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Coalition Forces Kill Terrorist, Detain 20 Suspects

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21, 2008 – Coalition forces killed one terrorist and detained 20 suspected terrorists yesterday and today during operations to disrupt al Qaeda operations in central and northern Iraq, military officials reported.

West of Taji this morning, coalition forces conducted an operation targeting an individual believed to be an associate of the Baghdad improvised-explosive-device and car-bombing networks. Intelligence indicates he is a terrorist facilitator of materials, vehicles and suicide bombers for multiple terrorist cells throughout the city, officials said. During the operation, coalition forces engaged and killed one armed terrorist and detained two suspects.

During an operation in Sharqat, coalition forces captured an alleged associate of the senior leader for the al Qaeda in Iraq network in Mosul. Reports indicate the suspect also is connected with several other senior leaders in northern Iraq. In addition to the wanted individual, the ground force detained five suspected terrorists.

In two operations in southeastern Mosul today, coalition forces detained six suspected terrorists while targeting the alleged senior leader for the network in Beiji and a suspected IED cell leader for a network operating in the city.

During an operation in Beiji, coalition forces detained three suspected terrorists this morning while targeting the suspected leader of an insurgent network that operates outside of the city.

North of Tal Afar yesterday, troops detained three suspects while targeting an alleged associate of al Qaeda in Iraq senior leadership.

"Iraqi and coalition force operations are systematically dismantling the al Qaeda networks in northern Iraq," Army Maj. Winfield Danielson, a Multinational Force Iraq spokesman, said. "As terrorists try to shift their operations to other locations, we will continue to find and attack their networks. Al Qaeda will find no safe haven in Iraq."

Also yesterday, Iraqi soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, and soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Division Military Transition Team, seized munitions in the Rusafa security district of eastern Baghdad. As part of a clearance operation, the patrol reported finding two large containers with an undetermined amount of C4 explosives, artillery shells, fertilizer and mines. An

explosive ordnance disposal team destroyed the munitions.

In Iraq operations Feb. 19:

-- Soldiers with Multinational Division Baghdad captured a suspected key member of an IED ring. Soldiers with the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, detained the suspect near the Nassir factory, northwest of Baghdad. The suspect allegedly is an al Qaeda member and IED facilitator suspected of multiple IED attacks against coalition and Iraqi security forces. The suspect is being held for further questioning.

-- Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers detained five suspected extremists in northeastern Baghdad's Shaab neighborhood. Paratroopers with the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, were conducting a cordon-and-knock operation with the Iraqi National Police when they discovered a suspected criminal. The individual is suspected of conducting IED attacks against coalition and Iraqi security forces as well as intimidating local members of the "Sons of Iraq" citizen-manned security force. While conducting a search of the suspect's house and an adjacent property, the paratroopers discovered a 60 mm mortar round. The individual and four other men were detained for questioning. During a follow-on mission shortly before midnight, paratroopers received an additional report on the whereabouts of another individual suspected of running a weapons-smuggling operation for a criminal militia network. Paratroopers detained the suspect and another man who tested positive for having handled explosives.

-- Iraqi National Police and Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers seized unfired rockets and a piece of unexploded ordnance following a rocket attack at a combat outpost in eastern Baghdad. Officials from the 10th Mountain Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team reported a suspicious vehicle in the area. Reacting quickly, Iraqi National Police created a cordon and worked with soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, to search the vehicle. The soldiers found nine rockets in the truck. The soldiers also found an unexploded piece of ordnance and called explosive ordnance disposal personnel to the scene.

-- Numerous tips led Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers to seize a cache of armor-piercing explosively formed penetrators in western Rashid. The tips led "Black Lions" of the 1st Infantry Division's Company D, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, to a weapons cache in Bayaa. The Black Lions found a car containing four assembled EFPs, 10 8-inch copper plates for use in EFPs, a complete 120 mm mortar system, a sniper rifle, a rocket-propelled grenade, 10 RPG boosters, nine hand grenades, 19 blocks of C-4 explosive, 1,000 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition, an AK-47 assault rifle, three passports, a bag of homemade explosives, and various IED components. Explosive ordnance disposal personnel safely eliminated the cache.

In operations Feb. 18:

-- Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers captured a man suspected of being an al Qaeda weapons trafficker during an operation in eastern Rashid. Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division's Company B, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to Task Force Dragon, knocked on a suspected criminal's door in Doura and arrested two alleged weapons traffickers, including one alleged to be al Qaeda in Iraq's "Prince of Princes." The suspected arms trafficker is believed to have received the moniker for his ability to transport weapons to certain groups.

-- Iraqi army and Multinational Division Center soldiers discovered four weapon caches in Yusufiyah. Troops from 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, and the 101st Airborne Division's Company C, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, acted on a tip from a local citizen questioned by the Iraqi army. The man admitted to being a member of al Qaeda in Iraq and told Iraqi soldiers the location of the caches, which were located within a square quarter-mile area. The caches yielded about 750 mortar rounds, a complete 60 mm mortar system, seven ski masks, hundreds of mortar parts, 100 pounds of unknown bulk explosives, and instruction manuals. After collecting the munitions, the soldiers talked with people who live nearby, and one citizen told them about a "spider hole" on his farm. The soldiers originally thought it was a small hole, barely large enough to hide two adults. Once they started digging, however, they found a room that was 10 feet by 12 feet, complete with an aluminum ceiling.

-- Iraqi army soldiers found a weapons cache and detained one suspect during an operation near Karbala. The quick-reaction force platoon from 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division, conducted the operation based on information from an Iraqi soldier. The cache contained 18 grenades, five RPG rounds, an AK-47 rifle, four bags of TNT, a homemade grenade, a large metal container with fuses installed, and a bottle of poison.

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