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Backgrounder #20

**Offensive Operations in Multi-National Division – Center
June, 2007 – January, 2008**

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Multi-National Division – Center: Areas of Operations Broken Down by Brigade¹:

- **2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division** is responsible for the immediate southeast of Baghdad between Highway 8 and the Tigris River. These areas include Arab Jabour and Hawr Rajab (which is on the outskirts of Baghdad near Highway 8). These Sunni areas were former strongholds of al-Qaeda in Iraq and were used to support insurgents in Baghdad.
- **3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division** is located immediately east of Baghdad between the Diyala river and the Tigris River in an area known as Mada'in Qada. This area is predominantly Shi'a and was used by Shi'a militias for resupply into Baghdad.
- **4th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division** is located in al-Iskandariyah and is responsible for the population centers along Highway 8 further south towards Karbala and al-Hillah. This was a major thoroughfare for insurgent resupply. Note: the 4th HBCT, 3rd ID recently replaced the 4th BCT, 25th ID.
- **3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division** is responsible for securing the areas to the southwest of Baghdad in north Babil province as well as some areas to the west of the Euphrates River. This was less of an insurgent stronghold and the 3rd BCT has been involved more in development projects as a result. Note: The 3rd BCT, 101st recently replaced the 2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Division.
- **3rd Brigade, Georgian Army** is located in al-Kut and is responsible for securing the traffic coming from Iran towards Baghdad in Wasit province. This has been a major thoroughfare of Iranian accelerants to violence moving into Iraq.



¹ Official areas of responsibility may be somewhat different than these areas, but these are the regions within which these brigades generally operate.

Multi-National Division – Center: Offensives under Operations Phantom Thunder and Phantom Strike

MND-C has had an overarching mission of blocking accelerants of violence (i.e. insurgents and insurgent equipment) from entering Baghdad through the southern and eastern belts of the city in order to support security operations in Baghdad.

Under Operation Phantom Thunder, MND-C moved into populations that had seen little to no coalition presence for two years. During that time, the populations had been ceded to the insurgents, who used that opportunity to entrench themselves very deeply and create safe havens and logistical hubs for operations in Baghdad. Operations Marne Torch and Marne Avalanche used large offensives to establish coalition presences in the areas to the immediate southeast and southwest of Baghdad and to root out al-Qaeda in Iraq from those areas. This required large offensive actions to begin to root out the insurgent presences in those areas.

Operation Phantom Strike, MND-C consolidated its territorial gains by building connections with locals and establishing Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) programs. Operations shifted in nature from large-scale offensives towards intelligence-driven targeted raids that relied upon air assault capabilities. These operations did not seek to increase the Coalition’s territorial gains, but rather to keep pressure on the insurgents and prevent them from reestablishing themselves in and around Baghdad.

Early January 2008 saw a transition to a new Corps-level offensive called Operation Phantom Phoenix. In MND-C this has brought on a new offensive called Operation Marne Thunderbolt.

Corps Level Operation (Throughout Iraq)	Phantom Thunder June 2007 - August 2007	
Division Level Operation (Throughout MND-C)	Marne Torch I June 2007 - July 2007	Marne Avalanche July 2007 - August 2007
Area of Concentration:	The agricultural areas along the Tigris River to the immediate southeast of Baghdad, particularly the Arab Jabour region.	The Highway 8 - Euphrates River corridor, stretching from the south near Mussayib through Iskandariyah and north to the Mahmudiyah
Objectives:	Clear Arab Jabour area of al-Qaeda in Iraq presence to remove safe haven and continue to support security operations in Baghdad.	Clear both Sunni and Shi'a extremist elements from the area to remove safe havens for extremists and continue to support security operations in Baghdad.
Units Involved:	<u>Coalition:</u> 2,000 Coalition Soldiers from the 2 nd BCT, 3 rd ID, 3 rd BCT, 3 rd ID, and 4 th BCT, 25 th ID <u>Iraqi Security Forces:</u> 1,000 Soldiers	<u>Coalition:</u> 5,000 Coalition Soldiers from the 2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Division, 4th BCT, 25th ID <u>Iraqi Security Forces:</u> 3,500 Soldiers from the 4 th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and the 8 th Iraqi Army Division
Results:	Killed 83, captured 278 insurgents; found numerous weapons caches. Disrupted insurgent operations in Arab Jabour.	Killed 16, captured 110 suspected insurgents, including 8 high value individuals. Disrupted insurgent operations in the areas southwest of Baghdad.

Corps Level Operation (Throughout Iraq)	Phantom Strike August 2007 - December 2007				
Division Level Operation (Throughout MND-C)	Marne Husky August 2007 – September 2007	Marne Torch II September 2007 – October 2007	Marne Anvil October 2007 – November 2007	Marne Courageous November 2007 – December 2007	Marne Roundup December 2007 – January 2008
Area of Concentration:	Tigris river valley, south of Arab Jabour, Hawr Rajab and Salman Pak (southeast of Baghdad)	Arab Jabour, Hawr Rajab (southeast of Baghdad)	Mada'in Qada (east of Baghdad)	Western bank of the Euphrates River (southwest of Baghdad)	Town of Khidr in north Babil Province, near Iskandariyah (southwest of Baghdad)
Objectives:	Use a series of air assaults to keep insurgents off-balance; enhance the mobility of U.S. forces areas where terrain creates opportunities for insurgent ambush and early warning.	Continue to attack al-Qaeda in Iraq within the Arab Jabour and Hawr Rajab areas.	Attack Jaysh al-Mahdi safe havens to prevent accelerants of violence from entering Baghdad.	Defeat extremists and AQI operatives on the western side of the Euphrates River, establish a coalition presence, and develop a CLC program.	Defeat 30 al-Qaeda operatives in north Babil province in the Euphrates River Valley.
Units Involved:	<u>Coalition:</u> 2 nd HBCT, 3 rd Infantry Division; 3 rd Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), 3 rd ID	<u>Coalition:</u> 2 nd HBCT, 3 rd ID <u>Iraqi:</u> 700-100 Concerned Local Citizens (CLCs)	<u>Coalition:</u> 3 rd HBCT, 3 rd ID <u>Iraqi:</u> 900 members of the National Police; 3,900 CLCs	<u>Coalition:</u> 3 rd BCT, 101 st Airborne; 4 th HBCT, 3 rd ID; 3 rd CAB, 3 rd ID <u>Iraqi:</u> 150 Iraqi Army forces. 70 CLCs	<u>Coalition:</u> 4 th HBCT, 3 rd ID; 3 rd BCT, 101 st Airborne <u>Iraqi:</u> Iraqi Army and Police; 80-100 CLCs
Results:	Killed 43, captured 80, suspected insurgents. Consolidation of gains in Arab Jabour and Salman Pak area with establishment of Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) groups	Killed or captured about AQI 250 personnel, including 3 high value individuals. found 30 IEDs, 40 caches Established Patrol Base Hawkes to expand reach further south into Arab Jabour	Killed 128, captured 65 suspected insurgents. Established Patrol Base Salie in Nahrwan to expand reach further east of Baghdad	Established Patrol Base in Osewat, allowing projection of force west of the Euphrates.	Discovery of 25 IEDs, 10 caches, Construction of Patrol Base Khidr to further extend reach into the Euphrates River Valley.

Multi-National Division – Center: Offensive under Operation Phantom Phoenix

Under Operation Phantom Phoenix, Coalition forces in Iraq again went on the offensive as they did under Operation Phantom Thunder, moving into areas and holding territories that previously served as sanctuaries for al-Qaeda in Iraq and other extremist groups.

Operation Phantom Strike had seen MND-C consolidate the gains it had made under Operation Phantom Thunder successfully. Under Operation Phantom Phoenix, the coalition’s offensive activities shifted again towards large-scale offensives. In MND-C, this was kicked off with a major bombing raid targeting al-Qaeda in Iraq safe-houses and defensive belts of deeply-buried IEDs further south in the Arab Jabour area. Unlike Operation Phantom Strike, this was followed by a major ground incursion of 850 soldiers of the 8th Division of the Iraqi Army. While not involved in gaining new territories, the 3rd HBCT, 3rd Infantry Division in Mada’in Qada is pushing to clear extremists out of the Salman Pak area, which is on the opposite side of the Tigris River, by mid-February, 2008. As in Arab Jabour, extremists were able to use Salman Pak as a major stronghold for an extended period of time.

Corps Level Operation (Throughout Iraq)	Phantom Phoenix January 2008 -
Division Level Operation (Throughout MND-C)	Marne Thunderbolt January 2008 -
Area of Concentration:	Southern Arab Jabour
Objectives:	Continue to clear the Arab Jabour area of al-Qaeda in Iraq further south in the Arab Jabour area, establish a permanent presence that will allow for continued security and stability in Baghdad.
Units Involved:	<u>Coalition:</u> 2 nd BCT, 3 rd ID, augmented with a Cavalry battalion from al-Anbar province; United States Air Force F-16s and B-1 bombers in major bombing raid.
Results:	<u>Iraqi Security Forces:</u> At least 850 Iraqi Army soldiers from the 8 th Iraqi army division, (As of 1/17/08) Killed 30, captured at least 15 insurgents (including one high value individual); found 15 weapons caches.