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USF-I Weekly Assessment 4 - 10 September 2011

USF-I COMMANDER'S WEEKLY ASSESSMENT

Mr. Secretary, Chairman, Jim:

Many Government of Iraq (GOI) leaders returned from abroad during the week and the Council of Representatives (COR) reconvened on 6 September. Therefore, we expect that things will pick up considerably after a quiet three-week period in Iraqi politics. President Talabani will convene a meeting of political bloc leaders this week to discuss the National Council for Higher Policy (NCHP) and security ministry nominations. We expect the leaders will also address a post-2011 U.S. Force (USF) presence. Jim Jeffrey and I are lining up a number of meetings with GOI officials this week to ensure things keep moving in the right direction.

The number of security incidents decreased by nearly one-third this week and the number of casualties dropped significantly. Attacks against USF also decreased considerably. These attacks were mostly in the North; we assess that they were conducted by Sunni insurgents groups such as Jaysh Rijal Tariq al-Naqshabandi (JRTN). Promised Day Brigade (PDB) was likely responsible for the majority of [REDACTED] attacks targeting USF, while Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) and [REDACTED] activity remained relatively low. As I have previously stated, I believe these groups continue to plan for an increase in attacks, especially as we reposture our forces and equipment through the South.

The 36th Infantry Division of United States Division-South (USD-S) transferred control of its operating area to USD-Center (USD-C), marking a major milestone in our campaign as we go from a three-division set to a two-division set. Henceforth, USD-C will operate in Iraq's nine southern provinces in addition to the provinces of Anbar and Baghdad.

Political

It was another quiet week on the political front as political leaders returned from abroad and the COR reconvened. Acting MOD Dulaymi informed us that President Talabani intends to host a meeting of political bloc leaders this week that will focus on the NCHP, security ministers, and the presence of USF in Iraq after 2011. The Ambassador and I are preparing to conduct multiple engagements this week to assess the current political environment and regain momentum on discussions concerning a post-2011 presence.

The six-month deadline imposed by Muqtada al-Sadr for improvement in the GOI's provision of essential services passed on 9 September. There were a few sparsely attended, peaceful demonstrations, falling well short of Sadr's initial call for a million participants. We attribute this to a number of factors, including a general lack of support

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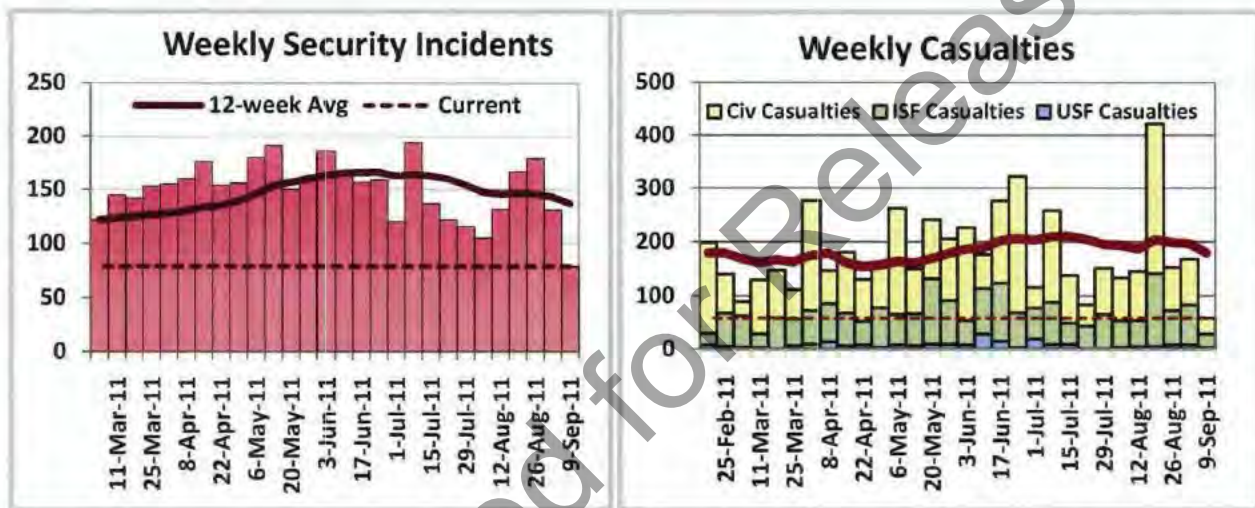
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from most political parties and pressure from 1.4b to support the Maliki-led government, likely leading Sadr to revise his guidance and discourage participation.

Security

During the reporting period, there were 86 security incidents, lower than the previous week (131) and below the 12-week average of 137. The number of casualties was 60 (19 killed, 41 wounded), a significant decrease from last week (167) and well below the 12-week average of 179. The number of attacks against USF fell from 37 to 19, below the 12-week average of 32. Three U.S. service members were wounded in action; none were serious injuries.



We attribute the week's level of casualties to the relative low number of attacks and no AQL high profile attacks. AQL is likely in a refit and rearm phase after the series of attacks during Ramadan and will continue to look for opportunities to conduct large-scale attacks.

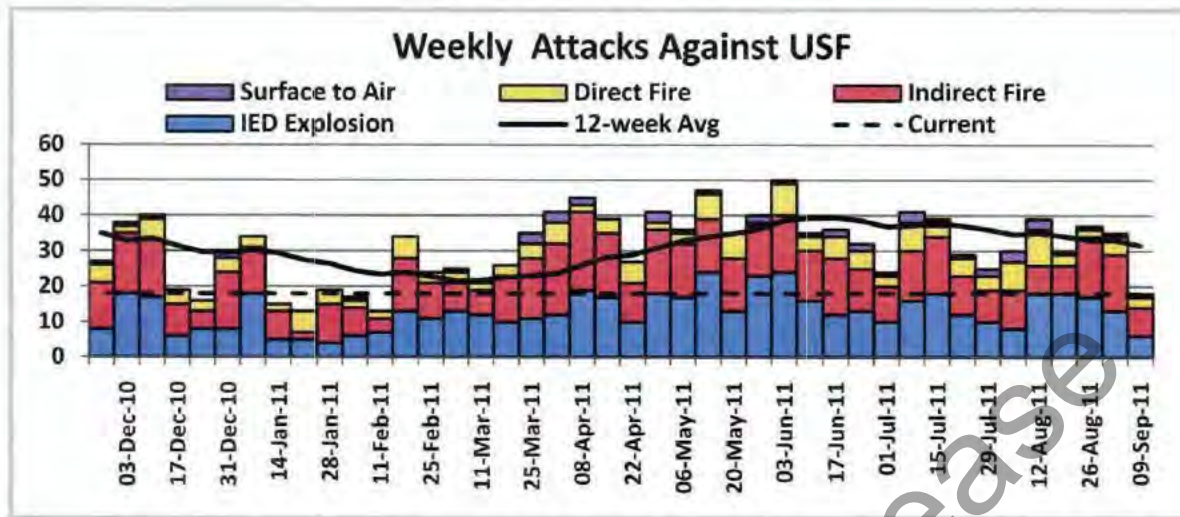
Attacks against USF dropped by nearly half (see below). Sunni insurgent groups such as JRTN continued to target U.S. bases and convoys in central and northern Iraq. The majority of these attacks were ineffective, resulting in only minor injuries and damage to equipment. 1.4b also conducted a number of attacks, including an RKG-3 attack in Basrah and an indirect fire (IDF) attack on the international zone. PDB continues to conduct the majority of these attacks while AAH and 1.4b contrary to recent public statements, remain relatively inactive. 1.4b

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Partnered CT operations picked up last week after the conclusion of the Eid holiday. As a result of successful partnered operations, we detained a number of 1.4b

1.4b including an AAH cell leader operating in Baghdad with ties to high-level operatives in 1.4b and an AAH member involved in lethal aid smuggling and IED and IDF attacks in Maysan Province. Focusing our targeting efforts on the 1.4b network continues to pay dividends. 1.4c

1.4c Last week we detained a long-time associate of several 1.4b leaders, allowing us to develop further insight into 1.4b planning activities. Joint U.S. and Iraqi forces also conducted numerous operations targeting Sunni insurgent groups, resulting in the detention of AQI, JRTN, and other Sunni insurgents involved in assassinations, kidnappings, small arms, and IED attacks targeting USF, ISF, and Iraqi civilians.

I had another productive weekly meeting with Acting MOD Dulaymi in which he acknowledged the importance of consistent partnered CT operations and the effective

1.4b. We also discussed the status of the F-16 LOA. He informed me that Minister of Finance Issawi had not returned from abroad to discuss the matter with the Prime Minister; however, Dulaymi reaffirmed Maliki's commitment to the purchase of the aircraft.

Arab-Kurd tensions flared in Diyala after Peshmerga forces conducted unilateral movement in the combined security area (CSA). We assess this move was likely intended to provoke a reaction and gain concessions during political negotiations. Senior leaders from USF-I and Iraqi and Kurdish security forces met to discuss the matter during a senior working group (SWG) meeting on 8 September. The Kurds agreed to cease uncoordinated movements in the CSA. Members of the SWG also agreed to continue the joint USF/ISF/Regional Guard Brigade patrols that have been in place since 19 August.

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USF-I leaders strongly emphasized that progress on these issues will be increasingly important as USF depart by the end of the year. Discussions also covered the formation of the Golden Lions battalion and operations in all CSAs, as well as topics that will be covered in the next SWG meeting on 13 September.

ISF Development

On 5 September, the U.S. Air Force's 52nd Expeditionary Flying Training Squadron completed its final T-6 flying training mission with the Iraqis. The occasion was accompanied by the completion of an Iraqi Air Force (IqAF) pilot's T-6 instructor pilot (IP) check ride, the culmination of an 18-month program of primary pilot training and instructor pilot training. The squadron now has 10 fully qualified T-6 IPs, enabling autonomous flying operations as Iraq continues to develop its nascent air force capabilities.

In a recent ceremony, the director of Iraq Training and Advisory Mission-Air relinquished control of the Hellfire munitions storage area at the Kirkuk Regional Air Base to the IqAF. Previously, the U.S. maintained responsibility for storage and security of the Iraqi-owned missiles. The event marked a milestone for the Iraqi military as they assume control of the entire kinetic chain, from storage to execution.

Transition

The Diyala provincial reconstruction team (PRT) ceased operations on 4 September, marking the end of the PRT mission in Iraq. USF-I participation in PRTs has been one of our most important missions, working with our State Department partners to strengthen and sustain civil capacity at the provincial and local levels. The success of this mission has laid the foundation for our enduring strategic partnership with Iraq.

On 7 September, the citizen-soldiers of the 36th Infantry Division transferred control of U.S. Division-South's operating area to the 25th Infantry Division of USD-Center. Headquarters USD-Center operates in Baghdad and Anbar Provinces and will now have Iraq's nine southern provinces in its area of responsibility. The men and women of the 36th ID did a tremendous job in one of the most complex and dynamic regions of Iraq. I am fully confident the 25th ID is up to the task as we begin our operational maneuver through the southern provinces.

This week, Secretary of the Army McHugh, Deputy Secretary of State Burns, and Commanding General Ann Dunwoody of Army Materiel Command will visit Iraq.

Respectfully,



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