

Backgrounder #26

Iran and Al-Qaeda in Iraq: What's the Connection?

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It is widely speculated in the media that the relationship between the Shi'a government of Iran and the Sunni insurgent group, al-Qaeda in Iraq, is a hostile one, primarily because of the sectarian differences between the two. However, there is clear evidence of Iranian support for another Sunni group, the Taliban in Afghanistan.¹ Therefore, it is worth investigating the potential links between al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Iranian regime, particularly the Iranian Revolutionary Guard-Quds Force (IRGC-QF). The dossier below contains articles, press releases, and Defense Department briefings from the last year that consider the nature of this relationship. While it may not present a definitive explanation of the connection between these groups, it does suggest possible links exist between the groups and the sectarian grounds for dismissing the relationship are likely too simplistic. The most relevant passages have been highlighted in yellow.

DATE	SOURCE	TEXT
1/3/2007	Iran's Secret Plan For Mayhem Eli Lake- Staff Reporter of the Sun January 3, 2007 http://www.nysun.com/article/46032	WASHINGTON — Iran is supporting both Sunni and Shiite terrorists in the Iraqi civil war, according to secret Iranian documents captured by Americans in Iraq. The news that American forces had captured Iranians in Iraq was widely reported last month, but less well known is that the Iranians were carrying documents that offered Americans insight into Iranian activities in Iraq. An American intelligence official said the new material, which has been authenticated within the intelligence community, confirms "that Iran is working closely with both the Shiite

	<p>militias and Sunni Jihadist groups." The source was careful to stress that the Iranian plans do not extend to cooperation with Baathist groups fighting the government in Baghdad, and said the documents rather show how the Quds Force — the arm of Iran's revolutionary guard that supports Shiite Hezbollah, Sunni Hamas, and Shiite death squads — is working with individuals affiliated with Al Qaeda in Iraq and Ansar al-Sunna.</p> <p>Another American official who has seen the summaries of the reporting affiliated with the arrests said it comprised a "smoking gun." "We found plans for attacks, phone numbers affiliated with Sunni bad guys, a lot of things that filled in the blanks on what these guys are up to," the official said.</p> <p>One of the documents captured in the raids, according to two American officials and one Iraqi official, is an assessment of the Iraq civil war and new strategy from the Quds Force. According to the Iraqi source, that assessment is the equivalent of "Iran's Iraq Study Group," a reference to the bipartisan American commission that released war strategy recommendations after the November 7 elections. The document concludes, according to these sources, that Iraq's Sunni neighbors will step up their efforts to aid insurgent groups and that it is imperative for Iran to redouble efforts to retain influence with them, as well as with Shiite militias.</p> <p>Rough translations of the Iranian assessment and strategy, as well as a summary of the intelligence haul, have been widely distributed throughout the policy community and are likely to influence the Iraq speech President Bush is expected to deliver in the coming days regarding the way forward for the war, according to two Bush administration officials.</p> <p>The news that Iran's elite Quds Force would be in contact, and clandestinely cooperating, with Sunni Jihadists who attacked the Golden Mosque in Samarra (one of the holiest shrines in Shiism) on February 22, could shake the alliance Iraq's ruling Shiites have forged in recent years with Tehran. Many Iraq analysts believe the bombing vaulted Iraq into the current stage of its civil war.</p> <p>The top Quds Force commander — known as Chizari, according to a December 30 story in the Washington Post — was captured inside a compound belonging to Abdul Aziz</p>
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Hakim, the Shiite leader President Bush last month pressed to help forge a new ruling coalition that excludes a firebrand Shiite cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr.

According to one Iraqi official, the two Quds commanders were in Iraq at the behest of the Iraqi government, which had requested more senior Iranian points of contact when the government complained about Shiite death squad activity. The negotiations were part of an Iraqi effort to establish new rules of the road between Baghdad and Tehran. This arrangement was ironed out by Iraq's president, Jalal Talabani, when he was in Tehran at the end of November.

While Iran has openly supported Iraqi Shiite militias involved in attacks on American soldiers, the Quds Force connection to Sunni insurgents has been murkier.

In 2003, coalition forces captured a playbook outlining Iranian intentions to support insurgents of both stripes, but its authenticity was disputed.

American intelligence reports have suggested that export/import operations run by Sunni terrorists in Fallujah in 2004 received goods from the revolutionary guard.

"We have seen bits and piece of things before, but it was highly compartmentalized suggesting the Iranian link to Sunni groups," a military official said.

A former Iran analyst for the Pentagon who also worked as an adviser to the Coalition Provisional Authority, Michael Rubin, said yesterday: "There has been lots of information suggesting that Iran has not limited its outreach just to the Shiites, but this has been disputed."

He added, "When documents like this are found, usually intelligence officials may confirm their authenticity but argue they prove nothing because they do not reflect a decision to operationalize things."

A former State Department senior analyst on Iraq and Iran who left government service in 2005, Wayne White, said he did not think it was likely the Quds Force was supporting Sunni terrorists who were targeting Shiite political leaders and

		<p>civilians, but stressed he did not know.</p> <p>"I have no doubt whatsoever that al-Quds forces are on the ground and active in Iraq," he said. "That's about it. I saw evidence that Moqtada al Sadr was in contact with Sunni Arab insurgents in western Iraq, but I never saw evidence of Iran in that loop."</p> <p>Mr. White added, "One problem that we all have is that people consistently conduct analysis assuming that the actor is going to act predictably or rationally based on their overall mindset or ideology. Sometimes people don't.</p> <p>"One example of a mindset that may hinder analysis of Iranian involvement is the belief that Iran would never have any dealings with militant Sunni Arabs. But they allowed hundreds of Al Qaeda operatives to escape from Afghanistan across their territory in 2002," he said.</p>
<p>4/11/2007</p>	<p>Media Roundtable with Major General William Caldwell, Spokesman for Multi-National Force-Iraq and Major Marty Weber, 79th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit</p> <p>Topic: Operational Update</p> <p>The Combined Press Information Center, Baghdad Iraq</p> <p>April 11, 2007</p>	<p>AN EXCERPT FROM THE TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>Q (Through interpreter.) From Al Hayat.</p> <p>General Caldwell, everyone knows that the Iranian intelligence is a strong intelligence. About these weapons -- does the Iranian government know about the smuggling of these weapons, or are they smuggled by the militias? And if you discover this weapon cache in (Al Jihad ?), and you know that the militias in (Al Jihad ?) are not supported by Iran because they are Sunnis.</p> <p>Do the Iranians support all the militias in Iraq? And if the Iranians are smuggling these weapons to a country to interfere in its domestic affairs and to fight against the coalition forces which is in Iraq, according to the Security Council resolution?</p> <p>GEN. CALDWELL: We have, in fact, found some cases recently where Iranian intelligence services have provided to some Sunni insurgent groups some support. We do continue to see the Iranian intelligence services being active here in Iraq in terms of both providing funding and providing weapons and munitions.</p> <p>We also know that training still is being conducted in Iran for insurgent elements from Iraq. And we know that as recent</p>

as last week from debriefings of personnel. What I can also tell you from the -- which concerns us very much. I mean, you know, the government of Iraq has been very clear that they want to have the ability and they should have the ability -- the people of Iraq should be able to determine their own destination without any outside interference from any foreign country. They have asked that from their neighbors. And we would hope at some point their neighbors would respect that.

MAJ. WEBER: We had a question on this side.

Q General, Mike Schuster from NPR.

Can I follow up that answer of yours? You said that you do have intelligence that Iranian intelligence has provided training for insurgent elements in Iran for insurgent elements from Iraq. Do you mean Sunni insurgents or Shi'ite militias, or both?

GEN. CALDWELL: The only training that I'm aware of that's inside in Iran that has occurred is for Shi'a extremists. But there has been some -- what I was referring to, there has been some support provided to some Sunni extremist groups by Iranian intelligence agents, not anywhere near the degree that it's obviously being done to Shi'a extremists, but there are now some confirmations we've been able to make.

Q (Inaudible.) This could be a bit of a repetition for you, but since it's quite a delicate issue, could you just exactly repeat when you said that Iranian intelligence was giving support or is giving support to Sunni insurgents, if I took it right, of the whole --

GEN. CALDWELL: You just want me to be exactly on the record. (Laughs.)

Q Absolutely.

GEN. CALDWELL: Yeah. Now, we do have some recent intelligence reporting out that does, in fact, tell us that Iranian intelligence agents have provided some support -- and we have not gone into the details of that -- to some Sunni -- some Sunni extremist groups. And that's all we've said about it so far.

<p>5/6/2007</p>	<p>US general says Iranian-origin weapons turning up in Sunni insurgent hands</p> <p>Robert H. Reid, Associated Press Writer</p> <p>International News</p> <p>Baghdad</p> <p>May 6, 2007</p>	<p>BAGHDAD: Powerful roadside bombs believed to be of Iranian origin and considered the signature weapon of Shiite militias are turning up in the hands of Sunni insurgents south of Baghdad, a U.S. general said Sunday.</p> <p>Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of the Army's Task Force Marne, said the presence of "explosively formed penetrators," or EFPs, in Sunni weapons caches suggests some degree of Iranian influence among Sunni as well as Shiite extremists.</p> <p>"We're seeing Iranian EFPs in the hands of Sunni extremists," Lynch told a group of Western reporters.</p> <p>But Lynch, whose command covers the southern rim of Baghdad and mostly Shiite areas to the south, said it was unclear whether the Iranians were supplying the weapons directly or whether the Sunnis were buying them on the black market.</p> <p>Roadside bombs, which the military calls "improvised explosive devices" or IEDs, have long been the major killer of American soldiers. The U.S. military has upgraded the armor on Humvees and taken over measures to protect troops against those bombs.</p> <p>But some of those measures are ineffective against EFPs, which hurl a fist-sized lump of molten copper through the toughest American armor. Insurgents are also burying some bombs deep enough to avoid U.S. detection devices, Lynch said.</p> <p>Such measures point to the resilience of both Sunni and Shiite extremist groups, which Lynch called a "thinking enemy," capable of responding to American countermeasures.</p> <p>U.S. military officials have been saying for months that the Iranians were supplying EFPs to Shiite militias, despite strong denials by the Tehran government.</p> <p>Sunni insurgent groups are strongly anti-Iranian, blaming the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government for helping Iran expand its influence here.</p> <p>Next month, Lynch's command will assume responsibility for security in Wasit province, a mostly Shiite area that borders</p>
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		<p>Iran. Wasit is currently under Polish military control.</p> <p>Lynch would not speculate why the Iranians would want to deal with armed groups opposed to the Shiite majority which Tehran wants to see maintain a dominate position in Iraq.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Lynch said there were clear signs of Iranian influence among both Sunni and Shiite extremists groups although he would not elaborate.</p> <p>He also refused to say whether the U.S. thought Iranians were training Sunni extremists, either here or in Iran. But use of EFPs requires some degree of training, he said.</p> <p>Other U.S. officials have said they had evidence that Sunnis were trying to "reverse engineer" EFPs and manufacture their own but the effort had been unsuccessful because they lacked the sophisticated machinery.</p>
<p>5/9/2007</p>	<p>Weekly Press Conference with Major General William Caldwell, Spokesman and Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Effects, Multi-National Force-Iraq and Major General David Edgington, Director, Air Component Coordination Element, Multi-National Force-Iraq</p> <p>Topic: Security Operations in Iraq</p> <p>The Combined Press Information Center, Baghdad, Iraq</p> <p>May 9, 2007</p>	<p>AN EXCERPT FROM THE TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>Q General, in the past week, you have spoken about collusion between -- probable collusion between Iran and Sunni insurgents, citing weapons that Sunni insurgents were using that came from Iran. Can you tell us anything more about that - - i.e., are these weapons that are directly going to Sunni insurgents from the Iranians? Are there middlemen? How does this transaction happen, and to what extent does it exist?</p> <p>GEN. CALDWELL: What I would say about the connection between the Iranian intelligence operatives and Sunni insurgents -- I think we've been real careful to try to say at this point that we have come -- confidence in -- we can -- we have credible intelligence on and information from debriefings that they are providing support. I don't think we've gone so far as to try to specify the specific kind of support that is being provided. Again, it is only select elements. It's not all Sunni insurgents. But rather we do know that there is a direct awareness by Iranian intelligence officials that they are providing support to some select Sunni insurgent elements.</p> <p>And again, we have not gone any -- really further than that to describe the specifics of that support.</p> <p>Q Are weapons -- is there evidence of weapons being</p>

		<p>used or -- GEN. CALDWELL: What we don't know is -- we're still ascertaining exactly -- what we will say is, we do know they're providing support in terms of financial support at this point, and then we're still more carefully examining the information and intelligence we derived before we would say anything further.</p> <p>Q (Off mike.)</p> <p>GEN. CALDWELL: Right now what we have said is to Sunni -- to some Sunni extremist elements. And again, we're just trying to make sure that -- if we make a statement, that we have the definitive information and intelligence and corroborate it with one or two sources, more than one, before we say something like that.</p> <p>We'll take one more. Yes, sir?</p> <p>Q (Through interpreter.) This evidence against Iran -- do you think that Iran is backing the insurgents to fight Americans in Iraq or also just funding these militias just to sabotage Iraq?</p> <p>GEN. CALDWELL: I think it's a combination of both. You know, again, I think they were real clear in Sharm el-Sheikh. There was a statement signed by all the parties present that everyone should allow Iraqis to decide Iraqis' future and that there should be no outside interference and there should be no support from outside elements to anybody other than the legitimate government of Iraq that's recognized by, you know, international standards and, you know, has been elected by the people themselves of Iraq. So that's what we would encourage everybody to do. They all signed that statement, and we would just encourage everybody to do that, so that Iraqis can decide Iraq's future.</p> <p>Okay. Thank you very much.</p>
<p>5/9/2007</p>	<p>U.S.: Iran helping some Sunni insurgents</p> <p>Associated Press</p> <p>May 9, 2007</p>	<p>BAGHDAD --A U.S. military spokesman said Wednesday that Shiite-dominated Iran is providing support to some Sunni insurgents fighting American forces in Iraq.</p> <p>Maj. Gen. William Caldwell said the military had credible intelligence to support the allegation but did not elaborate. He said the support to Sunni insurgents was limited to select</p>

	<p>groups, which he did not identify.</p> <p>"It's not all Sunni insurgents but rather we do know that there is a direct awareness by Iranian intelligence officials that they are providing support to some select Sunni insurgent elements," Caldwell told reporters.</p> <p>On Sunday, a U.S. general also said powerful armor-penetrating roadside bombs believed to be of Iranian origin were turning up in the hands of Sunni insurgents south of Baghdad.</p> <p>Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of the Army's Task Force Marne, said the presence of "explosively formed penetrators," or EFPs, in Sunni weapons caches suggests some degree of Iranian influence among Sunni as well as Shiite extremists.</p> <p>But Lynch, whose command covers the southern rim of Baghdad and mostly Shiite areas to the south, said it was unclear whether the Iranians were supplying the weapons directly or whether the Sunnis were buying them on the black market.</p> <p>Caldwell said the weapons issue was still being investigated, but "we do know that they're providing support in terms of financial support at this point."</p> <p>U.S. military officials have been saying for months that the Iranians were supplying EFPs to Shiite militias, despite strong denials by Tehran.</p> <p>Some Sunni insurgent groups are strongly anti-Iranian, blaming the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government for helping Iran expand its influence here.</p> <p>Caldwell also said that family members would be allowed to visit five Iranian detainees captured earlier this year in northern Iraq and the visit is likely to happen "very soon." He said the International Committee of the Red Cross had been told of the decision and names of potential visitors were being considered.</p> <p>The United States has accused the Iranians of having links to an Iranian Revolutionary Guard network that was supplying funds</p>
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		<p>and weapons to insurgents in Iraq.</p> <p>Iran denied they had any links to insurgents, saying the five men were diplomats who were engaged exclusively in consular work. The Iraqi government also has called for their release, saying the Iranians were involved in consular work.</p> <p>© Copyright 2007 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.</p>
<p>5/25/2007</p>	<p>Department of Defense New Briefing with Colonel Ricky Gibbs, Commander, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division</p> <p>May 25, 2007</p>	<p>AN EXCERPT FROM THE TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>MR. WHITMAN: That's correct. If there are EFPs that you're finding as part of your -- these IEDs that you're picking up.</p> <p>COL. GIBBS: How many -- what percentage we're finding, is that what you asked?</p> <p>Q If any?</p> <p>MR. WHITMAN: If you're finding any and if you can quantify that, that would be great.</p> <p>COL. GIBBS: Yeah, we're finding EFPs. It's probably about 25 -- and again, my numbers aren't exactly right -- but 15 to 20 percent is my guess on what we're finding. In all the IED attacks, approximately, 15 to 20 percent of those are EFPs.</p> <p>Q If they've gone up, IEDs have gone up, the overall percentage or number that they've gone up by?</p> <p>COL. GIBBS: No, I don't have the number off the top of my head how many they went up, but we can get that and get that to you.</p> <p>Q EFPs in JAM areas or have you been able to associate them with any groups? I'm wondering if they've migrated to Sunni hands.</p> <p>COL. GIBBS: What I'm seeing in my area is, they're predominantly al Qaeda.</p> <p>MR. WHITMAN: (Off mike) -- have already gone over our time, and we do want to be respectful of the colonel's time. We</p>

		appreciate you taking some time with us.
5/25/2007	<p>Multi-National Force-Iraq</p> <p>May 25, 2007 Release A070525b</p> <p>Coalition Forces Nab 20 Suspected Al-Qaeda Terrorists</p> <p>http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12012&Itemid=128</p>	<p>BAGHDAD, Iraq – Coalition Forces detained 20 suspected terrorists during several raids targeting al-Qaeda in Iraq around the country Friday morning.</p> <p>In Baghdad, Coalition Forces raided a house looking for a suspected al-Qaeda battalion commander. The ground force detained three suspected terrorists at the targeted location, including the alleged leader. Intelligence reports indicate he is responsible for numerous attacks in Baghdad, including assassinations, attacks on news media and attacks on the city’s infrastructure.</p> <p>Coalition Forces detained 11 suspected terrorists in an operation southwest of Baghdad targeting al-Qaeda leadership. One of the individuals detained is allegedly a close associate of a Libyan who facilitates the movement of foreign fighters in the area.</p> <p>In continuing operations to disrupt the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device network in Baghdad, Coalition Forces targeted a known explosives expert associated with the al-Qaeda in Iraq network. The individual is also known to have knowledge of explosively formed penetrators, or EFPs, and was recently promoted within the network. Coalition Forces detained two suspected terrorists from the target location.</p>
5/31/2007	<p>Multi-National Force-Iraq</p> <p>May 31, 2007 Release A070531a</p> <p>Three Suspected Terrorists Captured</p> <p>http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12098&Itemid=21</p>	<p>BAGHDAD, Iraq – Iraqi and Coalition Forces detained three suspected terrorists during operations in central and eastern Iraq Thursday morning.</p> <p>Iraqi and Coalition Forces detained two individuals in Sadr City during the first raid. They are believed to be members of the secret cell terrorist network known for facilitating the transport of weapons and explosively formed penetrators, or EFPs, from Iran to Iraq, as well as bringing militants from Iraq to Iran for terrorist training.</p> <p>Intelligence reports indicate one of the targeted individuals detained during the operation is suspected of providing facilitation and logistic support for trafficking weapons used in operations against Coalition Forces.</p> <p>In a separate raid in Khanaqin, Coalition Forces captured a suspected liaison to al-Qaeda in Iraq senior leaders, who assists in the movement of information and documents from al-Qaeda in Iraq leadership in Baghdad to al-Qaeda senior leaders in</p>

		<p>Iran.</p> <p>“We’re methodically disrupting terrorist networks in Iraq, and will continue to break down these networks so Iraqis can secure their own future,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Garver, MNF-I spokesperson.</p>
<p>7/13/2007</p>	<p>United States Army Special Operations Command News Service</p> <p>July 16, 2007 Release Number 070716-06</p> <p>Iraqi Forces Detain Al Qaeda Leader and EFP Facilitator in Samarra</p>	<p>SAMARRA Courtesy of CJSOTF-AP PAO, July 16, 2007) – Elements of the Iraqi Police detained the leader of an Al Qaeda cell in Samarra that facilitates the manufacture of improvised explosive devices (IED) and explosively formed penetrators (EFP) during an intelligence driven operation July 13. The targeted individual is allegedly responsible for an attack on a Coalition Forces convoy that killed one Coalition Forces soldier.</p> <p>With U.S. Special Forces present as advisors, the Iraqi Forces detained their primary target without incident. The primary target is reportedly in charge of a 50 member Al Qaeda terrorist cell and is directly involved with an EFP factory in Samarra.</p> <p>Iraqi Forces also detained a second individual believed to be a member of this cell. They also seized weapons, ammunition, computer, identification cards, passports and 3 million Dinars in Iraqi currency.</p> <p>One U.S. Special Forces soldier was slightly injured during the operation as the result of an IED strike.</p>
<p>7/13/2007</p>	<p>Iraq Raids Net Terrorists, Weapons; Sheiks, U.S. Leaders Meet</p> <p>American Forces Press Service</p> <p>Washington</p> <p>July 15, 2007</p>	<p>AN EXCERPT FROM THE ARTICLE:</p> <p>Also, elements of the Iraqi police detained the leader of an al Qaeda cell in Samarra that facilitates the manufacture of IEDs and explosively formed penetrators during an intelligence-driven operation July 13. The detainee, allegedly responsible for an attack on a convoy that killed a U.S. soldier, was detained without incident. He is reportedly in charge of a 50-member al Qaeda terror network and is directly involved with an EFP factory in Samarra.</p> <p>A second suspect was also detained. Weapons, ammunition, a computer, identification cards, passports and 3 million dinars in Iraqi money were confiscated.</p>

		<p>One U.S. soldier was slightly injured during the operation as the result of an IED strike.</p>
<p>9/22/07</p>	<p>Multi-National Corps-Iraq</p> <p>Release No. 20070923-03 September 23, 2007</p> <p>In two separate operations, Iraqi Security Forces, U.S. Special Forces detain eight suspected criminals</p> <p>Multi-National Corps – Iraq PAO</p> <p>http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14191&Itemid=21</p>	<p>BAGHDAD – In two early morning raids, Iraqi Security Forces detained eight suspected criminals Sept. 22 in Diyala and Tikrit.</p> <p>In the Diyala Province, Iraqi Special Operations Forces detained four suspected terrorists linked to a criminal financier and weapons trafficker. Intelligence reports that the regional financier facilitates weapons purchases with Iran in order to conduct trafficking operations that import improvised explosive devices, explosively formed penetrators and rocket-propelled grenades. In addition, he is alleged to have carried out extrajudicial killings of Sunnis in the Diyala area.</p> <p>The assault force seized a weapons cache that yielded a sub-machine gun with an ammunition drum, a G3 assault rifle with two magazines, three sets of body armor, various documents and computer accessories.</p> <p>In a separate raid in Tikrit, Soldiers from the 4th Iraqi Army Division detained four alleged criminals. Two of the detainees are believed to be responsible for numerous attacks against Coalition Forces including an Aug. 28 rocket-propelled grenade and small arms fire attack on a compound in Tikrit.</p> <p>The raid is also believed to have disrupted a possible forgery operation where food credits from the social welfare system were being criminally filtered to insurgents. The forgery operation provides terrorist operatives with paperwork that gives them “displaced persons status,” allowing terrorists to transit the region, receive support from social welfare systems and obtain legal access to setting up residences in new areas.</p> <p>While searching the objective, the scouts confiscated five weapons with ammunition and magazines, as well as sniper ammunition and forgery documentation.</p> <p>U.S. Special Forces served as advisers during both operations. No Iraqi or U.S. members were harmed in either operation.</p>
<p>10/2/2007</p>	<p>Multi-National Force-Iraq</p> <p>October 2, 2007 Press Release A071002a</p>	<p>BAGHDAD, Iraq – Coalition forces killed one terrorist, captured two wanted individuals and detained eight suspects during operations Tuesday targeting al-Qaeda in Iraq associates in central and northern Iraq.</p>

	<p>Coalition forces disrupt al-Qaeda network: one killed, 10 detained</p>	<p>Coalition forces conducted a precision operation targeting associates of al-Qaeda in Iraq senior leaders in Kirkuk. When the ground force arrived at the target building, they called for the building's occupants to come out and an armed man emerged. Perceiving hostile intent, Coalition forces engaged and killed the armed terrorist.</p> <p>Additional intelligence from the operation led to a follow-on location where Coalition forces targeted an alleged emir of foreign terrorists in the At Tamim province. The targeted individual is also believed to be involved in the use of explosively formed penetrators, or EFPs, against Coalition forces and was involved in recent car-bombing attacks in the area. The ground force detained one suspected terrorist on site without incident.</p> <p>In another operation, Coalition forces captured the alleged al-Qaeda in Iraq military emir of Muhmadiyah believed to be involved in weapons facilitation and attacks against Coalition forces. In addition to the targeted individual, the ground force detained two other suspected terrorists.</p> <p>Intelligence gained during previous operations led Coalition forces to Tarmiyah, where they conducted two coordinated operations and captured three suspected terrorists, including an alleged associate of the al-Qaeda in Iraq emir of the northern belt.</p> <p>East of Balad, Coalition forces targeted an associate of al-Qaeda in Iraq believed to be responsible for coordinating attacks against Coalition and Iraq security forces in the Salah ad Din province. One suspect was detained on site.</p> <p>In another operation in Samarra, Coalition forces targeted an associate of an al-Qaeda in Iraq senior leader involved in foreign terrorist facilitation who was killed during an operation Sept. 10. The ground force detained two suspected terrorists during the operation.</p> <p>"Every day we're removing terrorists from the ranks of al-Qaeda in Iraq," said Maj. Winfield Danielson, MNF-I spokesman. "We will continue to pursue individuals who facilitate and conduct attacks against the Iraqi people."</p>
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ⁱ Several large weapons shipments from elements of the Iranian regime to the Taliban have been intercepted by NATO forces. Former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the former Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, R. Nicholas Burns, have both stated that there was “clear” and “irrefutable” evidence of Iranian support for the Taliban. See, Jamey Keaten, “U.S. diplomat says NATO has intercepted Iranian weapons shipments to Taliban,” Associated Press Worldstream, June 13, 2007; Robin Wright, “Iranian Arms Destined for Taliban Seized in Afghanistan, Officials Say; 'Large' Shipment Said to Include Armor-Piercing Bombs,” *The Washington Post*, September 16, 2007, A19.