



NEWS RELEASE

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND

7115 South Boundary Boulevard

MacDill AFB, Fla.

33621-5101 Phone: (813) 827-5894; FAX: (813) 827-2211; DSN 651-5894

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COALITION AND IRAQI POLICE WORK TO MAKE IRAQ SECURE (May 17, 2003)

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait -- Coalition Forces continue to aggressively patrol to make Iraq safer for all Iraqis by eliminating smuggling and trade in weapons and explosives. Coalition forces also continue to conduct training and joint security patrols with Iraqi police in efforts to increase the professionalism of the police force and prepare them for their role in a self-governed Iraq.

Update on the Consolidation of the Mujahedin-E Khalq (MEK):

Coalition forces have consolidated 2,139 tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery pieces, air defense artillery pieces and miscellaneous vehicles formerly in the possession of the Mujahedin-E Khalq (MEK) forces. The 4th Infantry Division also reports they have destroyed most of the MEK munitions and caches. **The voluntary, peaceful** resolution of this process by the MEK and the Coalition significantly contributes to the Coalition's mission to establish a safe and secure environment for the people of Iraq.

Coalition Activity:

Coalition Joint Task Force Seven (CJTF-7) has procured and will soon distribute 20,000 police uniforms to the Iraqi police throughout Iraq.

The Mayor of An Najaf requested the presence of U.S. troops to deter activity of Ba'ath party and criminal elements operating in the area. A cordon and search operation by Marines from 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment resulted in the capture of 20 Iraqis, who are being held for questioning. A Marine was shot in the lower leg by an Iraqi during the operation, and is in stable condition.

A 233rd Military Police Company unit on joint patrol with Iraqi police in Baghdad on Thursday responded to a complaint that two armed men took control of a residence and had thrown the occupant out. The patrol apprehended the men and confiscated two pistols and ammunition. Both were transported to the Police Academy jail for the offense of armed invasion.

A 204th Military Police Company unit on a joint patrol with Iraqi police saw a house on fire in Baghdad on Thursday. The patrol investigated and apprehended two Iraqi males who were seen fleeing the scene. Both were transported to the Police Academy jail and may be charged with arson.

A 204th Military Police Company unit on a daytime patrol interrupted a possible car-jacking being perpetrated by two Iraqi males in Baghdad on Thursday. The two Iraqis fired at the patrol. The patrol returned fire, then were assisted by soldiers in a Bradley fighting vehicle and HMMWV from the First Brigade Combat Team who arrived on the scene after hearing the gunfire. One subject was shot in the leg and transported by to a military medical facility under guard. The other subject was not injured and was transported to a holding facility for further questioning.

Iraqi Police Force and V Corps soldiers raided six houses in Baghdad on Thursday. They recovered uniforms, shoes and equipment that had been donated to a recreation center, then stolen in an armed robbery the day prior. They also recovered two AK-47 rifles, ammunition and two hand grenades

3rd Infantry Division soldiers conducted 95 vehicle searches at Tactical Control Points in Baghdad, confiscating 27 weapons.

101ST Airborne Assault Division soldiers seized a loaded Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun and 1,000 rounds of ammunition near Makhmur recently.

18th Military Police Brigade maintained a presence at 13 Iraqi police stations to assist in law and order reporting. They also responded to two home invasions and arrested six individuals and seized weapons.

Fifth Corps Division Artillery soldiers observed Iraqis blowing up "junction boxes" on telephone poles near Taji recently. They dispatched a quick response force, which overtook and disabled a vehicle with 15 personnel. One Iraqi was injured, and 14 others detained.

Fifth Corps Division Artillery soldiers have cleared and consolidated 276 of 465 captured weapon and ammunition sites to date. The weapons and ammunition are being removed to an area outside of Baghdad to assess their safety and possible future use by a new Iraqi military.

18th Military Police Brigade units have done assessments of personnel and facilities at 43 Iraqi Police Force stations, and report that 86% of the Baghdad police force (7,047 of the original 8,205) have reported back to work.

Marines from the 5th Marine Regiment conducted the first day of training of for the police force in Rumaythah, and continues to maintain a 24-hour joint Iraqi-Marine police reaction force within the city.

Police Activity in the Last 24 Hours:

Throughout Iraq, Coalition forces conducted 16 raids and 1,256 patrols. Of the patrols, 167 were conducted jointly with Iraqi Police. The following are highlights of the patrolling effort:

Baghdad: Coalition forces conducted one raid and 421 patrols. Ten of the 421 patrols were conducted jointly with Iraqi police. These patrols arrested 129 people for various crimes, including looting, weapons violations and black market activity. They also seized ten AK-47 rifles.

Mosul: Coalition forces conducted two raids and 672 patrols. Ninety-two of the patrols were conducted jointly with Iraqi police. They arrested several Iraqis who had been wanted for questioning for various crimes.

Fallujah: Coalition forces conducted two patrols, resulting in the seizure of several AK-47 rifles and several handguns.

Al Basrah: Coalition forces conducted 12 raids and 58 patrols. 19 of the patrols were conducted jointly with Iraqi police. The raids and patrols seized four AK-47 rifles, several knives and numerous rocket propelled-grenade rounds. They arrested numerous suspects for crimes including murder, aggravated assault, theft and looting.