

LAW AND ORDER IN IRAQ

Question: There is a temporary vacuum of control in areas that had just been liberated, if not the United States or Britain, who is there to meet the policing needs of Iraq?

Answer:

- In many instances throughout the conflict, Iraqi troops collapsed and fled very rapidly, often before the U.S. military even arrived on the scene. Those coalition forces arriving in urban areas had as their first priority the mission of engaging the enemy, as combat operations were still ongoing. Although organized military resistance collapsed, our forces continued to face snipers, terrorists, and fighters loyal to Saddam Hussein.
- Coalition forces are responsible for providing a stable and secure environment inside of which the Iraqi people can take charge of their own government and their own future. We are working closely with our allies, the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), NGOs, the international community and re-emerging elements of the Iraqi police to restore order in Iraq as quickly as possible.

Question: What is being done right now to deal with this growing law and order problem?

Answer:

- Coalition forces are working to restore law and order in Iraq as quickly as possible. Civil Affairs personnel are currently assessing the situation on the ground and are preparing recommendations on needs and conditions. Coalition forces are working with local authorities and Iraqi police to restore law and order. Coalition forces have appealed to local police to return to work. Thousands have already responded in Baghdad alone. Initially, the returning Iraqi police will be unarmed and patrol jointly with coalition forces. I am confident that these measures will go far to restore law and order.

Question: How will it be addressed in a more permanent way over the next 6 months?

Answer:

- Our desire is to full return responsibility for maintaining law and order to the Iraqis as soon as possible. In the interim, several of our coalition partners have volunteered constabulary forces and gendarmerie to help. The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) will assume oversight for reconstituting the Iraqi

police force. Between the soldiers on the ground, the solid offers of assistance from our international partners and ORHA's efforts, I am confident that Iraqis themselves will soon begin to assume greater responsibility for maintaining law and order in a post-Saddam Iraq.