



MNF-I Strategic Effects / Communications Division Public Affairs Messages

10 December 2007



Enduring Themes

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- During the conference, Gates warned against Iran's continued exploration of nuclear power and said it is still too early to attribute a drop in the use of Iranian-made explosive devices in Iraq to any reduction of Iranian support for insurgents.
- In his sixth visit to Iraq, Gates said there is growing pressure from local and provincial levels for the central government to replicate the kind of grassroots reconciliation that is going on in many areas in Iraq. He echoed GEN Petraeus' caution about declaring victory too early, saying that there is still a lot of work to be done.

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The Source of Conflict

- The **fundamental source of conflict** in Iraq remains competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This competition will take place and its resolution is key to producing long-term stability in the new Iraq. The question is whether the competition takes place more or less violently.
- **Foreign and home-grown terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists and criminals all push the ethno-sectarian competition toward violence.** Malign actions by neighboring countries fuel this violence. Lack of adequate governmental capacity, lingering sectarian mistrust and various forms of corruption add to Iraq's challenges.
- The premise of our strategy is that **securing the Iraqi population is the foundation** for progress. Our goal is to provide that security and prepare Iraqi Security Forces to maintain it.

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Gen. Petraeus on the way ahead in defeating al-Qaeda

"When ... implemented, the agreement will address political, economic, and security issues. ... At the political and diplomatic levels, the agreement will ... protect the democratic system in Iraq."

Prime Minister Maliki on the Iraq-U.S. Declaration of Principles

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"Even amidst the statistics of the progress that is being reported, we have to be cognizant that this is still a tough fight and it's going to continue to be one into the foreseeable future."

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"There is progress, but peace is not breaking out all over ... violence levels are still too high ... we will continue to do all we can to make long-term peace and stability a reality for Iraq."

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Al-Qaeda in Iraq

- Attacks by al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) only strengthen our resolve to support the courage and strength of the Iraqi people, close ranks against the terrorists, and pursue those who wreak this senseless violence.
- The barbaric nature of AQI continues to find new depths of depravity in killing courageous citizens who reject these terrorists and their Taliban-like ideology.
- The murder of brave Iraqis, like Concerned Local Citizens, provides perhaps the clearest proof of the nature of this enemy, who will destroy the very people and neighborhoods from whom it wants support.
- Indiscriminate attacks, resulting in the injury and killing of innocent people, are frequent reminders of why Iraqi citizens have increasingly rejected AQI.
- We stand committed, along with the Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi population, to end the terror of AQI and create a safer country for all Iraqis.

Operation Phantom Phoenix

- Operation Phantom Phoenix is an Iraq-wide synchronized operation that will add to the security gains achieved during the last six months, by disrupting and destroying AQI and other extremists as they attempt to regain strength.
- The objective is to kill, capture or push AQI and other extremists from the places they hide inside Iraq and then hold the territory once cleared.
- The operation's success will come through the combined partnered effort of Coalition Forces, Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi people.
- Phantom Phoenix's success to clear Iraq of extremists will boost economic activity and improve essential services by providing a safe environment.
- Reconciliation programs, that keep extremists from returning to cleared areas, will continue throughout the operation.



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Passage of the Accountability and Justice Law

- Members of the Iraqi Council of Representatives passed the Accountability and Justice Law on January 12. This is an Iraqi law, formulated by Iraqi leaders, that addresses uniquely Iraqi issues.
- Passage of the law represents a significant achievement, as Iraqi political leaders have collectively chosen to reform a de-Ba'athification process that many regarded as flawed, unfair and a roadblock to reconciliation.
- The passing of this law sends a message to the people of Iraq, and throughout the region, that Iraqi political leaders are working together to build a state that will be inclusive, tolerant and looking towards the future.
- The law is a product of compromises and tradeoffs, as one would expect from a representative government.

"Al-Qaeda remains dangerous, and it will continue to target the innocent with violence. But we've dealt al-Qaeda in Iraq heavy blows, and it now faces a growing uprising of ordinary Iraqis who want to live peaceful lives."

*President Bush
on al-Qaeda*

"(We will) continue to pursue al-Qaeda and other extremists wherever they attempt to take sanctuary. We are determined not to allow these brutal elements to have respite anywhere in Iraq."

*Lt. Gen. Odierno
on pursuing al-Qaeda*

"Tribe after tribe rejected al-Qaeda, rejected its extremism, its oppressive practices and its indiscriminate violence. ... Sunni Arab communities were finally throwing off al-Qaeda, finally realizing that the time had come to try to take a place at the table instead of continuing to resist and continuing to boycott what was going on in their country."

*Gen. Petraeus
on the tribal Awakening movement*

"The level of attacks and the focus that they might have on the Concerned Local Citizens, and those who are part of the Awakening movement, are perhaps one of the clearest indications of the importance that these Awakening movements and Concerned Local Citizens are having on improving the security situation in Iraq."

*Maj. Gen. Bergner
on AQI attacks on Concerned Local Citizens*

"Al-Qaeda and their leader, Osama Bin Laden, have clearly targeted the Awakening, because Awakening members have participated seriously in spreading security. This is a testimony to them."

*Maj. Gen. Hertling
on attacks by al-Qaeda*



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Progress in Iraq requires **sustained commitment** by the Government of Iraq (GOI), United States Mission-Iraq (USM-I) and Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) to create the stability necessary to allow for political and economic progress. Improving security allows the GOI, USM-I and MNF-I the space and time needed to **focus on reconstruction projects** that improve basic services for its citizens. Military objectives of the surge are being met and improvements continue while overall **security incidents have declined**.

Iran and Special Groups

- Special Groups (SG) are trained, equipped, financed, and had at times been led by Iranians operating inside Iraq. These Groups have chosen not to honor Muqtada al-Sadr's pledge of a ceasefire. They are acting outside the law and are being dealt with as criminals.
- It remains to be seen what Iran's overall intentions will be on the ground in Iraq. Coalition Forces (CF) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) continue to find large munitions stockpiles and caches containing Iranian-made weapons.
- Iran has pledged they intend to provide for the peaceful transition inside of Iraq. They have pledged to stop funding, arming and training terrorists entering Iraq.
- To the extent that Iran may still be conducting, supporting, training, equipping, and funding operations today in Iraq, we need to **wait and see** how serious Iran is about honoring its pledge to the GOI.

Shorja Market Bombing

- At 0925 on November 23, a Special Group brutally attacked innocent Iraqi civilians at the Shorja Market in Rusafa, Baghdad.
- The explosive device was a ball-bearing laden bomb disguised inside a box of birds for sale.
- Eight Iraqis were killed, three Iraqi Police were wounded and 15 other innocent Iraqis were injured.
- Four SG criminals were arrested for the attack after testing positive for handling explosives. They later confessed and named the leader who planned the operation. He is a known Special Groups Leader.
- The attack killed both Sunni and Shia and clearly violates Sadr's sacred pledge of honor to cease attacks.
- This attack illustrates that Special Groups are using tactics previously employed only by al-Qaeda to kill and ultimately intimidate innocent Iraqi civilians.



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Redeployment & Troop Drawdown

- Current conditions will enable the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to accept more control of the battlespace through a planned drawdown of American troops.
- The redeployment of the first of five brigades has been made possible because of the improved security situation which resulted from the surge of operations, a more capable ISF, and the courageous commitment of Iraqi citizens to oppose al-Qaeda and other extremist violence.
- The surge in Iraq constituted five brigades providing approximately 30,000 soldiers, which included enabling forces. A brigade normally consists of 3,000 – 5,000 soldiers.
- As each brigade redeploys, the drawdown will result in roughly 3,000 to 5,000 soldiers redeploying without replacements. The areas they operate in may well be taken up by existing forces in the theater.

If conditions continue to permit, a total of five BCTs will redeploy over the next eight months

Redeployment & Troop Drawdown

- This week, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team (BCT) will redeploy to their home in Fort Hood, Texas. Their area of responsibility of Diyala Province will be turned over to the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.
- This is the first Army **redeployment without replacement** and reflects overall improved security within Iraq, as well as improved capabilities of the ISF and the emergence of Concerned Local Citizens (CLC).
- The redeployment of the 3rd BCT does not mean that operations in Diyala province will be vacated. Repositioning of Coalition and Iraqi forces will ensure that overall force levels and combat capability levels in Diyala will be **tailored to meet emerging threats**.
- While the 3rd BCT will be leaving Diyala, the number of troops on the ground in that province will actually increase based on the size of the new unit taking over responsibility. While we typically do not reveal specifics of troop movements, Coalition Forces will be positioned in a manner to best combat threats to the Iraqi people and assist ISF in establishing and maintaining a free and secure Iraq.



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