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Coalition Targets Suicide-Bombing Cell, IED Network

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15, 2008 – Coalition forces killed three terrorists and detained 10 suspects yesterday and today during operations to disrupt al Qaeda networks in northern and central Iraq, military officials said.

Southwest of Mahmudiyah today, coalition forces captured an alleged terrorist associated with facilitating weapons, improvised-explosive-device materials, vehicles and suicide bombers for use in al Qaeda in Iraq attacks. The individual is believed to be associated with six other individuals detained by coalition forces within the last month for suspected involvement in the weapons-facilitation network. Reports indicate the suspect is also a close contact of several terrorist leaders, including foreign-based weapons facilitators.

On the way to the target area, coalition forces were engaged by an armed individual, and they returned fire in self-defense, killing him. They continued on to the target building, where the wanted individual identified himself to the ground force and subsequently was detained, along with one additional suspect.

Also this morning, coalition forces conducted an operation in Baghdad resulting in the capture of an alleged terrorist facilitator for al Qaeda in Iraq networks operating between the capital city and north of Ramadi. The suspect reportedly is connected to IED and car-bombing networks in Baghdad and to the leader of the Ramadi al Qaeda network. In addition to the wanted individual, the ground force detained four suspected terrorists.

Nearby, one additional suspect was detained for his alleged ties to an IED manufacturer for a car-bombing network in Baghdad.

During an operation in Mosul yesterday morning, coalition forces targeted alleged associates of an al Qaeda in Iraq senior leader and foreign-terrorist facilitator. Reports indicate that one of the targeted individuals is a leader of a suicide-bombing cell in the city and involved in attacks against coalition and Iraqi forces in the area.

Intelligence led coalition forces to an area where a vehicle associated with the targeted suspects was located and the ground force directed an airstrike. An individual who was in the targeted vehicle was observed fleeing the area, and coalition forces followed him to a nearby alley, where he was detained.

Also yesterday, coalition forces conducted an operation northeast of Samarra targeting an alleged al Qaeda in Iraq senior leader for the region. As coalition forces arrived in the target area, they observed two armed men. One of the individuals reached for his weapon, and coalition forces engaged, killing two terrorists. Upon clearing the area, the ground force recovered two weapons and IED materials. The ground force also destroyed a vehicle in the target area to prevent further use for terrorist activity.

"These operations are another example of Iraqi and coalition forces' continued success against al Qaeda in Iraq senior leaders and their networks," said Army Maj. Winfield Danielson, a Multinational Force Iraq spokesman. "We are finding the places they hide and disrupting their ability to conduct vicious attacks on innocent civilians."

In Iraq operations yesterday:

-- Elements of 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multinational Division Baghdad, detained the brigade's number-one high-value individual and his brother. The two are suspected as IED facilitators and allegedly are linked to a fatal IED attack Jan. 29. Five others suspected of facilitating IED activity in Taji Qada, northwest of Baghdad, also were detained.

-- Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers found 50 artillery rounds, a rocket and a mortar round during nine separate sites within an hour of patrolling southwestern Baghdad. Soldiers of Company A, 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, attached to Task Force Dragon, seized 50 155 mm artillery rounds, a rocket and a mortar round during an early-morning patrol in Saydiyah. The munitions safely were destroyed by explosive ordnance disposal personnel.

-- An Iraqi citizen turned in two rocket-propelled grenades and launchers to Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers in Doura. The Iraqi found a burlap bag containing the weapons and turned them over to scouts from Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. The weapons were safely destroyed by explosive ordnance disposal personnel at a coalition forces facility.

In operations Feb. 13:

-- Iraqi army soldiers and "Sons of Iraq" security volunteers rescued two Iraqi citizens in western Baghdad. Following a tip about a possible kidnapping, Iraqi army troops with 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, and Sons of Iraq raided a home in western Baghdad and found two Iraqi civilians bound in a hole inside the home. The victims were returned to their families.

-- Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers unearthed munitions in a palm grove during a patrol in the Rashid district of the Iraqi capital. Soldiers from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, attached to Task Force Dragon, were searching a palm grove in Doura for unexploded ordnance when they found the munitions. Explosive ordnance disposal personnel destroyed 11 anti-armor grenade fuses, two 122 mm mortar rounds and 14 hand grenades in a controlled detonation at a coalition base.

-- Iraqi special operations forces with U.S. Special Forces soldiers advising detained a suspected leader of a criminal splinter group near Hillah. The suspect and his group are suspected of mortar attacks against Iraqi and coalition forces and attacks using IEDs and explosively formed projectiles. According to intelligence reports, the group also is involved in the torture, kidnapping and murder of Iraqi citizens. An associate member of the criminal splinter group also was detained in the operation.

-- Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers discovered a substantial weapons cache northwest of Baghdad. As part of Operation Phantom Phoenix, soldiers from 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, discovered the cache consisting of various mortar rounds, anti-aircraft rounds, explosives, rocket-propelled grenades, and two rifles. An explosive ordnance disposal team conducted two controlled detonations of the cache.

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