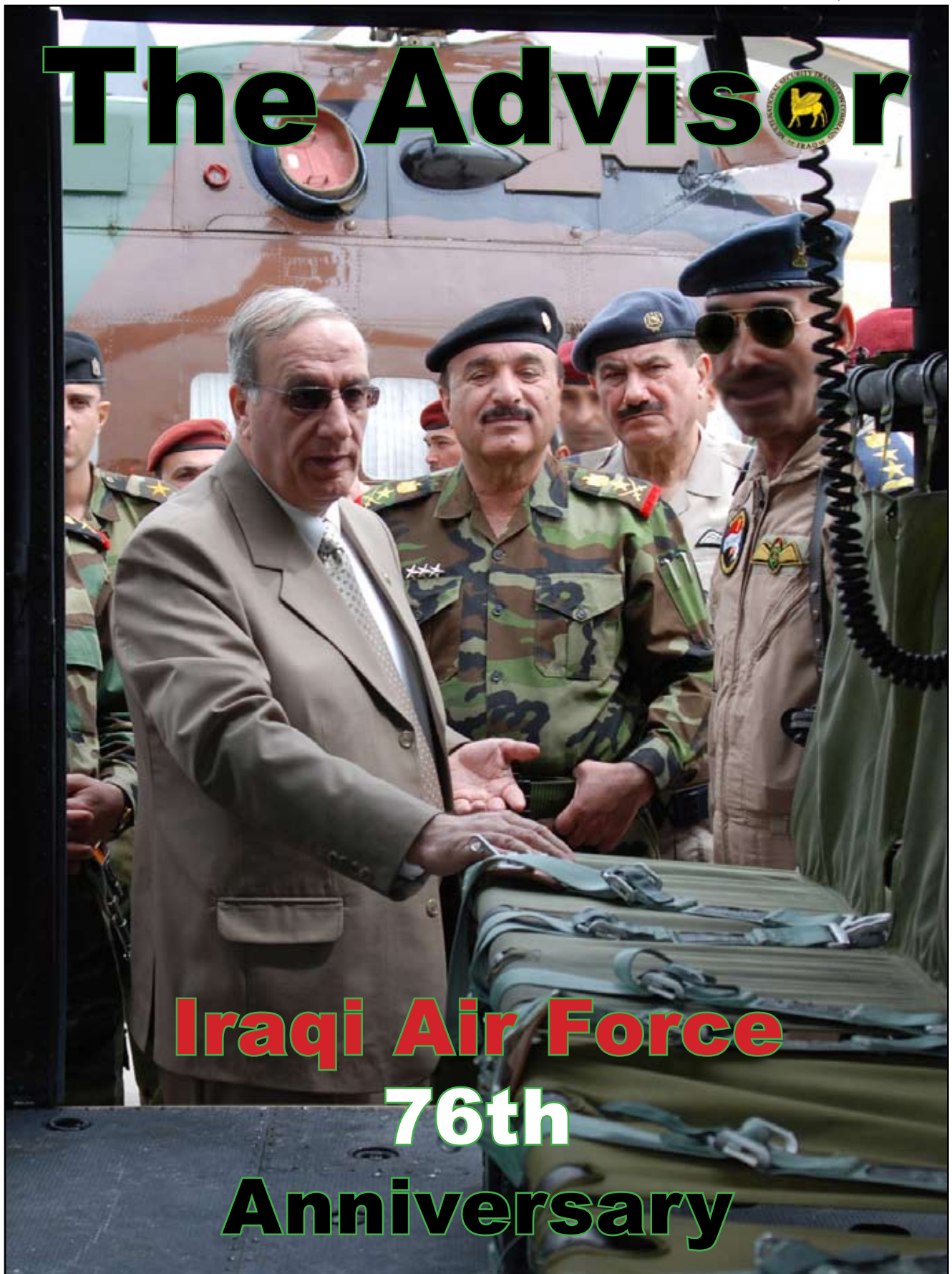


The Advisor



Iraqi Air Force 76th Anniversary

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The faces of Iraqi soldiers and police have been altered to protect their identities.

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ON THE COVER

Iraq's Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir Mohammed Jasim and other members of Iraq's military look inside a Huey II helicopter during the 76th Anniversary of the Iraqi Air Force ceremony held at New Al Muthanna Air Base April 22.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Ronda Jordan

Transition leader speaks on current, upcoming affairs

By U.S. Air Force
Senior Airman Christie Putz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – With the right information and cooperation of the citizens, Iraqi security forces can defeat the terrorists who are trying to destroy their country, said a Coalition senior advisor April 22.

“The security forces must continue to work to gain the support of the Iraqi people,” said U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, during a press conference. “In return, the people of Iraq must support their security forces.”

In the past two years, more than 8,100 Iraqi soldiers and police have died protecting their fellow citizens, he said. More than 18,200 have been injured.

“Soldiers and police are suffering every day for the Iraqi people,” said Dempsey. However, Iraq's Security Forces are also gaining strength every day, he added.

There are plans to add 25 battalions, two division headquarters and approximately 20,000 soldiers to the Iraqi Army as 2007 progresses, he said. This plan will allow troops to be placed in the most challenging areas and also give the Iraqi Army additional forces to take units out of the fight to rest, re-equip and train.

Iraqi soldiers are also being armed with U.S. weapons – the M-4 carbine for officers and M-16 rifles for soldiers. These will replace their current AK-47s.

The Iraqi Air Force is adding more aircraft to their fleet in 2007 that allow movement of passengers and cargo, as well as some specialized aircraft used for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

“By the end of the year we'll have 28 Mi-17 transport helicopters, as well as 16 U.S. Huey II helicopters,” said Dempsey. “[The ISR aircraft] has the ability to



Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Christie Putz

U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, addresses members of the Iraqi free press with an update on Iraq's security forces April 22.

conduct reconnaissance from the air... and send a streaming video back to an operations center, which will be very useful in helping to fight against IED en-placers and things like the protection of the oil pipelines.”

Two oil platforms off the shore of Iraq's 31 miles of coastline account for roughly 85 percent of the country's income. “The Iraqi Navy has a part to play in base security and the security of the actual platforms,” the general said. “And as they add capabilities over the course of the next several years, they will eventually take that responsibility (for security) to themselves.”

Additional initiatives across all the Iraqi military services include adding a non-commissioned officer corps and further expanding training to continue replenishment of the ranks.

On the police side, Dempsey said there are reform programs in almost every aspect of the Ministry of Interior.

“When Minister [of Interior Jawad] Bolani took office, Prime Minister [Nouri al-Maliki] directed him to take a look at his ministry and to reform it to reduce some of the outside influences and also to find the best possible leaders to take charge...” he said.

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Q&A: Commander, Iraqi Air Force

The Iraqi Air Force commemorated its 76th anniversary at New Al Muthanna Air Base in Baghdad April 22. Maj. Gen. Kamal Al-Barazanchi, Iraqi Air Force Commander, talked about the significance of the event. A 32-year air force veteran, Barazanchi began his career by flying Russian MiG fighter jets.

Q: What were your reasons for joining the air force?

A: That is the first question I was asked when I applied for the Air Force College and I was unprepared for it back then but I wanted to serve my country and to me one of the best ways was to become a pilot.

It's a discipline that takes courage and commitment.

Why is Iraqi Air Force day commemorated on April 22?

In 1931 five Iraqi pilots landed the air force's first planes in Baghdad. They flew them from England where they had attended pilot training. Iraq was the first country in the Middle East to have its own air force. That is why we celebrate this day.

What does this event mean to you personally?

This anniversary was one of the happiest days of my life. Now when we celebrate we do so looking back on our accomplishments but also looking forward to building a bigger air force. We did not celebrate in 2004 and 2005 because there was no Air Force.

How did you feel when you were nominated for Air Force Commander?

Although it is normal for every country to have an air force, psychologically I never thought I would be in this position of leadership — I had to think a lot before accepting the nomination.



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Iraqi Air Force Maj. Gen. Kamal Al-Barazanchi, Air Force Commander, in his office at the Ministry of Defense, talked about the significance of the 76th Anniversary of the Air Force.

What do you envision for the Iraqi Air Force in 10 years?

There are two ways of looking at it. What we wish and what is.

I wish that in 10 years or even before, that the air force expands to become equal in size to the air forces of Turkey and Iran and the other neighboring countries in the Middle East. Our goal is to have General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin F/A 16 and McDonnell Douglas F/A 18 Hornet fighter jets so we can be as strong as the other nations' air forces.

Before we had aircraft, equipment, technicians and pilots. In 2003 we lost everything but we still have the people and their talents. Many of those who believe in democracy are using their talents to build the air force. We also have the doors wide open to young people to join so they can bring in new blood and be a part of the air force.

What is the biggest challenge facing the Iraqi Air Force?

Our biggest challenge is the need for more aircraft and equipment. We also need to build a defense system with radar communications, operations rooms and interceptor airplanes as well as ground to air rockets and air to air rockets. This is a challenge but it is our goal. But before we provide the equipment the training is more important.

How will you overcome these obstacles?

We will expand our air force by training new pilots and aircrew personnel. The officers first attend a military college to learn general military subjects and then they go into the air force school to become pilots. At the same time, aircrew personnel and other supportive personnel attend training also. Our goal is to train a group of 65 officers every six months.

How has the Iraqi Air Force changed from the previous regime?

Before, we were under a dictator who used the military to protect his own regime. Now the military's function is to protect all Iraqi people not just one. The air force does not belong to a party - it is for all Iraqis - we are here to serve Iraq.

What kind of individual joins the air force?

One who gives himself to his country. He knows that by joining he may get killed.

What is your vision for Iraq in five years?

Iraq is part of the world and we should ask ourselves where we want to see the world in five years. Every change in the world reflects either directly or indirectly on Iraq. Especially now, that terrorists are operating outside of Iraq.

Iraqi Air Force celebrates 76 years

By U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Members of Iraq's Air Force had a reason to celebrate April 22 – it was the 76th anniversary of the force which was founded in 1931. Iraq's Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir Mohammed Jasim and several representatives from Iraq's military and Coalition forces commemorated the event with a ceremony at the New Al Muthanna Air Base in Baghdad.

The ceremony began against a backdrop of aircraft showcasing Iraq's growing air power. The static display included a Cessna Caravan, C-130 Hercules transport carrier, a Huey II helicopter, an Mi-17 helicopter and a SAMA CH 2000.

The Iraqi national anthem preceded a reading from the Holy Quran and Iraqi Air Force Maj. Gen. Kamal Al Barazanchi, Air Force Commander, began the ceremony by thanking those present for their support of Iraq and its air force.

"I applaud all of you pilots, aircrews and friends ... our country needs you now more than at any other time to support our democracy," said Kamal.

Minister Jasim stressed the need for a strong Iraqi Air Force to combat terrorism. Although the war against insurgents is not limited to Iraq's borders, those perpetrating terrorist activities have concentrated their aggression inside Iraq, he said.

"This war is a global disease that extremists use to voice their opinion, and it has collected in Iraq's neighborhoods to fight our people," Jasim said.

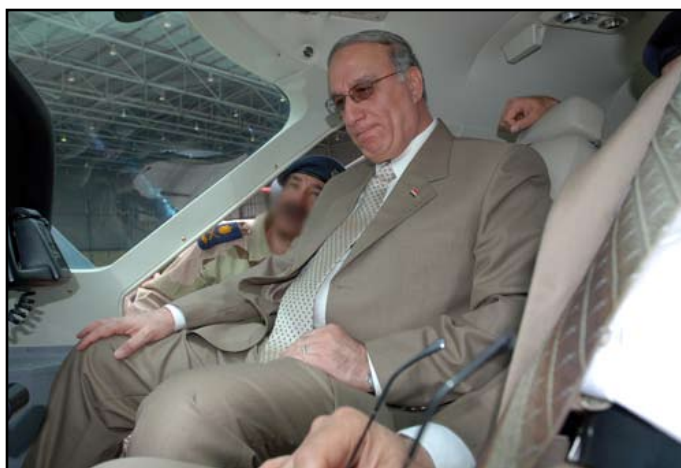
"We can't fight terrorists without the Iraqi Air Force and the support they give to the ground forces," Jasim said. "If we want to depend on ourselves (to provide for our own security) we have to develop our air force capabilities."

Iraq's government has been rebuilding



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

A Huey II helicopter with Iraqi Air Force markings on display at the event.



Iraqi Minister of Defense, Abdul Qadir Mohammed Jasim sits inside a Cessna Caravan airplane. The aircraft was purchased by the Iraqi Air Force through the Foreign Military Sales program.

Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Iraqi Air Force pilots look at the aviation instrument panel of the Cessna Caravan, an aircraft purchased to conduct intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations.



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

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Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

A Sama CH2000 light air surveillance airplane.



Photo by Edgar Castillo

A Russian-made Mi-17 helicopter provides battlefield mobility and cargo movements.



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

The Cessna Caravan's primary function is surveillance and reconnaissance, suited to monitor Iraq's borders and natural resources.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Ronda Jordan

One of three Iraqi C-130 Hercules transport aircraft that make up Squadron 23 of the Iraqi Air Force.

76 years of heritage celebrated at ceremony

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its air fleet since 2004 with the assistance of the Coalition Air Force Transition Team. The Iraqi Air Force has acquired several aircraft and is training pilots and aircrews continuously. As of February

2007, there were six squadrons and 970 personnel in the Iraqi Air Force.

"This day will be a reminder of our sacrifices as we continue to pursue our goals," Jasim said. "I trust we will be here next year but with more airplanes behind us."



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Iraqi Minister of Defense, Abdul Qadir Muhammed Jasim and Iraqi Air Force Maj. Gen. Kamal Al-Barazanchi, Air Force Commander, during the 76th Iraqi Air Force Day commemoration at New Al Muthanna Air Base in Baghdad April 22.

Leaders outline logistics way ahead in Iraq

By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Kimberly A. Green
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq - After a couple of months of planning, executive members throughout the Iraqi government gathered to prove their commitment to the acceleration of a self-reliant Iraq by remaining focused on the task at hand - collectively solving strategic logistic issues throughout the region.

More than 100 senior Iraqi government officials and Coalition leaders met in Baghdad to discuss and further develop the way ahead for logistics during a conference held at the Blackhawk Forward Operating Base Conference Center April 17.

The conference was themed "top down logistics for Iraqi self reliance." The theme set the tone for discussions concerning ways to develop lines of communication and relationships that cross ministerial boundaries.

In keeping with the theme guest speaker Dr. Abdul Mutaleb Al Khwan, cross-ministerial coordinator for the National Security Agency, spoke of the importance of having this type of conference.

"I believe this type of conference is very crucial because it gives all the partners a chance to meet and discuss the issues face to face. At this level we reveal the strengths and weaknesses and therefore we develop a solution," said Khwan. "It brings opinions closer together and allows leaders to cultivate more channels of communication."

According to one of the event organizers, Iraqi Army Col. Alaa, the conference focused on ways to improve logistics capabilities through joint efforts to develop initiatives and concepts to move toward an independent Iraq.

"This conference provides a major step in the process of formulating fundamental points regarding logistics leadership from top to bottom," said Alaa. "We wanted all the Iraqi ministries to find common ground here in order to work towards optimum performance for logistics."

This conference was said to have been the largest gathering of senior Iraqi government logistics leaders to date with 11 key ministries represented. Unlike previous conferences which were conducted at the tactical or operational level this one-day conference took on a different approach.

"Top down logistics ... was designed to get senior leadership

"We wanted all the Iraqi ministries to find common ground here in order to work towards optimum performance for logistics."

Dr. Abdul Mutaleb Al Khwan
cross-ministerial coordinator for the
National Security Agency

involved ... in order to get the long-term sustainment needed for the Iraqi Security Forces we really need to have a long-term vision and structure on which to hang logistics," said U.S. Navy Capt. Richard Guernsey, Coalition logistics advisor. "You can't get that from the bottom up; it has to come from the top down so that the leadership involved can establish the doctrine and policy for long-term strategic logistics."

Key leaders capitalized on the opportunity to address topics concerning the requirements based budgeting, contracting and procurement requirements, fuel distribution, rules of law and much more.

While this event was the first of its kind, leaders stressed the need for future gatherings in order to continue the ongoing acceleration process to a self-sufficient Iraq.

"Logistics is essential and it is very important to develop the combat capacities in order to sustain the Army and keep it going," Alaa said. "We must work together to meet the demands of our military in times of war."



Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Andy Dunaway

Operation Chalons emphasizes coordination

Iraqi National Police wait to join Coalition forces in the joint cordon and search operation dubbed Operation Chalons, April 23 in Jisr Diyala. The operation's mission was to increase the security of the area through increased joint cooperation between the forces and unannounced inspections of National Police checkpoints for redundancy and strategic importance.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Antonieta Rico

IA, Coalition soldiers clear Baquba neighborhood

Lt. Col. Khalil Alohidhi, commander of 4th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, shakes hands with residents of Baquba, Iraq April 24. Soldiers of the battalion, along with Coalition soldiers, began a clearing operation April 23 to rid the Tahrir neighborhood of insurgents.

Dempsey gives update on state of security forces affairs

From DEMPSEY, Page 2

A four-phase transformation program was designed to build a more effective force and overcome recent challenges with leadership. They are now roughly halfway through the second phase with the third phase set to begin in September.

“What we’ve done is take them out of the conflict and put them into a retraining program to make them more like police – give them a much greater appreciation for their responsibility to protect and serve the people,” Dempsey said.

Six out of nine brigade leaders were relieved of duty and replaced by new leaders who are doing a much better job, he said.

“Most reports now are that the units coming out of this transformation program are actually performing quite well,” he said.

With most changes, though, come challenges. The most obvious obstacle preventing a quick and smooth transition of control is the enemy.

“We’re very eager to transition, but we’re also committed to making sure that Iraq’s Security Forces succeed,” the

general said. “And so, the judgments we make together – that’s the Coalition and our Iraqi brothers – we try to determine where it is possible to transition and where the enemy’s conduct doesn’t allow it to happen yet.”

Another challenge is the development of a mature institutional base, or tactical support such as logistics, communications and intelligence. Pulling both their improved tactical performance and the institutional base pieces together will be an emphasis this year, he said.

Lastly, while monetary challenges continue to exist, progress is being made in the way Iraq funds their security forces.

“This is the first year, 2007, where the government of Iraq will spend more on its security forces than the United States government has spent on them,” said Dempsey. “This is the first year since 2003, and we think that’s a very positive and important moment for us.”

There are still some areas where they remain dependent on the U.S. however, he noted. “Our goal is to reduce the dependence and increase the self-reliance,” he said. “That’s why we’re here.”

While there is no definitive timeline or date of U.S. withdrawal, there are plans in place to help determine when the country is ready for handover of provincial Iraqi control.

The plan takes into account milestones relating to the degree of enemy activity, preparedness of the forces and government, and the functioning of a joint coordination center to allow the flow of information, he said.

The general stated he didn’t know how long the U.S. will be part of the rehabilitation of the forces, but instead that the decision on the country’s long-term relationship with Iraq will be made at the highest levels of government.

However, he predicts an ongoing relationship between the nations.

“[Transitioning] doesn’t mean we walk away,” he said. “What it means is that our relationship changes, and that it changes such that now we would enter back into those areas when asked, because the situation exceeds the capabilities of the governor and the local forces. That’s the normal course of events in a democratic system.”

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi Army-led mission nets large cache

BAGHDAD – Iraqi troops from the 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division discovered a large weapons cache in Baghdad's Ghazaliya district April 26.

The soldiers acted on a tip and found the cache in the Shulla neighborhood, in the northwestern portion of the Iraqi capital.

Following a cordon and search of the area, the Iraqi troops found 127 mortar rounds, more than 200 pounds of TNT, 10,000 PKC rounds, 10 mortar tubes, 15 hand grenades, 13 rifles, including two M16s, 150 fuses and three anti-tank mines.

The Iraqi Army troops also detained seven suspected insurgents in the operation.

– *Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs*

US, Iraqi raid in Mahmudiyah nets Iranian-marked rockets, mortars

MAHMUDIYAH - Iraqi Army and Coalition forces captured eight suspected insurgents in a joint operations raid in a Mahmudiyah apartment complex April 22..

Soldiers of 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition forces discovered the caches at about 6:30 p.m. local time.

Coalition forces have found many weapons caches in the

Mahmudiyah area, but most rocket and mortar rounds found there have been deteriorated and apparently intended for use in improvised explosive devices.

In contrast, the 60mm and 82mm mortar systems, three 107mm rockets, three 60mm and three 82mm rounds found in the latest cache were nearly new.

Soldiers of the unit examined the weapons, which were stamped with recent dates and Iranian markings.

Also found was bulk ammunition for a machine gun.

The munitions were seized and the detainees were taken into Iraqi Army custody for further questioning.

– *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Weapons cache found by Iraqi Army, Coalition forces west of Al Iskandariyah

KALSU – Iraqi Army and Coalition soldiers discovered a weapons cache west of Al Iskandariyah April 27.

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition forces fought insurgents near Abu Shemsi and discovered three weapons caches.

The caches contained one machine gun, one rifle, 75 hand grenades, two mortar tubes, one mortar tripod, three mortar rounds, and one base plate. All of the mortar items were for a 120mm weapon system.

The cache was secured for destruction.

– *Multi-National Division – Center Public Affairs*



Courtesy photo

Taking control

Shaibah Logistics Base on the outskirts of Basra City was handed to the Iraqi Army April 24. A flag changing ceremony signified the formal handover of the camp, which will become the home of 10th Division's newly formed 5th Brigade and its Divisional Training Center. In his speech, Gen. Habib called upon everybody to help multinational forces to finish their job in Basra, bring about the achievement of Provincial Iraqi Control, and denounce extremists, criminals and terrorists.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Commandos, Baghdad Eagles detain suspected extremists, find caches

BAGHDAD – Coalition and Iraqi forces detained suspected extremists, found weapons caches and improvised explosive devices south of Baghdad April 26.

Soldiers of 4th Brigade “Baghdad Eagles,” 6th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition troops detained the suspects and found the caches during routine combat operations.

U.S. Soldiers detained the suspected extremists after discovering a weapons cache in the vicinity of the detainees’ house.

The cache contained a bayonet, four bandoleers, two cases of 7.62mm ammunition and 26 AK-47 magazines.

Meanwhile soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 4-6 IA discovered a cache consisting of two Katyusha rockets in Mahmudiyah.

Three improvised explosive devices were discovered; two were found by soldiers of 4-4-6 IA near Yusufiyah. The other IED was found by Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT.

The suspects are being held for further questioning.

The contents of the cache were destroyed during a controlled detonation conducted by the Iraqi Army explosive ordnance disposal team.

– *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Baqubah: Local’s tips lead to success

TIKRIT – Local citizens in Baqubah’s Tahrir neighborhood led Iraqi Army, police and Coalition forces to more than 20 caches and assisted in capturing five suspected terrorists and

engagements that left approximately 25 insurgents dead.

The most significant items, many of which were found due to tips by local citizens, include small-arms weapons, more than 5 mortar tubes, nearly 140 artillery and mortar rounds, more than 10 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, approximately 55 rocket-propelled grenade rounds, more than 10,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition, grenades, and improvised explosive device materials to include several hundred pounds of home-made explosives, timers and blasting caps.

In addition to the caches, the security forces have also discovered and cleared more than 20 IEDs emplaced throughout the neighborhood in recent days.

– *Multi-National Division – North Public Affairs*

Weapons cache found inside mosque

BAGHDAD – Based on a tip from local residents, Iraqi Security Forces discovered a weapons cache at the Al Nur Mosque in Baghdad’s Jihad neighborhood April 23.

Iraqi National Police raided the location after locals reported seeing insurgents firing mortars and fleeing into the mosque.

The weapons cache consisted of four 155mm artillery rounds, 21 blocks of military-grade C-4 explosives, two propane tanks with C-4 explosives attached, three rolls of wire, one 107mm rocket rigged as an improvised explosive device, a rifle, and a roll of wire wrapped around a soda bottle.

Iraqi Security Forces conducted the raid while Coalition forces cordoning off the area and did not enter the mosque at any time during the operation.

– *Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs*



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Shane S. Keller

Training for the fight

An Iraqi army soldier with 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division provides security as another soldier searches at mock civilian at a simulated entry control point during a training exercise on Camp Yassir, Iraq, April 18.