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Backgrounder #7

Operation Phantom Strike Factsheet

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- Phantom Strike, a series of targeted joint operations against al Qaeda, Sunni, and Shia insurgent elements in Baghdad and the surrounding areas, was launched on August 13, 2007.
- Corps-level operation: Multi-National Corps—Iraq is the highest echelon of command of coalition combat forces; the Corps is under the command of Lieutenant General Ray Odierno.
- This operation is the third phase of a multi-phase strategy to secure Baghdad and the belts surrounding the capital.
  - The first phase lasted from 10 January to 15 June, during which time additional surge forces were deployed and moved into areas in and around Baghdad, developing intelligence and stable bases in those areas.
  - The second phase, Operation Phantom Thunder, began on 15 June. Phantom Thunder was a corps-level offensive that sought to disrupt al Qaeda, Sunni insurgents, and Shia extremists by killing or capturing key terrorist leaders throughout Iraq. According to Lt. Gen. Odierno, “In 142 battalion-level operations, Iraq and Coalition forces detained 6,702 suspects, killed 1,196 enemies and wounded 419 others. Combined forces also killed or captured 382 high-value targets.”<sup>1</sup>
  - The current phase began on 13 August and aims to build on the momentum and gains of Phantom Thunder. Operation Phantom Strike includes the conduct of quick-strike raids aimed at destroying existing terrorist staging areas and preventing insurgents from re-establishing sanctuaries.
  - Subsequent phases will likely focus on continuing to clear and hold Baghdad and the surrounding provinces so as to establish stable and sustainable security.
- Phantom strike includes several sub-operations:
  - Operation Lightning Hammer focused on clearing the Diyala River Valley of al Qaeda, secret cell, and other insurgent elements. Lightning Hammer involved roughly 16,000 Iraqi and Coalition forces that cleared approximately fifty villages in Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad. This twelve day operation concluded Wednesday August 22; in total, 26 members of al Qaeda were killed, 37 suspected terrorists were detained, and 10 weapons caches were found.
  - Operation Marne Husky was launched on 15 August and seeks to disrupt terrorists who were driven from their safe havens by earlier Marne Torch and Marne Avalanche operations. Marne

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<sup>1</sup> Multi-National Force-Iraq Daily Stories, “Operation Phantom Strike continues to put pressure on extremists,” August 22, 2007.

Husky focuses primarily on al Qaeda and secret cell targets in the Tigris River Valley south of Baghdad and east of the capital near Nahrwan.

- Operation Falcon Fury III, a part of Marne Husky, included targeted raids in Suwayrah on August 26 aimed at an enemy safehouse in order to disrupt extremist elements operating in the area.
- Operation Gecko, in which Coalition forces have received tips from a Concerned Citizens group, aims at “systematically cleaning up the area, removing deadly roadside bombs and capturing or killing the terrorists and militiamen responsible for the violence and chaos that had blanketed the region” south of Baghdad.<sup>2</sup>
- Phantom Strike is also pursuing al Qaeda, Shia, and Sunni insurgents in the areas south and west of Baghdad towards the Euphrates and southeast along the Tigris in areas such as Suwayrah, Arab Jabour, Jisr Diyala, and Salman Pak; al Qaeda is also being targeted north and west of Balad, west of Baqubah, south of Balad Ruz, north of Baqubah along the Diyala river, in Khan Bani Sa’ad, and near Taji and Tarmiyah.
- Within Baghdad, Phantom Strike operations are targeting secret cell and al Qaeda terrorists, particularly in the areas of Doura, the Karrada peninsula, Khadra, Yarmouk, Bayaa, Amel, and Shula.

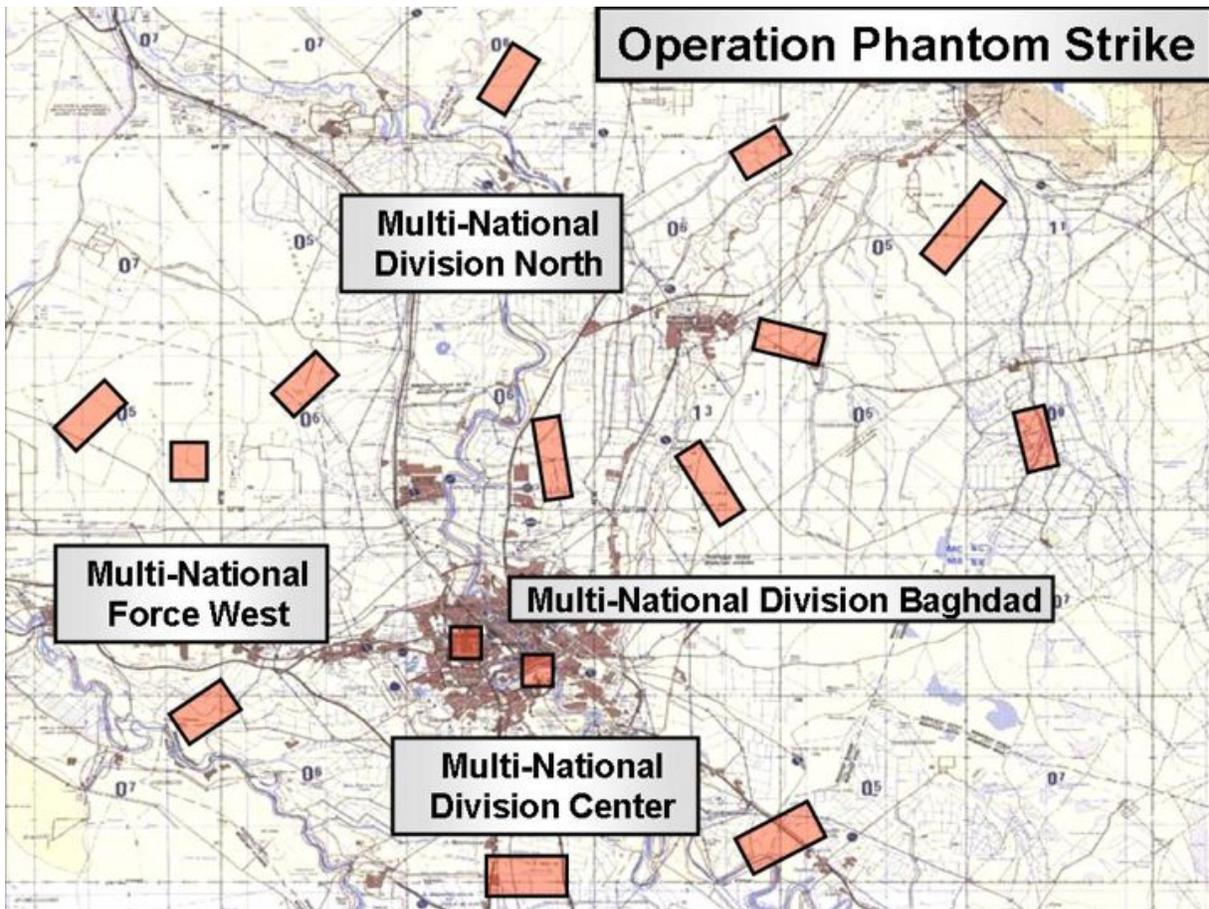


Figure 1: Operation Phantom Strike, DoD News Briefing, Friday, 17 August 2007 with Army Lieutenant General Ray Odierno, Commander, Multi-National Corps-Iraq

<sup>2</sup> Multi-National Force-Iraq Press Release No. 20070827-08, “Concerned citizens, Coalition Forces destroy weapons cache, insurgent safe houses,” August 27 2007.