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## USF-I Weekly Assessment 28 August – 3 September 2011

### USF-I COMMANDER'S WEEKLY ASSESSMENT

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

It was another quiet week in Iraqi politics with many key leaders out of the country as Ramadan drew to a close on 30 August and the three-day Eid al-Fitr holiday commenced. We anticipate the Council of Representatives (COR) will reconvene as early as 6 September to take up a number of critical issues, including debate on a post-2011 U.S. Force (USF) presence.

The overall security environment was relatively stable last week. The number of incidents decreased and was below the 12-week average. The number of casualties rose slightly, largely due to a number of attacks by AQI. On 28 August, a suicide bomber detonated explosives inside the largest Sunni mosque in Baghdad. Twelve civilians were injured and six were killed, including a member of parliament. The following day, a vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) attack in Anbar Province resulted in 15 casualties. Finally, on 31 August, a VBIED exploded in downtown Baghdad, resulting in 26 casualties.

Recent attacks by [1.4b] likely indicate the recent lull in attacks against USF has ended. Both Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) and [1.4b] announced their intent to resume attacks against our bases, convoys, and patrols. These statements are reinforced by intelligence reporting indicating these groups are well resourced and intend to inflict maximum casualties as we reposture our forces throughout the fall and into December. We will continue to adapt our force protection measures to meet the [1.4b] threat and will persist in our efforts to maintain pressure on [1.4b] AAH, and Promised Day Brigade (PDB) networks.

1 September marked the official transition to Phase II of our operational plan. During this phase, our priority effort will shift from strengthening the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to preparing for our reposture in accordance with the 2008 Security Agreement. We will also put into place mechanisms that will support our enduring strategic partnership with Iraq.

#### Political

There was very little political activity this week. The COR remained in recess and many political leaders traveled abroad for the Eid al-Fitr holiday. Iraqiyya reportedly submitted a number of minister of defense nominees to President Talabani; however, they have not divulged the names of the potential candidates, stating concerns about their safety.

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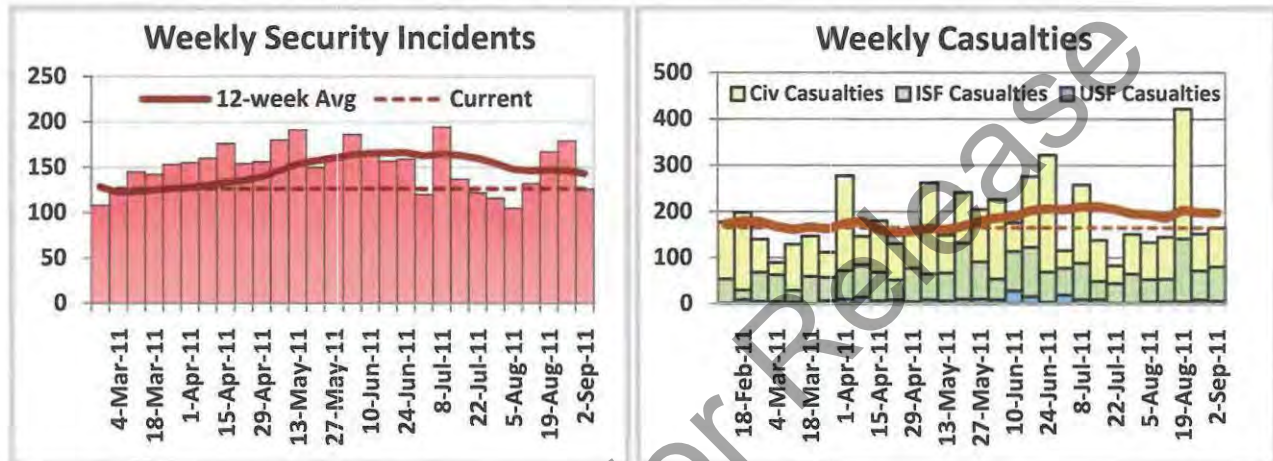


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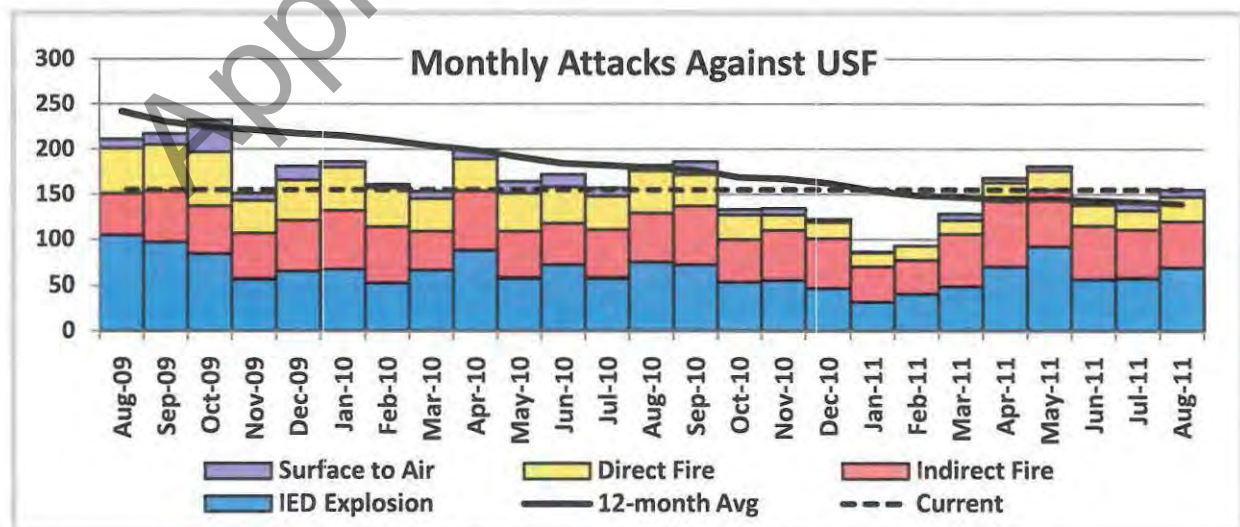
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### Security

During the reporting period, there were 131 security incidents, lower than the previous week (175) and below the 12-week average of 143. The number of casualties was 167 (33 killed, 134 wounded), an increase from last week (151) and below the 12-week average of 197. The number of attacks against USF decreased from 37 to 35, just above the 12-week average of 33. Eight U.S. service members were wounded in action; none were serious injuries.



For the month of August, there were 660 security incidents, an increase from the previous month (616) and just above the 12-month average of 644. Casualties for the month totaled 996 (199 killed, 797 wounded), higher than July and above the 12-month average of 799. The number of attacks targeting USF in August increased from 141 to 156, which is above the 12-month average of 140 (see below). No U.S. service members were killed in action; 27 were wounded in action. Remarkably, August was the first month since the beginning of the campaign with no U.S. deaths.



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Overall attacks against USF decreased during last week; however, [1.4b] activity has picked up following the recent lull. Recent reports confirm our assessment that these groups, particularly [1.4b] and AAH, were limiting attacks due in part to direction from [1.4b] in an attempt to shape the security environment in Iraq. Both groups released statements declaring their intent to renew attacks on USF. AAH followed through with attacks late last week, including the unsuccessful improvised rocket-assisted munitions (IRAM) attack in Baghdad on 27 August. Although we have disrupted the [1.4b] network with focused counterterrorism (CT) operations targeting [1.4b] leadership, we assess the group will likely attempt a high profile attack against our convoys and bases in the near future. Unlike [1.4b] and AAH, PDB continued to conduct attacks, driven by Muqtada al-Sadr's desire to impact public and political discourse on a post-2011 USF presence. Our overall assessment is that all three groups will increase attacks against our forces as we reposition. As always, force protection is our number one priority: we will do what is necessary to protect our personnel.

After expending considerable resources to conduct the coordinated attacks of 15 August, AQI demonstrated that it retains the capability to continue sporadic signature attacks throughout the country. On 28 August, an AQI operative detonated his suicide vest at the Um al-Qura mosque in Baghdad, resulting 18 civilian casualties. A member of parliament was among those fatally wounded. On the 29th, AQI conducted a VBIED attack in Anbar (15 casualties), followed by another VBEID attack in downtown Baghdad the next day (18 casualties). Although we knew it was unlikely AQI would achieve its objective of 100 attacks by the end of Ramadan, the number of suicide operatives used last month demonstrated that AQI is willing to expend valuable resources to conduct attacks that garner significant media attention.

I met with acting Minister of Defense Dulaymi on 29 August. He informed me that he has been actively assessing the readiness of Ministry of Defense (MOD) forces in order to gain the situational awareness he needs to be effective. We discussed security challenges in the southern provinces, particularly Maysan. He expressed support of our partnered operations targeting [1.4b] and said he intends to actively engage with ISF commanders to ensure their cooperation.

U.S. and Iraqi Special Operations Forces conducted a limited number of CT operations this week. We attribute this slowdown to the observance of Ramadan and the celebration of Eid al-Fitr. In one notable operation, partnered forces detained two AAH operatives involved in indirect fire attacks against USF, including the 26 August attack on Camp Taji that consisted of 11 240mm rockets.

### Transition

One year after our transition to Operation New Dawn, USF-I has moved into Phase II of our operational plan, which will take us to the end of our current mission. Although we have been conducting transition activities for quite some time, repositioning will become our decisive effort. We will continue our work to strengthen ISF capabilities; however,

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we will devote the majority of our time and resources towards our reposture. This effort will include the redeployment of personnel, repositioning of equipment and other assets, and other transition activities necessary to establish our enduring military-to-military partnership with Iraq.

Ongoing site transition activities remain on schedule; we are currently operating from 43 U.S. and partnered bases. In the next 60 days, we will work with the GOI Receivership Secretariat and the MOD to transition 31 sites, including five of our large bases. In order to facilitate the transfer of the remaining 10 large installations prior to 31 December, we have convened the Large Base Transition Board as an executive-level forum in which we can synchronize our efforts during these complex transfers and identify potential complications for timely resolution.

With regard to our transition to enduring locations under U.S. Mission-Iraq (USM-I), we have established the Embassy Support and Enduring Sites Transition Board (ES&ESTB). This board is the principle forum for enduring site transition synchronization between USF-I and USM-I. The ES&ESTB is co-chaired by the directors of the USF-I logistics and engineering directorates and includes the participation of the Deputy Commanding General (DCG) for Support, the DCG for Advising and Training, and the Embassy's Management Counselor.

Another facet of the ongoing transition is ensuring we set the conditions for U.S. Embassy-Baghdad's success after the departure of USF-I. We continue to work closely with our Embassy partners to transfer equipment needed to grow Department of State capability. Thus far, we have transferred nearly 40,000 line items valued at over \$98 million. These transfers include base life support items such as containerized housing units, electrical power generators, laundry units, storage tanks, and other items. We have also transferred force protection items such as T-Walls, and jersey barriers.

Secretary of the Air Force Donley will visit Iraq this week to meet with senior USF-I, GOI, and ISF officials.

Respectfully,



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