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Troops in Iraq Kill Nine, Capture 56, Destroy Terrorist Hideouts

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19, 2008 – Coalition and Iraqi forces killed nine suspected terrorists, detained 56 others and destroyed terrorist safe havens and training grounds in Iraq over the past four days, military officials said.

In Iraq today:

-- Coalition forces southeast of Samarra detained two suspected terrorists, including an alleged leader of the al Qaeda in Iraq network in Jalam who is linked to kidnappings and terrorist financing. The suspect allegedly arranges meetings between senior leaders from Tigris River Valley terrorist networks.

-- Troops nabbed two suspects during an operation in Mosul targeting an alleged senior leader for the al Qaeda networks in northern Iraq.

-- Coalition forces captured an alleged associate of the senior al Qaeda in Iraq commander in Baghdad who leads cells responsible for suicide and car-bombing attacks, and other terrorist activities. The suspect reportedly facilitates transportation for senior terrorist leaders in the area, military officials said.

In Iraq yesterday:

-- Coalition forces captured a suspect with alleged links to senior-level al Qaeda members in Mosul near Ashura. The suspect reportedly commands a group of foreign terrorists and suicide bombers responsible for killing five coalition soldiers in a Jan. 28 attack. Troops killed one suspected terrorist and detained another in the operation.

-- Insurgents fired a series of rockets on Victory Base Complex and West Rashid in southwestern Baghdad, killing five Iraqi civilians and wounding at least 14 others, and injuring two U.S. soldiers. Coalition and Iraqi quick-reaction teams swept the area and captured six insurgents at the scene of the rocket launch, military officials said.

-- Coalition troops captured a suspected Iranian-trained "special groups" leader and detained one other suspect during operations to disrupt criminal networks in the Iraqi capital. The targeted individual reportedly was in charge of all special groups criminal elements in western Baghdad and supplied members with armor-piercing explosively formed penetrators and other munitions.

-- Forces in Mosul captured two suspects, including an alleged military leader of the local al Qaeda in Iraq network. Reports indicate the targeted suspect previously served as a leader in the Beiji network, but was relocated due to recent coalition forces operations that have degraded the leadership presence in Mosul, military officials said.

In Iraq Feb. 17:

-- Coalition forces near Khan Bani Sad conducted an operation targeting a senior intelligence leader involved in the al Qaeda in Iraq network in Baqouba. The targeted individual brandished a weapon with the perceived intent to fire on coalition forces. The assault force engaged, killing the wanted terrorist and an additional suspect.

-- Members of a "Sons of Iraq" citizen security group killed two al Qaeda in Iraq members transporting homemade explosives and improvised explosive devices in Adhamiyah. Military officials said the members took appropriate measures by firing on a minivan that failed to reduce its "high rate of speed" while approaching a checkpoint. A coalition forces explosive ordnance disposal team determined the vehicle was being used to transport explosives.

-- Troops conducted an operation in Sharqat targeting an alleged founder of an anti-coalition insurgent group tied to the leader of the al Qaeda in Iraq network in Beiji. Coalition forces killed a suspected terrorist and detained two others in the raid.

-- Coalition forces conducted an assault on a suspected special groups finance network south of Baghdad, killing an armed suspect in self-defense. During the assault, troops discovered large amounts of Iraqi currency, military officials said.

-- Troops caught seven suspects in Baqouba and southwest of Samarra during operations targeting associates of the regional al Qaeda suicide-bombing network. Coalition forces also nabbed an associate of the al Qaeda in Iraq leader who operates in the Jazirah area.

-- Coalition forces captured an alleged associate of the terrorist network in Kirkuk. Military officials said the suspect is linked to three high-ranking terrorists captured by troops in recent operations. Forces detained four additional suspected terrorists in the raid.

- Troops detained five suspected terrorists during two operations in Mosul targeting associates of foreign-terrorist and weapons facilitators, military officials said.

-- Forces detained three suspected terrorists in western Baghdad, including an alleged weapons smuggler who specializes in transporting IED and car-bomb supplies in northern Iraq. Military officials said the individual is associated with another suspected car-bomb smuggler, who coalition forces captured Feb. 15.

-- Coalition forces in the Iraqi capital nabbed an alleged senior-level car-bomb smuggler for al Qaeda in Iraq networks throughout Baghdad and north to Tikrit. The suspect is believed to be a direct associate of al Qaeda senior leaders in Baghdad and surrounding areas. Troops detained one additional suspect on site, military officials said.

-- Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers captured a top lieutenant of Arkan Hasnawi, an Iranian-funded and -trained special group in northern Baghdad. The suspect is accused of attacking Iraqi and coalition troops with explosively formed projectiles and mortars and for kidnapping and murdering Iraqi civilians.

-- Coalition forces in Abu Ghraib detained one suspected terrorist with alleged ties to the al Qaeda in Iraq network operating in Arab Jabour, military officials said.

-- Iraqi and U.S. special operations forces detained a suspected terrorist leader during an operation in Mosul. Military officials said the suspect is responsible for improvised-explosive-device attacks against Iraqi security forces in the city and for distributing insurgent propaganda.

-- Coalition air strikes north of Baquba destroyed 17 structures believed to house al Qaeda in Iraq operatives and booby-trap ambushes and function as terrorist training grounds. Troops based the targeted structures on intelligence gleaned in previous operations, military officials said.

In Iraq Feb. 16:

-- Coalition troops observed two men fleeing a targeted area northeast of Samarra near the Hamrin Mountains. The men failed to heed troops' instructions to stop and instead continued in opposite directions. Coalition forces followed one, engaging and killing him. The other was found hiding with a pistol, prepared to fire at ground forces, who engaged and killed him, military officials said.

-- Troops targeted an alleged aide to foreign terrorists who is associated with an al Qaeda in Iraq senior leader in Mosul. Coalition forces detained nine suspected terrorists and discovered a cache containing improvised-explosive-device materials during the operation.

-- In a separate operation on the east side of Mosul, coalition forces captured an alleged leader of the city's al Qaeda in Iraq network. Reports indicate the suspect is associated with several senior leaders in the area, including a judge of an illegal terrorist court system and the radical Taliban-like spiritual advisor for the city's al Qaeda in Iraq networks, military officials said. The ground force detained one additional suspect.

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