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Forces Capture 6 in Central, Northern Iraq Operations

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10, 2008 – Coalition forces detained six suspected terrorists today during operations targeting al Qaeda networks operating in central and northern Iraq.

In Tarmiyah, forces captured an alleged associate of a senior leader for the al Qaeda in Iraq network in Baghdad's northern belt. The network is responsible for bombings in the area as well as extortion, intimidation, weapons trafficking and facilitating foreign terrorists, officials said.

Two suspects were detained at an alleged terrorist safe haven east of Samarra. Further north, forces detained three suspects during an operation southeast of Tal Afar targeting an al Qaeda in Iraq senior leader directly connected to Abu Ayyub al-Masri, al Qaeda in Iraq's overall leader.

In other Iraq operations, coalition forces detained 11 suspects yesterday while targeting insurgent networks operating in northern Iraq.

During a series of operations southeast of Beiji, forces captured two wanted individuals and detained three additional suspects. One of the wanted individuals is an alleged leader of an al Qaeda in Iraq assassination group in Hawijah. The second suspect reportedly is a close associate of an al Qaeda leader responsible for financing terrorist operations.

Northwest of Mosul, coalition forces captured an alleged senior level facilitator for northern Iraq terrorist networks. Five suspected terrorists were detained in addition to the wanted individual.

Also yesterday, members of a "Sons of Iraq" citizen security force thwarted an attack at a checkpoint in the Shaab neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah district. Three men opened fire on the guards manning the checkpoint. The guards returned fire on the approaching vehicle and forced the assailants to flee the area. None of the guards were injured.

In other operations yesterday, coalition forces detained two suspects southwest of Mahmudiya, including an alleged associate of an al Qaeda in Iraq senior leader for the southern belt network.

In operations across Iraq last week:

-- The Iraqi Ninevah Special Weapons and Tactics team, advised by U.S. Special Forces, detained four known insurgents in an operation in the village of Athba on Feb. 8. The four are believed to be part of a bomb cell. The cell is believed to be responsible for an attack that killed a U.S. soldier in January. Six other suspects are being held for questioning.

-- Two men newly registered in a "Sons of Iraq" citizen security group led coalition forces to an al Qaeda in Iraq safe house Feb. 8 east of Mansuriyah. Six insurgents were killed and one was detained when forces went to the house.

-- Soldiers arrested six suspects and seized munitions in support of Operation Phantom Phoenix in the Rashid District of the Iraqi capital Feb. 8. The six were taken to a coalition detention facility for questioning.

-- Also Feb. 8, during an operation east of Baghdad, coalition forces captured an alleged Iranian-trained "special groups" criminal element leader and detained another suspect.

-- On Feb. 7, Iraqi security forces, with U.S. Special Forces advising, detained four suspected terrorists during three separate raids. Two were detained in Baghdad operations and one near Ramadi.

-- The Iraqi army found two kidnap victims and coalition forces killed three al Qaeda in Iraq operatives and detained seven during Operation Blackhawk Thrasher near Qubah on Feb. 7. The operation was part of the countrywide Operation Phantom Phoenix.

-- Coalition forces killed four terrorists and detained 10 suspects in other operations last week targeting al Qaeda networks operating in Diyala province. During the multi-day operation, forces discovered 13 house bombs and seven weapons caches, including 300 anti-aircraft rounds, and bomb-making materials, including 80 bottles of ammonium chloride, bags of ammonium nitrate and jugs of homemade explosives.

-- A "Sons of Iraq" group discovered a weapons cache near Sabah Nissan, a village east of Baghdad, Feb. 5. The cache held two rocket-propelled grenades, a 130 mm artillery round, a 120 mm tank round, a 60 mm mortar round and a 57 mm mortar round.

(Compiled from Multinational Force and Multinational Corps Iraq news releases.)