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Coalition Captures Bomb Facilitator, Detains Terror Suspects

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 2, 2008 – Coalition forces in Iraq captured an alleged homemade-bomb facilitator with ties to al Qaeda in Iraq today, and detained numerous other terrorism suspects in a variety of recent operations, military officials reported.

The alleged facilitator reportedly is involved in a network supplying explosive materials to the leader of a central Baghdad al Qaeda network, and also is believed to be a close associate and relative of the Bizayz terrorist network's leader, officials said.

In addition to the wanted individual, the ground force detained nine other suspected terrorists in the operation.

In other operations around Iraq today:

-- Coalition forces detained a terrorism suspect on the west side of Baghdad while targeting an associate of a senior al Qaeda leader.

-- In Sharqat, coalition forces conducted operations targeting two alleged leaders of the city's al Qaeda network. The ground force captured one of the wanted suspects, who reportedly served as a leader in the Beiji al Qaeda network and led an assassination cell in the region. In addition to the wanted individual, the ground force detained five other suspected terrorists.

- Coalition forces captured an alleged leader of an Iranian-supported "special groups" criminal militia early today in the Numaniyah area, south of Baghdad. He reportedly was involved in attacks on Iraqi and coalition forces in Kut. Three other suspected criminals also were detained.

In news from Iraq yesterday:

-- Coalition forces positively identified the two terrorists killed during an operation Feb. 27 in

Mosul as Jar Allah, also known as Abu Yasir al-Saudi, and Hamdan. Abu Yasir al-Saudi, a Saudi Arabian national, was the southeast Mosul emir for al Qaeda and led a foreign terrorist facilitation network in the city. He conducted numerous attacks against Iraqi and coalition forces, including an improvised explosive device attack Jan. 28 that killed five coalition soldiers. Hamdan, also a Saudi Arabian national, was a close associate of al-Saudi and part of his network of foreign terrorists in Mosul. Hamdan was involved in coordinating the movement of foreign terrorists into Mosul, and led a regional anti-aircraft ring.

-- In east Mosul, coalition forces detained three suspected terrorists while targeting associates of Jar Allah and Hamdan.

-- Coalition forces captured an alleged special groups facilitator who reportedly is an Iranian-trained sniper instructor involved in attacks on Iraqi and coalition forces in Baghdad. He is thought to have coordinated and facilitated special-groups militia training in Iran. The forces discovered two assault rifles and detained three other suspects and detained three other suspected criminals during the operation.

-- North of Tarmiyah, coalition forces captured an alleged weapons dealer reportedly associated with an al Qaeda network senior leader whose network is responsible for the majority of homemade-bomb attacks in the area, and is involved in extortion, intimidation, weapons trafficking and the facilitation of foreign terrorists, officials said. The wanted individual identified himself to the ground force and was detained along with three suspected terrorists.

-- West of Samarra and in Sharqat, three suspected terrorists were detained while coalition forces targeted associates involved in the facilitation of finances and weapons for the al Qaeda networks in Samarra and Mosul.

-- In northern Iraq, coalition forces detained three suspected terrorists during two precision operations.

-- A suspect was detained west of Shammar Jarbah, during operations targeting an associate of a senior level foreign terrorist facilitator.

In operations in Iraq on Feb. 29:

-- An Iraqi teenager was killed during an engagement south of Samarra when a Multinational Division North AH-46 Apache helicopter engaged six suspected roadside bombers. Iraqi and coalition soldiers then investigated the area at ground level and were told by about 40 individuals located at a nearby house that six boys had been digging roots for firewood. Coalition forces offered condolences to the boy's family. The incident is under investigation.

-- In southeast Mosul, coalition forces detained two suspected terrorists while targeting a weapons facilitator for the al Qaeda networks throughout the city.

-- During operations intended to disrupt bomb attacks in northeast Mosul, an Iraqi special weapons and tactics team, advised by U.S. Special Forces, detained the alleged leader of an assassination and homemade-bomb cell. Two other suspected terrorists also were detained.

-- A local Tarmiya sheik turned in a weapons cache to Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, northwest of Baghdad. The cache contained artillery shells of various calibers, artillery casings filled with home made explosives and detonating cord and fuses, metal containers filled with homemade explosives, seven mortar shells, missile warheads, rocket warheads, and jugs of nitric acid. An explosives team secured the cache.

-- Coalition forces targeted alleged associates of the Samarra al Qaeda network's senior leader. Coalition forces observed several vehicles containing suspects departing the target area east of Samarra. The drivers refused to follow orders to stop the vehicles and, following escalation of force procedures, the assault forces fired on the vehicles. Six terrorists were killed and four vehicles were destroyed as a result of the engagement. One suspect was detained, and several weapons were recovered from the site.

-- Acting on a tip from Iraqi citizens, soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, seized two weapons caches northwest of Baghdad. The caches included mortar rounds, missile warheads, Russian Kopye rockets, rocket-propelled grenades, tubes of TNT and bags of burnable fuses. The caches were turned over to an explosives team for disposal.

-- Iraqi soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 6th Iraqi Army Division discovered a cache that included homemade explosives, hydrochloric acid, and anti-tank mines in a house west of Baghdad. A Multinational Division Baghdad explosives team conducted a controlled detonation of the confiscated items.

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