

SECRET # NOFORN # 20211106

## USF-I Weekly Assessment 30 October – 5 November 2011

### USF-I COMMANDER'S WEEKLY ASSESSMENT

Mr. Secretary, Chairman, Jim:

Ambassador Jeffrey and I engaged Prime Minister Maliki and his national security advisor, Falih Fayyad, to discuss the next phase of the U.S. strategic relationship with Iraq. After receiving a thorough report from Fayyad the previous day, Maliki appeared eager to take the steps necessary to establish a robust relationship. We discussed the future military and diplomatic presence in Iraq as well as upcoming events to commemorate the efforts of U.S. Forces (USF) during the Iraq campaign. We also discussed Maliki's trip to Washington DC on 12 December, the impending transfer of detainees, and the status of existing foreign military sales (FMS) programs.

All security indicators remain below average. Most of the week's casualties were the result of two AQI high profile attacks, one of which targeted the ISF and Sons of Iraq in Diyala Province and another that targeted civilians in the Shia-dominated city of Basrah. The [1.4b] militant group Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) continued to conduct attacks against our forces during the reporting period. Although none were effective, we continue to assess AAH (and other [1.4b], if they resume attacks) poses the greatest threat to our forces as we conduct our reposture.

Our reposture and transition efforts are on track and, in many cases, ahead of schedule. USF-I currently operates from 12 locations. Over the next 30 days, we will transition six bases to the GOI, including two large bases (Joint Base Balad and Victory Base Complex). We will also transition two enduring sites: one to the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I) and one to the Department of State. We also continue to make tremendous headway in the withdrawal of equipment. Since last week's report we reduced equipment in theater by an additional 20 percent. Our personnel drawdown is also proceeding on schedule: as of 4 November, there were 31,278 military and Department of Defense personnel in Iraq, a decrease of 4,733 from the previous week.

We continue to work through a number of issues that require resolution in order to successfully stand up the OSC-I. These include establishing bilateral agreements such as land use agreements, receiving National Security Decision Directive 38 approval, obtaining approval of a joint manning document, and securing legal protections under the Vienna Convention.

#### Political

Ambassador Jeffrey and I had a productive discussion with Prime Minister Maliki on 4 November. We covered a broad range of topics, including the nature of our enduring strategic relationship, significant events commemorating the Iraq campaign, the impending transfer of detainees, and the status of FMS programs.

The Prime Minister said he wants the highest level of strategic relationship possible. The Ambassador and I reminded him that we have been building towards that for the last

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15 months and we will need his support to move forward under the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA). We will continue to discuss the details with NSA Fayyad.

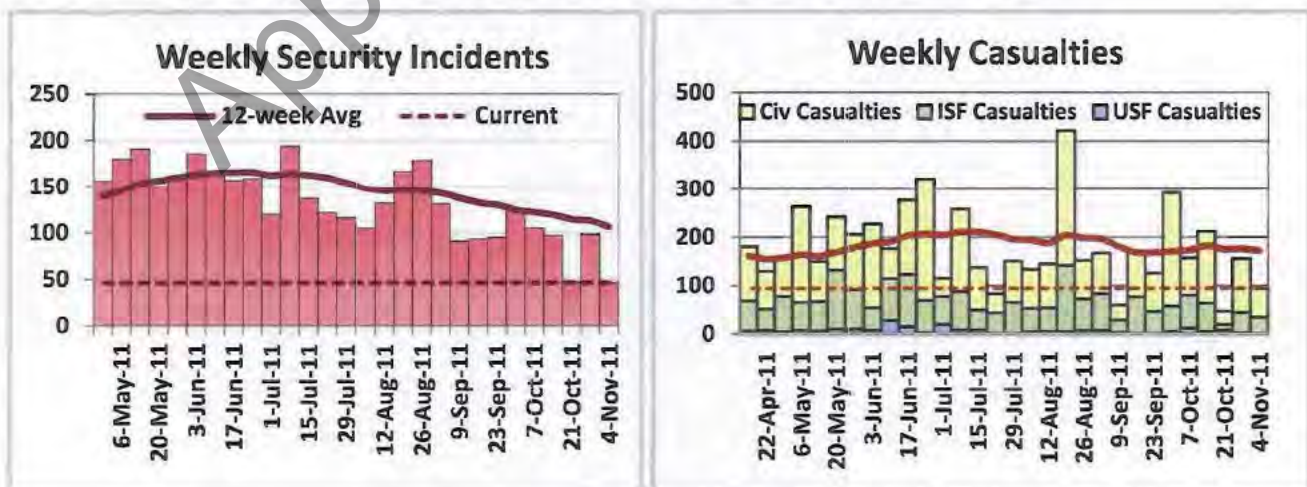
During the meeting, we ran through the series of events planned to commemorate the end of the U.S. military mission in Iraq, to include a GOI-hosted ceremony in Baghdad on 1 December, Maliki's publicly-announced trip to Washington DC on 12 December, and the USF-I end of mission ceremony on 15 December. We also discussed the meeting of the Higher Coordinating Committee (a component of the SFA) and agreed the meeting should take place in Baghdad.

I informed the Prime Minister that we must complete the handover of detainees to the GOI as part of our withdrawal. We discussed the detainees currently in our custody at the theater internment facility (TIF) at Al Asad Air Base. Because the TIF is scheduled to close, we will transfer custody of all detainees (currently 52) no later than 24 November. I requested the GOI maintain custody until at least the end of December. The Prime Minister appeared supportive but did not verbally commit to holding the detainees. However, he did ask for all evidence we have that might aid in their prosecution.

Finally, Maliki expressed concern regarding the date of delivery of F-16s purchased by the GOI. In accordance with the letter of offer and acceptance signed by the Prime Minister in September, the first airplane is scheduled to be delivered in early 2015. Maliki asked if the delivery could be expedited. However, it should be noted that even if the aircraft are expedited, the other components that come together to provide true capability, such as pilot training, training equipment, and office buildings and hangars, must also be in place.

### Security

During the reporting period, there were 48 security incidents, a decrease from the previous week (98) and below the 12-week average of 106. The number of casualties was 95 (14 killed, 81 wounded), lower than last week (155) and below the 12-week average of 171. The number of attacks against USF decreased from 22 to 15 and remained below the 12-week average of 23. One U.S. service member was killed in action.



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Two AQI high profile attacks accounted for nearly 80 percent of the week's casualties. On 2 November, AQI conducted an attack targeting civilians in the city of Basrah, killing two and wounding 40. The attack is consistent with our assessment that AQI will continue to target civilians in Shia-dominated areas of the country and demonstrate its reach by conducting occasional attacks in the southern provinces. On 3 November, a suicide operative detonated his suicide vest as members of the Sons of Iraq (SOI) gathered to receive their pay in Baqubah (Diyala Province). Moments later, a vehicle-borne IED targeting first responders exploded. We assess the attack, which killed six and wounded 27, was intended to intimidate the SOI and portray the ISF as incapable of providing security.

Overall attacks against USF decreased. On 3 October, a U.S. Soldier was killed by a sniper while conducting a counter-IDF patrol in Kirkuk. Jaysh Rijal Tariq al-Naqshabandi (JRTN) claimed the attack on its website the following day. An Iraqi witness provided information to the ISF, leading to the apprehension of the individual who allegedly conducted the attack.

Although Sunni insurgent groups have conducted the majority of attacks against our forces, we assess [redacted] remain our biggest threat. AAH continues to be the only [redacted] conducting attacks, returning to pre-operational pause activity levels. The group has claimed a number of attacks during the last month, including two recent attacks against Victory Base Complex and explosively-formed penetrator attacks targeting U.S. convoys and patrols. Reporting indicates AAH continues to preposition weapons and intends to conduct a steady stream of attacks as we reposition. These reports further indicate that [redacted] increased extortion activities targeting local businesses and wealthy citizens.



For the month of October, there were 369 security incidents, a decrease from the previous month (422) and below the 12-month average of 598 (see chart above). Contrary to reporting in the media, we assess that casualties *decreased* for the month, from 654 to 584 (144 killed, 440 wounded) and remained below the 12-month average

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of 776. The number of attacks targeting USF decreased from 96 to 83, the lowest since February 2011 and below the 12-month average of 128. One USF (contractor) was killed in action and 26 were wounded in action (most not seriously). This will be the last report on monthly security trends. The fidelity of our data is decreasing due to a growing dependence on host nation reporting driven by our shrinking footprint.

Partnered counterterrorism (CT) operations targeting the AAH network resulted in the detention of three operatives, including a courier who carried 1.4b, 1.4d with close ties to AAH senior leaders. Joint CT forces also apprehended an AAH cell leader and the finance chief of a cell in Baghdad.

The situation at Camp Ashraf is currently stable, but tense. After a meeting with United Nations Assistance Mission-Iraq (UNAMI) envoy Martin Kobler and a call from the UN Secretary General, GOI representatives stated the government might consider a one- or two-month extension to the current 31 December deadline for camp closure. Such a delay would be contingent upon "significant progress" in UNAMI's relocation plan. Kobler indicated he would continue talks with the GOI after the end of the week-long Eid al-Adha observance, which begins 6 November. We assess progress is unlikely, however, due to the continued unwillingness of Mujahadeen-e-Khalq (MeK) members to leave the camp and insufficient time for implementation of the UNAMI plan. Further, we assess that any effort by the GOI to relocate the MeK will lead to a use of force and the potential loss of life. We will continue to raise the issue with GOI leaders and urge patience as the UN continues its refugee registration efforts.

### Transition and Reposture

Our transition and reposture is on track. As of 5 November, 31,278 military and DOD civilians operate from 12 locations.

Our phased approach to the withdrawal of equipment in Iraq gains momentum each day as we draw closer to the end of mission. Since last week's report, we have reduced the amount of equipment by another 20 percent. One-third of the remaining equipment will either transfer to OSC-I or be given to the GOI under established Congressional authorities. The remaining two-thirds will be transported to Kuwait for return to the U.S. or redistribution to Afghanistan. Overall, I am confident that our established drawdown plan will keep us on track for full withdrawal from Iraq not later than 31 December.

We continue to closely monitor progress of our transition through regular meetings of the Embassy Support and Enduring Site Transition Board (ES&ESTB). The ES&ESTB is an invaluable forum in which senior leaders from USF-I and the Embassy focus on the status of various transition efforts. In two weeks, USF-I will host the last board before handing off the lead to OSC-I. All USF-I tasks required to enable OSC-I and DOS are on track; we will continue to work remaining issues through end of mission. We remain particularly focused on areas that will require mitigation to prevent delays in mission capability, including postal transportation, force protection equipment, waste removal, and food and fuel delivery.

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We have made tremendous progress to establish DOS medical capability. Over 97 percent of required contracted medical personnel are either on station, enroute, or scheduled for deployment. The majority of those who have arrived are already performing their assigned duties in theater. USF-I will continue to provide personnel to resource a military medical asset bridging strategy until our Embassy partners have established medical capability in early December. This schedule will allow all USF-I medical assets to redeploy on schedule.

Jim Jeffrey and I traveled to Basrah on 2 November to meet with civilian and military leaders and see the progress they have made in standing up the U.S. Consulate. The team is doing impressive work despite extraordinary challenges. The most significant challenge remains delays in the delivery of critical construction materials due to time-consuming entry requirements at the Kuwaiti border. We will continue to provide assistance to enable full operational capability by the end of the month.

Congressman McCaul and five of his colleagues will visit Iraq next week.

Respectfully,



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