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MNF-I TALKING POINTS: PIRATED MOVIES IN IRAQ

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(PA POSTURE: PASSIVE)

1. **PURPOSE:** To provide guidance on the answering queries about the sale of pirated movies on Coalition bases in Iraq.
2. **BACKGROUND:** The U.S. Embassy recently received a query from the Motion Picture Association of America regarding the sale of pirated movies on Embassy grounds. The MPAA directed their query to the Embassy after being queried themselves by USA Today about pirated movies in Iraq. The Embassy has since referred the MPAA to MNF-I, although the MPAA has yet to contact the press desk. These talking points are to help guide our response regarding the sale of pirated movies on Coalition bases.
3. **THEME:** Coalition forces respect the rights of movie producers to make a profit from their creative endeavors.
 - a. Coalition forces respect the right of movie producers to make a profit from their creative endeavors. Coalition-controlled stores, including all AAFES facilities, prohibit the sale of pirated movies, television shows, and other media.

4. TALKING POINTS

- Coalition forces respect the right of movie producers to make a profit from their creative endeavors.
- Coalition stores, like AAFES facilities, prohibit the sale of pirated media.
- U.S. forces have had a long-standing positive relationship with entertainment industry representatives, many of whom have come to Iraq to entertain our troops.

5. QUOTES.

- a. "Movies give our troops a chance to escape temporarily from the rigors and dangers of the battlefield. This has been the case since World War II and it carries over into present-day conflicts." – Col. Gerald O'Hara, Multi-National Force – Iraq spokesman. (20 Apr 08)

6. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q1. Why do Coalition forces allow the sale of pirated movies on its bases?

A1. The U.S. does not allow the sale of pirated media in Coalition-controlled stores. Some Iraqi owned and operated businesses sell pirated media in the form of CDs or DVDs. Some of these businesses are located on or near Coalition operating areas, and we share these operating areas with the Iraqi Government. Others are located solely on private property or in Iraqi buildings and are subject to Iraqi law. We are currently looking into whether any stores currently sell

pirated media on U.S. controlled property, and we are determining the appropriate steps to resolve the issue if they do.

Q2. Have you banned U.S. troops from visiting shops that sell these pirated movies?

A2. No. Much like an American flea market, these small shops sell a variety of locally produced goods, including culturally-related souvenirs and crafts. Banning our troops from visiting these shops would have the unwelcome secondary effect of harming Iraqi entrepreneurs selling legitimate goods. We do not condone the purchase of pirated media, and AAFES-operated post exchanges offer a variety of movies that do pay royalties to American movie producers.

Q3. Have you banned U.S. troops from buying pirated movies?

A3. We expect our forces to comply with U.S. law even when deployed overseas, including those laws which govern criminal copyright infringement. Prosecution of violations is left to the discretion of an individual Soldier's commanding officer. Additionally, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Military Provost Office cooperate to ensure the U.S. servicemembers comply with Federal law when returning with goods from overseas deployment. Pirated media items, like bootleg DVDs, will be confiscated upon return to the U.S. Finally, our forces are specifically prohibited from shipping pirated media back to the U.S. Packages to the U.S. are inspected prior to shipping to ensure that they do not contain contraband including pirated media.

Q4. How can the purchase of pirated media by servicemembers deployed in Iraq be curtailed?

A4. U.S. forces have had a long-standing, positive relationship with the entertainment industry. Working to continue this relationship, including the provision of popular entertainment like first-run movies, concerts and other events will help to curtail demand for pirated media.

7. POINT OF CONTACT: MNFI PRESSDESK@iraq.centcom.mil