden Lion Battalion, a force comprised of IP, IA and Kurdish Peshmerga being trained by USF. We expect to finalize the transition plan at the next SWG meeting on 17 July and allow USF to transition the Kirkuk CCP's by 1 August.

ISF Development

The Anbar Operations Center (AOC) recently executed province-wide clearing operations directed by the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC). They successfully executed the operation with minimum USF assistance. The IGFC allocated Iraqi Air Force MI-17s and King Air ISR to facilitate the BOC commander's ability to extend his combat power into



~~SECRET # NOFORN # 20210717~~

SECRET // NOFORN // 20210717

USF-I Weekly Assessment 10 - 16 July 2011

remote areas of the western desert. For the first time, the AOC deployed a tactical operations center to provide forward-based mission command. The AOC planned the mission within 24 hours after receiving the IGFC's order, demonstrating the staff's ability to effectively execute a higher command's order. The growing capability of the BOC to act independently will allow our forces in U.S. Division-Central to shift valuable resources from Anbar to Baghdad.

The Kirkuk Training Center is conducting five classes with a total of 139 students enrolled from across Kirkuk Province. The majority of the student population is comprised of the second training class for the Combined Security Force Battalion, "The Golden Lions." Of note, a class of thirty-three Christian Iraqi Facility Protection Police graduated from the Basic Recruit Training (BRT) course on 13 July. These individuals were trained to guard Christian places of worship in the area.

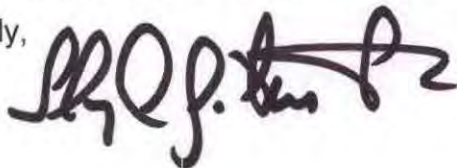
Transition

On 14 July, USF-I successfully transferred FOB Sykes to the Iraqis. This was the first of 12 large bases that USF-I will transition to the GOI. Sykes, located in Ninawa Province, covered over 4,000 acres and housed over 1,000 personnel. The transition process included deed/title verification and the transfer of numerous items to the Iraqi Army as Foreign Excess Personal Property. In addition to the land rights and property transfers, we conducted three surveys to properly address any environmental impact. We are scheduled to transfer our next large base, FOB Cobra (in Diyala Province), at the end of August.

As part of our ongoing transition, USF-I support to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) concluded on 15 July. UNAMI has supported the UN mission in Iraq since 2003. The organization performs human rights monitoring at locations such as Camp Ashraf, provides technical support to the Independent High Electoral Commission, and advises on economic development. ISF and UN forces have assumed security responsibilities for UNAMI compounds as well as logistics and transportation support (ground and air). We will rely on the relationships between our military advisors and UNAMI representatives to ensure continued unity of effort until UNAMI's current mandate expires on 31 July.

As reported last week, we initiated the transfer of 206 detainees from U.S. to Iraqi custody. By 13 July, 196 detainees were transferred. During the course of the transfer, seven additional prisoners were incarcerated as a result of recent operations. Therefore, 17 detainees remain in USF-I custody. We expect most of these detainees will be transferred no later than 21 July. USF-I will continue to provide overwatch until 31 July.

Respectfully,



SECRET // NOFORN // 20210717