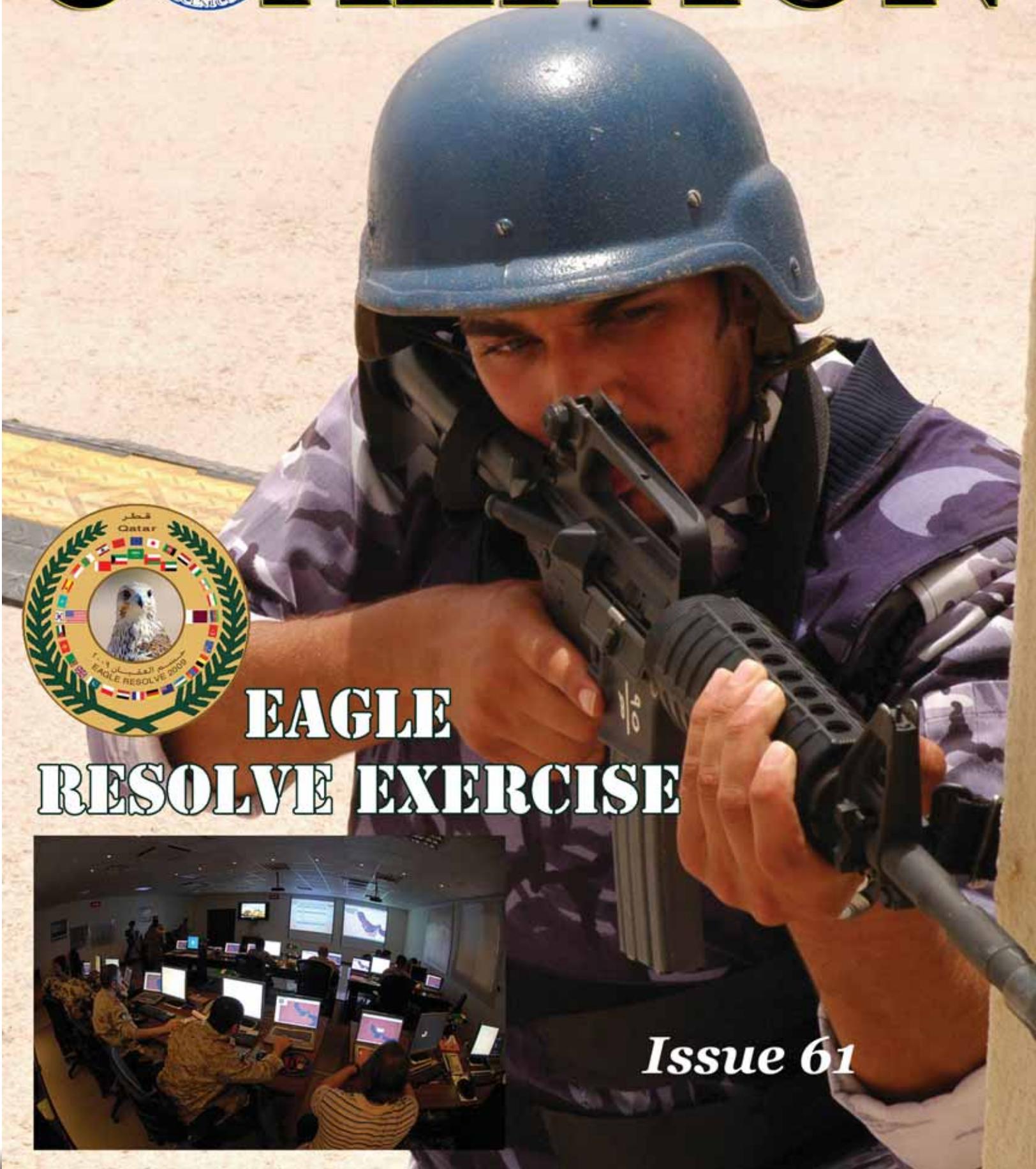


COALITION



EAGLE RESOLVE EXERCISE



Issue 61



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France  Brig. Gen. Gilles Lemoine

Chief of Coalition Public Affairs Team

Pakistan  LTC. Muhammad Arif

Coalition Bulletin Staff

Senior Editor

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Editorial Staff

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Editor's Note

By the generous permission of our NATO partners, the *Coalition* is pleased to bring you stories covering the activities of the International Security Assistance Force. As ISAF and the Coalition are separate entities, ISAF stories will be denoted by the NATO logo at the top of each page when they appear.

Cover Photo: Pictures from the Eagle Resolve Exercise conducted at the Crisis Management Center in Doha, Qatar, from April 26 to May 5, 2009. Eagle Resolve is an annual, multi-national exercise designed to enhance regional cooperative defense efforts of the GCC and the United States.

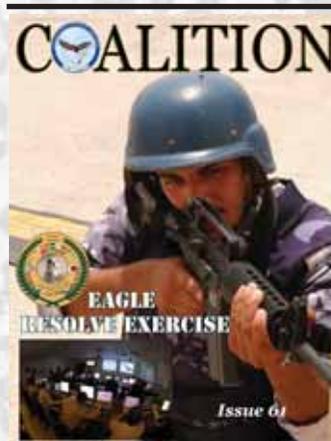
(U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Shaun Withers)

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INSIDE 61

- Reflections of Major General Robert E. Livingston, Director of Coalition Coordination Center
Page 4-5
- U.S., GCC Nations Complete Field Exercise.
Page 6
- Odierno: Security, Progress Continues
Page 7
- NATO Task Force Thwarts Pirate Attack
Page 8
- Romanian Forces End Iraq Mission.
Page 9
- Joint Chiefs Chairman Lists Top Priorities
Page 10
- ISAF Provides Humanitarian Aid to Flood Victims
Page 11
- Top U.S. General in Southern Afghanistan Optimistic More Forces Will Turn Tide
Page 12
- ISAF Opens Kabul International Airport North
Page 13
- Jordan Special Operations Center Opening.
Page 14
- Fact Sheet on Iraq
Page 15



EAGLE RESOLVE EXERCISE

Design:

Cpt. Dritor Papa



General McChrystal Assumes Command of HQ ISAF

KABUL, Afghanistan - General Stanley A. McChrystal arrived in Afghanistan on 14 June to assume Command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Gen. McChrystal will lead the international community's efforts to bring security to Afghanistan, in partnership with Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), to create the conditions for governance, reconstruction and development to flourish.

nato.int

Czech PRT Trains ANP in Logar

KABUL, Afghanistan - The Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is continuing to assist Afghan National Security Forces in Logar Province by training members of the Afghan National Police (ANP) in basic policing skills and knowledge.

nato.int

ISAF Helps Repair Zabol Bridge

KABUL, Afghanistan - The U.S. Army's 4th Engineer Battalion provided the Military Construction Force that repaired a bridge in Zabol province. The bridge had been damaged in an explosion that rendered it structurally unsound and impassable to traffic.

nato.int

Engineers Conduct Concrete Training

BAGHDAD - U.S. Soldiers with the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) recently instructed 6th Iraqi Army (IA) Engineers on how to conduct concrete missions and use the XM5 2600 concrete module, a mobile concrete factory.

mnf-iraq.com

Brigade Leaving Southern Iraq a 'Much Better Place'

WASHINGTON (May 27, 2009) – Southern Iraq is “a much better place to live and raise a family than it was a year ago,” thanks to tremendous strides in security, governance, job opportunity and essential services, the commander of the 1st Cavalry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team said.

Army Col. Philip Battaglia described two major lines of progress he's seen since his “Long Knife Brigade” arrived at Multinational Division South last year: one focused on security and the other, on local government.

centcom.mil

The Coalition's focus now rests squarely on Afghanistan. This narrowing of focus resulted from the combined effects of the increasing self-reliance of the Iraqi government for its own security, and international acknowledgement that more needs to be done to defeat the insurgency in Afghanistan. There is confidence that a responsible draw-down of Coalition (although now predominantly US) forces in Iraq can be conducted without losing the gains achieved over the past several years, while also freeing up resources for a concerted effort to confront the insurgency in Afghanistan.

The build up of US (and coalition) forces in Afghanistan is now in full swing. These additional forces will help ensure the success of Afghanistan's Presidential elections due to be held on 20 August. But even more importantly, alongside initiatives to bolster the capabilities of the indigenous Afghan security forces, they will ensure that the operational sequence of shape, clear, hold and develop brings about a measurable increase in security for the local population. It is critical that the local people see coalition and indigenous security forces bringing improvements to their lives so they can live with greater security, free from intimidation and coercion, and in an environment where their basic rights and freedoms are protected. That is the very least they should be able to expect. Improvements in governance and economic development will also be required, but they cannot come without an adequate security environment.

Our coalition countries are also motivated to strive for a world that is free from the insidious effects of terrorism. We sent forces to Afghanistan to eliminate safe havens for Al Qaeda and their terrorist affiliates, so that the global community may live without the fear of terrorist attacks. Ultimately, it is through success in that arena that we will measure our overall success. Through the actions we need to take to achieve that objective – and it is an objective in which we cannot afford to fail – we will concurrently bring about an environment in which the wellbeing of the Afghan people will be immeasurably improved.

R.J. (Dick) Newlands
Air Commodore
New Zealand SNR and Coalition Chairman
US Central Command, Tampa

Reflections of Major General Robert E. Livingston Jr.

Director of the Coalition Coordination Center

Interview of:

*Senior Editor of the Coalition
Captain Dritor Papa*

Major General Robert E. Livingston, Jr. is the Director of the Coalition Coordination Center, United States Central Command (CENTCOM), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. General Livingston is responsible for facilitating the exchange of information between the CENTCOM Command Staff and the Military Senior National Representatives from more than 60 countries. He is also responsible for coordinating the identification, readiness and movement of non-United States forces necessary to satisfy requirements within the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR).

General Livingston's military career began when he enlisted in the South Carolina Army National Guard in March 1978. He was commissioned through the Palmetto Military Academy, Officer Candidate School in 1980 as the Top Honor Graduate. His military education began with his completion of the U.S. Army Infantry School in 1978 and Airborne School in 1979. General Livingston commanded Task Force 218 in support of Operation Noble Eagle from June 2004 to January 2005. From May 2007 to April 2008, he commanded Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix (VI) in Afghanistan where he was responsible for training the Afghan National Security Forces. Prior to reporting to CENTCOM, his previous assignment was as Director for Strategic Plans and Policy (J5), National Guard Bureau, Arlington, Virginia

Q: Sir, You have worked tirelessly with the partner countries in the Coalition for the war on Terror for quite a long time now. What is your attitude towards the war on terror?

A: Terror is a technique used by extremists who will use methods to advance their agenda that are not acceptable by civilized people. These people will use horrendous acts such as, killing, raping and hurting innocent men, women and children, in order to advance their own political agendas.

I think it is incumbent upon the civilized people of this world to unite and to prevent these horrendous events from happening. It is our duty to prevent terrorism from occurring for whatever reason.



In May, Major General Livingston was promoted to his current rank at a ceremony officiated by General David Petraeus, Commander, U.S. Central Command.

Q: With the developments in the AOR, what do you see as the role of the Coalition members in both Iraq and Afghanistan?

A: Their role is to assist these two nations in establishing a government that is reflective of the population, serves the needs of the people and promotes internal stability. By assisting the government in achieving stability and caring for their own people, we will help these two nations become contributing members of the world society and thereby contribute to the stability of the world.

It is not our role to do it for the governments of Afghanistan or Iraq; rather we must assist. Any military action we take within the borders of either one of these nations should be done first upon the request of that nation, and second to allow either the establishment of that country's own security force or to provide some relief from the threat so that the economic and social environment may improve.

Q: What do you see is the biggest achievement of the Coalition Coordination Center (CCC) throughout these years since its establishment?

A: The CCC has always promoted cooperation among the coalition members whether it is in country or here in Tampa. The CCC has facilitated teamwork and fostered

a collaborative effort among the Coalition. The direct result has been military force contributions and other contributions from our partners that have made our success in the AOR possible. The staff of CCC has facilitated countless movements of Coalition Forces into theater and support for those Forces. Even more important we set the ground work for the Commander's vision of a network of partner nations from both inside and outside our AOR that contribute to AOR stability through shared mutual interests.

Q: What do you see as your biggest challenge during your assignment?

A: I think the biggest challenge is the integration of the CENTCOM staff in coalition operations and to increase substantive discussions with Coalition Senior National Representatives. The CENTCOM staff has always been very interested in the opinions of the Coalition but certain policies have made this interaction difficult. This interaction is crucial so that CENTCOM may have the benefit of a world viewpoint while generating world commitment towards solving common problems. This interaction and the ensuing cooperation is a key step in implementing our Commander's and the Administration's vision of World cooperation based on common interests. There are many policy and other technical issues, but the most critical task is to provide appropriate forums for these interchanges to take place. These forums will take many forms and will evolve.

Q: On a related note, what do you consider is your biggest personal achievement while in office vis-à-vis any personal goals?

A: My personal achievements are very much directly related to the biggest challenges we face overall. I think we have made some significant progress in increasing the Coalition's ability to contribute to the USCENTCOM planning process and to the actual CENTCOM operations throughout the area of operations. I think this level of communication and cooperation has been a big achievement, though not a personal achievement per se, because quite frankly we do everything as a team. This also continues my personal development of which I continue to learn and understand the world through coalition eyes.

Q: More than 60 nations are part of the Coalition. No doubt it's a challenge to fit them

together while making difficult decisions. What guides you in all that you do, if any?

A: I think that there are a couple of principles that guide me: first, we have to remember why we have come together as a coalition and that is to combat extremists that use terror to achieve their goals. As long as we understand this common goal and that we are here to provide a better future for our families and our children. Secondly, no one person or country has all the insights or good ideas. It remains very important for all countries to gain a world perspective on the operations that are ongoing. By understanding approaches of other nations, the United States benefits by recognizing that these views exist and taking them into consideration prior to making decisions. This understanding allows us to create synergies around common interest.

Q: Would you mind saying a few words about your next commitment and personal interest(s) after leaving this office?

A: I try to do things because it is the right thing to do. Since my mobilization, after 11 September, I have transitioned in and out of the civilian and military worlds. At this point, I have made the choice to work within the military and to continue to serve my Country. This choice has provided my family and me with many great opportunities to serve and develop myself. So when I am asked about my next commitment, it will depend on where I am needed to serve. That may be another military assignment or a return to the civilian world to guide the great and tolerant employees of my Company, Gregory Electric. I just appreciate the opportunity to serve and will continue to serve where I'm best needed.

**Q: Complete this sentence:
It is amazing how _____.**

A: It is amazing how much you can get done as a team; especially if you are not worried about who gets the credit. This goes for our CCC and also for coalition efforts. It also goes along with what CENTCOM is trying to achieve: Gen Petraeus' vision of a strong regional and even world team that is committed to working together to achieve mutual goals that support a Regional Security Architecture.

U.S., GCC Nations Complete Field Exercise

*By Sr. Airman Michael Longoria
U.S. Central Command*

The Gulf Cooperation Council nations and the United States recently completed a two-day field training exercise in Qatar, as part of Eagle Resolve 2009.

“The field training exercise was excellent,” said Capt. Khalifa Nassir Al Muslem, an operations officer from the Qatar Ministry of Interior. “We all have daily routines that we are use to. The Field Training Exercise allowed us to get out of that routine and work with different agencies.”

The Field Training Exercise (FTX), which began May 4, featured different scenarios ranging from a hostage situation to a chemical attack during a soccer game.

“We chose these scenarios based on current activities in the Gulf region,” Staff Brigadier (Pilot) Abdullah Juman Al Hamad, Head of National Defense and Crisis Management in Qatar.

The first day of the exercise started with a plane carrying radioactive materials crashing at Doha International Airport. After the crash, focus shifted to a missile attack. The day ended with a chemical attack during a soccer game at one of Doha’s premier stadiums.

“The entire field training exercise keeps us alert and improves our ability to deal with these types of crisis,” said Kuwait Army Medical Capt. Abdullah Al Sabah.

Day two began with a hostage situation at Alrazi School, where 20 students and three teachers were held hostage by four masked gun men.

“A situation like this could happen and we need to

make sure we are prepared to respond,” said Col. Salim A. Al-Mohannadi, assistant director of training and courses department, Qatar Internal Security Forces. “We wanted to treat this as a real world event but at the same time use it as a learning experience. We accomplished that goal.”

The learning experiences continued throughout day two with exercise participants responding to a biological attack at a fruit market and air space infractions as well as vessel searches and seizures in the Arabian Gulf.

“It has been a very successful exercise but we still have a lot to learn,” said Brigadier Abdullah.

A review of the Field Exercise on May 6 marked the completion of all exercises for Eagle Resolve, which began in late April and focused on promoting a common understanding of defense concepts and procedures, as well as exercising consequence management efforts. A senior leader seminar will be hosted next week to complete Eagle Resolve. Brigadier Abdullah, the Eagle Resolve exercise co-director, added, “By working together with the United States and the other GCC nations, we are helping to improve the region’s defense capabilities. This exercise demonstrated the spirit of collaboration between GCC countries and the United States.”

This marks the 10th year that the U.S., Qatar and members of the GCC nations have participated in the annual exercise.



Qatari Firefighters extinguish a fire May 4 at Doha International Airport in Doha, Qatar, during a field training exercise.

Odierno: Security, Progress Continues in Iraq

By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

“We continue to see overall levels of violence at or near the lowest level since the summer of 2003 inside of Iraq,” Army Gen. Ray Odierno said.

In addition, Odierno said, the capacity and capability of the Iraqi Security Forces is much improved and the Iraqi people understand and continue to reject attempts by al-Qaida and other elements to create a new cycle of sectarian violence.

The general acknowledged that while violence is low, it hasn't been eradicated, as terrorists are intent on conducting high-profile suicide attacks designed to garner attention and spark sectarian discord. April was the deadliest month this year for both American and Iraqi forces.

“I would emphasize that this is not 2006 or 2007,” he said. “We have yet to see sectarian retribution, [and] all the political parties and government officials are appropriately disavowing the recent attacks. We continue to see indications that the Iraqis want to move forward, whether it's in the form of voting for their elected leaders, improving economic conditions or normalizing relations with their regional partners.”

As the Iraqi government takes greater control of its country's security, U.S. forces are stepping further into the background, Odierno said. Implementation of the status-of-forces agreement between the United States and Iraq is moving along as well, he added.

“We've closed more than 50 installations in Iraq,” he said. “We've returned security of the Green Zone to the government of Iraq, and we've turned over the Republican Palace, which served as a U.S. embassy, among other examples.”

The general noted that President Barack Obama announced that U.S. forces will end combat operations in Iraq at the end of August 2010, changing over to an advisory and training mission.

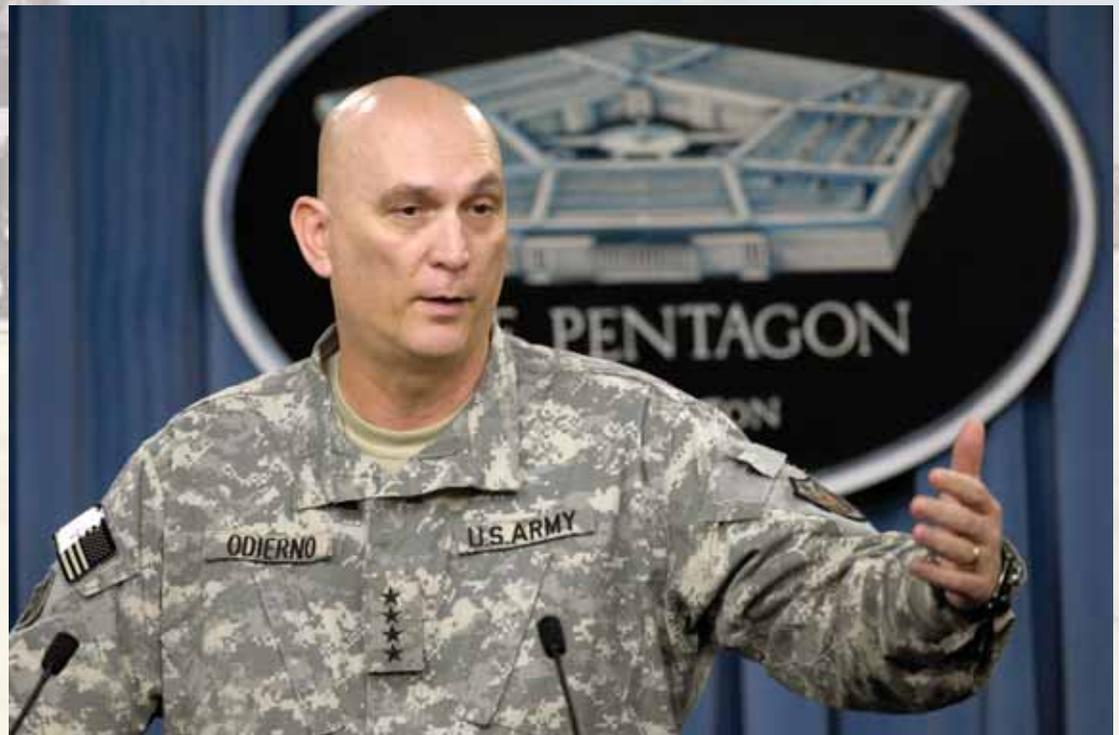
“We will maintain a force [of about 35,000 to 50,000] to ensure that we can achieve our new missions while providing sufficient force protection and still be able to

conduct counter-terrorism missions,” he said.

Odierno cited evidence of Iran's continued funding, training and equipping of surrogates who continue to conduct disruptive operations in Iraq.

While Iranian interference has lessened, he said, this behavior is not what Iraq should expect from a neighbor. Iran has an opportunity to form a positive relationship with Iraq based on respect for Iraq's sovereignty, he said. Syria also could improve its relations with Iraq, he added, if it demonstrated a commitment not to allow foreign fighters intent on causing trouble in Iraq to stage from within its borders.

At the end of 2011, when all U.S. forces are out of



Army Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of the Multi-National Force – Iraq, provides an operational update briefing May 8, 2009, to the Pentagon press corps. DoD photo by R.D. Ward

Iraq, it doesn't mean the U.S. relationship with the country will end, the general said, noting a second agreement between the two nations.

“The second was the strategic framework agreement, which is designed to ensure cooperation in many areas between the United States and the government of Iraq,” Odierno said. “[This includes] areas such as medical, cultural, scientific, economic and other endeavors that will strengthen the country and help our two countries enjoy a long and enduring friendship based on mutual respect as sovereign nations.”

NATO Task Force Thwarts Pirate Attack

Story and Picture Courtesy of: nato.int

NRP Corte-Real, Gulf of Aden – A NATO operation conducted by the Portuguese frigate NRP Corte-Real resulted today in the disruption of a pirate attack attempt and the boarding of a confirmed pirate vessel - leading to the seizure and disposal of weapons as well as the disruption of their ability to conduct further attacks.

On June 22nd, at approximately 1000 Local Time (LT), a filled skiff with eight Somali pirates armed with RPGs and AK-47s were caught in a high-speed chase by NATO's Portuguese warship "Corte-Real" after they attack the Singapore-flagged MV Maersk Phoenix. "We are under a pirate attack, we are under fire.", MV Maersk Phoenix broadcasted for assistance as it traveled west through in world's most dangerous shipping lane, 145 nautical miles north-northeast of Boossaso, Somalia. Corte-Real, the NATO closest unit was escorting a Pakistani flagged severe-risk vessel had to hand it over to a nearby Coalition Turkish warship before render assistance. After a half-hour high-speed hot pursuit, the Portuguese frigate intercepted the pirate skiff and boarded her. Warning shots, first to the air and afterwards across the skiff bow were executed as loudhailers commanded the Somalis to stop. The

boarding operation conducted by Portuguese Navy Special Forces was conducted using one RHIB (rigid hull inflatable boat) with the standoff support from NRP Corte-Real. After a detailed search, four automatic weapons (AK-47), one RPG with three grenades, several bullet magazines and two ladders were found on board.

The boarding was considered a very successfully operation. After registration of the eight suspect pirates and evidence collection, the boarding team confiscated all weapons and other material used in piracy activity. After consulting the Portuguese national authorities, the pirates were released. Any decision made regarding detention of suspect pirates falls under national law. This applies to all ships in the NATO command of whatever nation. "We need more legal support urgently to support our actions here as piracy will not stop." Commander SNMG1, Radm Pereira da Cunha said. NRP Corte-Real is one of the four naval vessels within Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) and is currently conducting anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, near Somalia. "Operation Allied Protector" is a coordinated effort to deter piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia.



Portuguese Navy Special Forces intercept a skiff filled with eight Somali pirates threatening a cargo ship in the Gulf of Aden June 22



Romanian Forces End Iraq Mission

Story Courtesy of: mnf-iraq.com

Military operations in Iraq formally ended for Romanian forces June 4, when the Romanian 26th Infantry “Red Scorpions” Battalion prepared to ship out its remaining troops following an end-of-mission ceremony here.

The Romanian flag was lowered in the 26th’s compound, affectionately known as “Camp Dracula,” following a ceremony honoring the Romanian military personnel who died in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The ceremony was held just an hour before the U.S. Army 1st Armored Division’s 4th Brigade Combat Team conducted a relief-in-place, transfer-of-authority ceremony with the outgoing 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Cavalry Division.

Romanian President Traian Basescu, who is the supreme commander of Romanian Armed Forces during wartime, was on hand.

Romanian Lt. Col. Gabriel Toma, commander of the 26th, received the U.S. Bronze Star Medal from Army Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr., commander of

Multi-National Corps - Iraq.

“It’s hard to say farewell to a trusted partner,” Jacoby said. “Few have been as committed to freedom of the Iraqi people as the Romanians, and I extend my thanks, as it’s been an honor to serve with them here in Iraq.”

Jacoby praised the Romanians as a dedicated and capable force, and expressed condolences for their lost Soldiers.

Since August 2003, Romania has deployed more than 5,200 troops to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Assigned to two different Multi-National Divisions, Romanian forces have provided intelligence support to Multi-National Division - South by conducting reconnaissance and surveillance missions and operating unmanned aerial vehicle platforms.

Romanian forces also provided base security, supply-route security and quick-reaction forces in Basrah, and conducted training and monitoring of Iraqi Army units, culminating with the May 23 graduation of Iraqi Commandos on Camp Ur.



Lt. Col. Gabriel Toma, commander of the Romanian Army’s 26th Infantry Battalion, conducts an inspection of troops with Romanian President Traian Basescu, during an end-of-mission ceremony June 4, 2009, at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mark Miranda.

Joint Chiefs Chairman Lists Top Priorities

Story by John J. Kruzal
Courtesy of defenselink.mil

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff identified increasing Middle East security, revitalizing U.S. forces and focusing on global challenges as his top priorities in remarks at the Brookings Institution on 19 May 2009.

Detailing his priority list, Navy Adm. Mike Mullen defined the broader Middle East as stretching from Lebanon to Iran and even including parts of South Asia.

for the near term — and we clearly need those resources in Afghanistan — but also for the long term,” he said.

Th chairman said that in Iraq – where roughly 140,000 U.S. troops are deployed – the situation is “fragile” as forces began to draw down in accordance with agreements between Washington and Baghdad.



Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Senior Fellow Michael O'Hanion address the audience at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., May 18, 2009. Mullen discussed and took audience questions regarding the future of global engagement. DoD photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley

Mullen cited the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy President Barack Obama’s administration unveiled in March as an example of the regional approach that’s needed. “Certainly, our president and the new administration has put together a comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan,” he said. “And I felt this was vital — to focus on the region, not just focus on one country or the other but, in fact, have a comprehensive strategy for the entire region.”

The military contribution to security is necessary, Mullen said, but not sufficient. He emphasized the need for increased presence of nonmilitary U.S. agencies, and he called for better resourcing of the State Department and the rest of the American government, which he characterized as increasingly “expeditionary.”

“I think it’s an absolute priority that we resource our State Department and other agencies to do this, not just

“And at the same time, we see the strategic growth of required forces in Afghanistan and, again, a focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan,” he said. Mullen added that like Iraq, security in Afghanistan will depend on its own national security forces gaining momentum and responsibility.

“So [there is a] heavy focus, obviously, in my life and with my staff, in engagement on the broader Middle East. But a lot of what’s going on there also applies to other parts of the world,” he said.

Another of Mullen’s priorities – focusing on the health of U.S. forces – also occupies much of his time, he said.

“There’s a resilience in that force, a skip in their step, a capability that is truly extraordinary in its evolution, and really revolution, to become what I believe is the best counterinsurgency force in the world, and in doing so has set a standard about how quickly we can change, given the strategy is put in the right place,” he said.

But despite their counterinsurgency progress in Iraq

the U.S. military is under the strain of multiple deployments and combat stress. He said both the Army and Marine Corps are at their newly increased end strength, but that it will take some time before new troops are trained and can relieve current forces.

“Over the next 18 to 24 months, that stress is going to continue,” he said. “And then after that, I can start to see a time where dwell time [at home stations between deployments] will increase, and we can start to bring the pressure down, based on what I understand right now.”

The chairman also stressed the need to take care of injured troops – including those suffering from traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress — and their families, and to care for the spouses and children of those killed.

“And when I say, ‘take care of them,’ I really mean take care of them for the rest of their lives,” he said. “These are young people who have gone out, done what our country has asked them to do, and they should be well taken care of, not just by the Department of Defense or [Veterans Affairs], but by America — communities throughout the land, reaching out to these young people, whose dreams haven’t changed.

“They want their kids to go to school. They’d like to go to school. And they’d like to own a piece of the rock,” he continued. “It’s just the path has been altered. And as far as I’m concerned, we owe them that debt.”

Mullen said the Defense Department budget should reflect its care for the people who commit to military service.

“We’re going through a big debate right now about systems, major acquisition programs, what we should buy for the future,” he said. “What we should buy for the future is to make sure we get it right for our people. That’s health care, that’s housing, that’s benefits, that’s the compensation package, that’s bonuses — all those kinds of things.”

Mullen said his other priority is to make sure the United States is adequately engaged in parts of the world that don’t fall under the U.S. Central Command, where American forces are engaged in both Iraq in Afghanistan.

“It’s not a small globe,” he said. “There are challenges that exist throughout the world, and [I’m] making sure right now, with so many of my forces focused in the Central Command area, that I have enough forces that are engaged in other parts of the world.”

The chairman underscored how interwoven the world is – as evidenced by the global financial crisis – and said countries are “very dependent on each other.”

“Stability is a key for the future in that regard,” he said. “And along those lines, that stability — again, not unlike Iraq and not unlike Afghanistan — that stability is going to be a necessary condition, but not sufficient, because we need education development, we need economic development, we need good governance. Those are also key to progress, not [only] in the current conflicts, but progress in the future as well.”

ISAF Provides Humanitarian Aid to Flood Victims

*Story and Picture
Courtesy of nato.int*

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) were assisted by International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops in providing humanitarian relief to the victims of flooding in Faryab province on 12 May.

The heavy rainfalls on May 11 made many of the rivers of Faryab province burst their banks and caused a landslide in the small mountain village of Bataw-e-Bala. German and Norwegian ISAF commands responded quickly and were able to provide four helicopters to support the relief action in order to help the residents of the village.

The natural disaster caused extensive damage to the village but fortunately its residents were able to escape onto a nearby plateau. The ISAF helicopters were used to support GIRoA and the UN-OCHA to transport tents, food, blankets and medical aid to the remote region.

The coordination of the relief aid was undertaken by a Disaster Management Committee, an ad-hoc group of representatives from GIRoA, UNAMA, UN OCHA and Non-Government Organizations.

In addition to the invaluable assistance of the ISAF aircraft, Regional Command North was able to provide 500 wool blankets, more than 1,000 litres of potable water and a large amount of food. ISAF handed over the valuable supplies to the Afghan National Army (ANA) who distributed them to the local Afghan people.



An ISAF helicopter carries relief supplies to the small mountain village of Bataw-e-Bala.

Top U.S. General in Southern Afghanistan Optimistic More Forces Will Turn Tide

Story by Donna Miles
Courtesy of dvidshub.net

The top U.S. general in Southern Afghanistan said he's "unapologetically optimistic" about the difference incoming U.S. troops will make to the security situation here.

Recalling his previous deployment here, commanding the sole U.S. brigade in Afghanistan – at a time when the United States had 15 in Iraq — Army Brig. Gen. John Nicholson said he sees the influx of forces as an opportunity to turn the tide on violence.

"To me, to see this increase in U.S. forces means we are now resourcing our counterinsurgency appropriately to accomplish what it is we have laid down in our [Afghanistan-Pakistan] strategy," said Nicholson, deputy commander of Regional Command South.

"So I am very encouraged and feel that this is going to make a big difference."

Speaking with reporters during Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates' visit here to check on preparations for the incoming sailors and Marines, Nicholson said they'll help secure the local population in a way the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force couldn't without more troops.

"So with this additional U.S. force complementing what they are already doing, we are ... approaching the force levels necessary to secure the population and enable the kind of development activities and other things that we believe will change the situation," he said. "So yes, we are optimistic that we are going to see some changes down here."

Nicholson made no bones about the fact that he expects violence here to increase initially before abating. It's most likely to increase as troops move into areas where they previously had no presence, he said, and in the lead-up to Afghanistan's presidential elections this fall.

"There will be an increase of violence initially, because the enemy will not easily give up their hold on the population," he said. "But this will be a spike, not a continuous upward slope. There will be an increase, then a decrease in violence. Afterwards, we will have improved security."

U.S. and other RC-South forces are working to preempt enemy interference with the elections. But Nicholson conceded, "We do expect there to be a significant security challenge" as Election Day approaches.

Exacerbating the problems is that NATO hasn't come through with all the forces it had promised to temporarily beef up ISAF through the election period. Army Gen. David McKiernan, commander of ISAF

and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, expressed frustration last week that ISAF will be two battalions short of what he had expected.

Nicholson said workarounds are being explored, in cooperation with the Afghan Independent Election Commission and Afghan National Security Forces that will take the security lead.

"This will be an Afghan-run election, Afghan-secured," he said. "We will back up the Afghan security forces, but they will provide the principal security for the elections at the polling places."

Looking beyond the elections, when he expects violence to start to drop, Nicholson said the focus can move from improving security to laying the foundation for other critical developments. This includes helping the Afghan government improve governance and boosting reconstruction and development.

Another focus will be on helping the southern agricultural areas transition from a poppy-based economy to one built on legitimate crops such as fruits, vegetables, saffron or cotton. Nicholson is less enthusiastic about wheat as an alternative crop, not only because it's currently plagued by a blight, but also because it's an annual crop that will force farmers every year to make the decision to replant wheat or revert to poppy.

This agricultural transition – one assisted by the U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Agriculture Department – is "instrumental to our success down here," Nicholson said.

"We think this is quite achievable, given that this was the breadbasket of Afghanistan as recently as the 1970s," he said. "So we are looking to help them return to where they once were, feeding the country and providing enough products for export so they have a thriving agricultural economy."

Another ongoing priority will be growing the Afghan security forces so they're better able to face down insurgents. U.S. and ISAF forces are "pushing as hard as we can to accelerate the growth of their security forces and the growth of their capacity," he said.

A challenge in this region, birthplace of the Taliban, is that many of the insurgents are locals who don't stand out from the general population in the way foreign fighters do in the eastern part of the country.

This creates "a fundamentally different challenge in how we conduct counterinsurgency," Nicholson said. That's because the key first step is separating the enemy from the rest of the population, he explained. Ideally, the next step is to "bring them over" so they abandon their loyalty to the insurgents.

Nicholson reiterated the importance of good governance that delivers services to the people in promoting this effort. “This goes a long way toward enabling the people to believe in the government [and] side with the government,” he said.

Afghans in this region endure a “very tough existence,” he said, with a life expectancy of 45 years, fatalities for one in five children before age 5, high illiteracy and high unemployment.

He dismissed any notion that the people naturally align themselves with the Taliban. “The Taliban appeal in the past was that it brought order out of anarchy,” he said, albeit an extremely harsh form of order.

The Afghans “prefer what this modern Islamic government has to offer, but they want to see it deliver,”

he said. “So when this government begins to deliver in a way that affects lives, I think we will see a shift.... and a willingness to support the government.”

Nicholson called the troop plus-up a big step in helping the Afghans help themselves achieve their potential.

“The Afghans want this to be their fight. They want to win this war themselves,” he said. “They appreciate our help very much. They know they need our help, but they are also willing to do it themselves.”

So the critical path now, he said, is to improve security and grow the capacity of the Afghan security forces and the government. “And the faster we can do that, then the sooner we can move on” into an advisory role, he said. “But in the interim, they do need our help.”

ISAF opens Kabul International Airport North

*Story and Picture
Courtesy of nato.int*

A \$77 million construction project came to a close during a grand opening ceremony for Kabul International Airport (KAIA) North on May 1. A symbolic key was given to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Deputy Commander, Lieutenant General Jim Dutton, from the construction company that built KAIA North.

The construction of the 30-facility Airport Protection Overlay District (APOD) compound is the single largest wartime construction project in NATO’s history. The project allows handover of KAIA South for Afghan development and boasts the first major land transfer from NATO back to Afghanistan.

The \$77 million initiative is part of a \$130 million, three-year construction project to develop Afghanistan’s only viable international airport, which is critical for the land-locked country. Seven million dollars of the \$77 million was for the aircraft parking expansion, doubling NATO’s strategic and tactical aircraft parking capacity at KAIA.

During his remarks, Lt. Gen. Dutton thanked U.S. Army Colonel Thomas Finn, project manager for KAIA North, for his efforts in the migration from KAIA South to KAIA North. He talked about the \$17 million Role 2 hospital, which is NATO’s first hospital construction outside Europe, and also mentioned that more than 1,400 Afghans worked at the site with zero security incidents.

More than 229 NATO personnel will relocate from KAIA South to KAIA North into 11 buildings. KAIA North was built with higher force protection (FP) standards, allowing troops to be protected where they live and work. Thirteen million dollars went into force protection upgrades to defeat Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED) threats at the gates.

Construction on KAIA North started in the fall of 2007 and was completed by February 2008. Thirty million dollars in construction funding came from 14 different nations. The final migration is expected to be completed later this year.



A symbolic key is given to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Deputy Commander, Lieutenant General Jim Dutton, from the construction company that built KAIA North.

KASOTC OPENING

*By Col Muhammad Al-Samdi
Senior National Representative of Jordan in
USCENTCOM*

On Tuesday 19th of May 2009 his majesty, King Abdullah II inaugurated the “King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center” (KASOTC) in Amman Jordan, a facility planned to serve as a regional center for counter-terrorism training.

Military representatives from countries around the world were present. (Gulf States, Egypt, Iraq, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Greece, Netherlands, Kenya, China, France, Turkey,

Thailand, Sweden, Romania, Malaysia, Tanzania, Liberia, Denmark, Brunei, UK, Russia, South Africa), along with the US

The center is a joint initiative of the Jordanian and U.S. governments to train Jordanian, U.S., and regional allies in the fight against terror.

KASOTC is being built at the Yajooz area near the capital; the facility includes a live-fire urban training center, a driver training range, close-quarter battle houses, sniper training ranges, airplane mockups, housing and mess hall facilities that can accommodate up to 650 people.

Col. Adnan Abbadi, a commanding officer at the center, told reporters that the facility will serve as a training ground for forces from around the world, “regardless of race or religion”.

“This center, with its strategic location, is the king’s idea to unify regional efforts to counter terrorism. it will be a military training base for the Arab world and the region,” he said.

During training, coaches apply a number of urban warfare scenarios. Operations are computerized and recorded by 360 cameras, he said.



King Abdullah II, high level Jordan Officials and the USCENTCOM Commander, General Petraeus attending the opening ceremony.

At a Glance: Jordan Contribution to the Coalition

Jordan contributes to the Coalition with two field hospitals, in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These hospitals give assistance and medical support to our brothers in Afghanistan and Iraq after years of war and hardship. In addition to providing medical support for the Coalition Forces.

Hospital Capacity

A total of 50 beds
10 intensive care and Recovery beds
2 Neonatal Incubators
2 operating theaters,
Intensive care unit with 2 Ventilators
6 Inpatient Wards for care of the various types of patients

The Medical Staff

27 senior doctors in various specialties
More than 40 qualified male nurses and paramedics.
The medical personnel include many senior military doctors with extensive experience in treating military and civilian patients including women and children in all specialties.

The Surgical Specialties

3 General Surgeons
1 Orthopedic Surgeon
1 Plastic Reconstructive and Burns Surgeon
1 Neurosurgeon
1 Vascular Surgeon
1 Chest Surgeon
1 Urologist
1 Ophthalmologist
1 ENT Surgeon
1 Oral Surgeon
2 Gynecologists

Supported by Two Senior Anesthetists and 2 Anesthesia Technicians

The Medical Specialties

1 Internist
2 Pediatricians
1 Gastroenterologist
1 Cardiologist
1 Dermatologist
1 Rehabilitation Physician
1 Psychiatrist and 1 Psychologist



FACT SHEET



Statistics below reflect projects funded via Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), Developmental Fund of Iraq (DFI), Commander's Emergency Response Fund (CERP), Iraqi Commander's Emergency Response Fund (ICERP), Economic Support Fund (ESF), and Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF).

As of 02 May 09, GRD has:

- 4,547 projects completed at a construction cost of \$6.9 billion
- 321 projects ongoing (started not completed and awarded not started) at a construction cost of \$1.9 billion

Electricity

- Of the 6,000 megawatts planned; 4,952 megawatts have been added and restored, increasing electrical power capacity
- Strengthened and stabilized the electrical transmission grid through the completion of 36 132/400 kilovolt (kV) substations and 11 overhead line projects
- Completed construction of 86 33/11 kV substations

Water

- 865 water supply projects are completed and 66 are ongoing
- 570 water treatment and sewage projects are completed and 37 are ongoing
- 0.9 million cubic meters per day of water treatment capacity achieved affecting 5.2 million people (1.1 million cubic meters per day planned through IRRF funding)
- 0.2 million cubic meters per day of water treatment capacity is under construction

Facilities

- 2,788 projects completed with 132 ongoing (see facilities breakdown below):

Transportation and Communication

- Completed 246 village road projects; 22 ongoing
- 112 of 113 railroad renovation projects completed
- 26 of 27 aviation projects completed; improving 5 airports
- 8 port projects completed; one ongoing (Umm Qasr Pier and Seawall – Funded by the Iraqi government)

Building, Health and Education

- All 133 IRRF funded Primary Healthcare Centers (PHC) have been turned over to the Iraqi Ministry of Health; 2 other PHC projects (other funding) are ongoing
- 44 hospital renovation projects are completed and 8 are ongoing
- GRD projects have increased the capacity to treat patients; approximately 6.6-million patients in hospitals and 4.6-million outpatients at the PHCs can be seen annually

- 1,112 school projects are complete with 33 ongoing; projects are both new construction and renovation

Security and Justice

- 155 border posts and 14 Point of Entry facilities are completed (MNSTC-I funded projects included)
- 95 fire station projects are complete
- 58 courthouse/correctional facilities projects are complete and 16 are ongoing
- GRD is constructing and/or rehabilitating 5 correctional facilities that will provide nearly 8,500 beds and improve conditions for many inmates

For more detailed information and updates, visit www.mnf-iraq.com

Afghanistan - A Turkish soldier interacts with a child at the Wardak central Market during a tour of the province with members of the Turkish Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Picture, Courtesy of: nato.int

