

# The Advisor



Reconnecting  
air force  
maintenance

# THE ADVISOR

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Some faces of Iraqi soldiers and police have been altered to protect their identities.

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## ON THE COVER

**An Iraqi airman installs a “Dash -95” aircart hose to a C-130E to check for possible leaks with the help of a Coalition advisor at the New Al Muthanna Air Base Sep. 18.**

Photo by U.S. Air Force  
Staff Sgt. Lucia Newman

# Iraqi president says country's forces ready to secure Baghdad

By Samantha L. Quigley  
American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** — The Iraqi government is ready to send whatever number of troops is needed to help secure Baghdad, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said Sept. 24.

“The commander and chief of the Iraqi Army can move the units of (the) army from different parts of Iraq to Baghdad,” Talabani told CNN’s John King, on the television program Late Edition. “Of course, our capital is Baghdad and we are very interested to secure (it).”

This would help satisfy senior Coalition leaders, such as Multi-National Division - Baghdad Commander U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James Thurman who made a recent statement that an additional six battalions of Iraqi soldiers, or about 3,000 troops, are needed to help quell unrest in Baghdad.

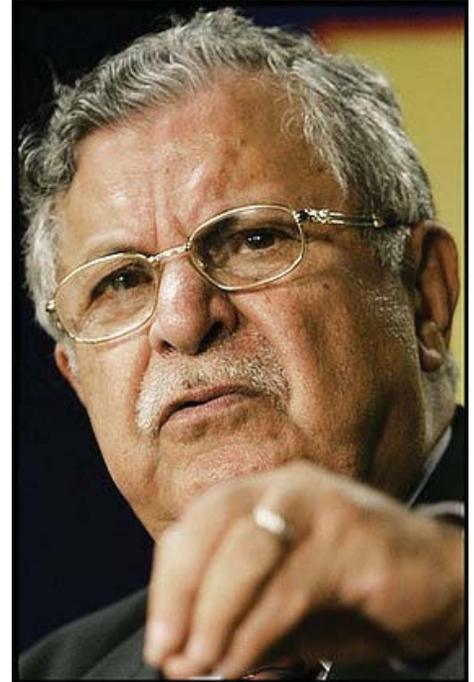
Talabani acknowledged security is an issue, but said it’s the country’s only issue and that life in Iraq has made a lot of progress after emerging from Saddam Hussein’s rule.

“The time of Saddam Hussein, hundreds of thousands were buried in mass graves ... and the Iraqi people were deprived from all kinds of democratic rights and free economy,” he said. “Now we have in Iraq only one problem, which is the problem of security.”

Talabani said the Iraqi people would continue to support the country’s army in preparation for replacing American forces in one province each month.

He also said he is sorry for the loss of American lives on behalf of his country, but that Iraq is grateful for the United States’ liberating efforts.

“We are very sorry for sacrifices of American forces in Iraq. I think that was the price of liberating Iraq and (millions) of Iraqis,” he said. “(The) American government did a very important (thing) when they



Courtesy photo

**An undated photograph of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani who was in Washington to speak with members of congress. Talabani discussed Iraq’s security situation on CNN’s “Late Edition” Sept. 24.**

liberated Iraq from the worst kind of dictatorship, which was (affecting) the peace and stability, not only of Iraqi people, but of the Middle East.”

Now that his country is no longer oppressed by Saddam Hussein, Talabani said Iraq is working to further peace and stability in the Middle East and to normalize relations with its neighbors. He recently visited neighboring Iran.

He also said he hopes that Iraq will be able to help heal the United States’ relations with Iran.

“We have good relations with Iran and (also) with the United States of America,” Talabani said. “We are thinking that, as much as we can, we must ... try to improve relations with the United States of America and Iran. This is the way we can achieve our goals and protect our national interest in the area.”

# Iraqi Air Force takes over first-line maintenance

By U.S. Air Force  
Staff Sgt. Lucia Newman  
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Although most of the focus has been rebuilding the Iraqi Army and Police, the Iraqi Air Force is slowly beginning to stand on its own.

The New Al Muthanna Air Base in Baghdad reached a milestone in September as the base took control of the first-line maintenance operations of their C-130Es from Coalition forces.

“I see this as the first step to branching off into our own air force,” said the Iraqi Air Force 23rd Squadron Engineering Flight commander. “This is a big step for us, because as we take control of our military, the next step is to take control of Iraq.”

First-line maintenance can be considered the first line of defense for the Iraqi Air Force’s cargo aircraft, ensuring they’re safe, reliable and ready to fly when pilots need them.

Maintenance within the Iraqi Air Force is divided into two categories at the base level: first-line, which equates closely to flightline or organizational maintenance in the U.S. Air Force; and second-line, the intermediate maintenance backshops. Within these two lines of maintenance are various



**An Iraqi airman performs a pre-flight inspection on a C-130E aircraft at New Al Muthanna Air Base, Sept. 19. The Iraqi Air Force currently has three C-130Es, and expects to receive another three by 2008.**



Photos by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Lucia Newman

**An Iraqi Air Force aircraft mechanic assigned to the 23rd Squadron at the New Al Muthanna Air Base and a Coalition advisor work together to find an oil leak while performing maintenance on a C-130E aircraft in Baghdad Sept. 19.**

specializations that equate closely to those found in the U.S. Air Force crew chiefs, engine mechanics, avionics, aircraft structural maintenance and aerospace ground equipment, as well as the planning, supply and aerial transport functions that support their operations.

Since January 2004, Iraqi airmen have been training with Coalition forces on the maintenance of the C-130E. Now, maintainers have developed to a point where more and more mechanics are trained and qualified to perform their tasks – getting the planes off the ground – and to train the newest mechanics joining their air force.

“They’ve gone from a point where everyone was working only in a classroom environment learning safety and theory of operations to taking over all responsibility for the launch, recovery and servicing of the aircraft – they do all of the daily executions,”

said U.S. Air Force Capt. Justin Barry, Coalition Air Force Transition Team maintenance team chief.

“We’ve been blessed because a lot of the (Iraqi) mechanics that work here have between 15 to 35 years of experience working on aircraft in the old Iraqi Air Force. So they’re quite capable of, and familiar with, maintaining the aircraft and its systems,” said Barry. “So for us it’s been about providing training and familiarizing them with the maintenance system that we’ve developed for the (C-130E) aircraft.”

The C-130E is an intra-theater airlifter with a turbo-prop engine system, which is considered to be very good for low altitude operations. Barry said the Iraqi Air Force was previously using Russian-modeled, straight-jet engine aircraft.

**See TRAINING, Page 5**

# Military leaders discuss operations in Baghdad

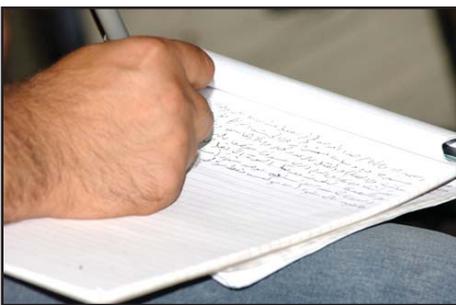
By U.S. Army  
Sgt. 1st Class Rick Brown  
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Iraqi and Coalition leaders met with Arabic and Western press Sept. 26 to discuss Operation Together Forward, the ongoing joint effort between the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Police, the National Police and Coalition forces. The operation is designed to help improve existing security conditions and stability in the nation's capitol.

Maj. Gen. Bashar Mahmoud Ayoub, commander of the 9th Iraqi Army Division, was joined at the press conference by the Adhamiyah District Police Chief, Iraqi Police Brig. Gen. Ahmed and 172nd Stryker Brigade Commander U.S. Army Col. Michael Shields.

Addressing the most recent operations in the Adhamiyah District neighborhoods of Shaab and Ur, all three leaders noted the improved stability and security of the area, but stated that work there is not complete. They were also adamant about the need for continued cooperation between the armed forces, the political leadership of Iraq and the Iraqi people.

According to Shields, during the Shaab and Ur operation that began Sept. 14, the combined team searched more than 36,000 buildings, including 23 mosques that Iraqi Security Forces were given permission to search. The operation led to the discovery of five



**A journalist takes notes during a press briefing Sept. 26 in Baghdad. Senior Iraqi Army, Police and Coalition leaders spoke to reporters about ongoing operations in the city.**



Photos by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Rick Brown

**Maj. Gen Bashar (foreground), 9th Iraqi Army Division commander, speaks to the press Sept. 26 about ongoing security operations in Baghdad. He was joined by the Adhamiyah District police chief, Brig. Gen. Ahmed.**

caches containing an undisclosed number of weapons and the capture of several detainees.

Bashar told reporters that the security forces would go wherever they are needed to protect Iraqi citizens, but that, "Neither the Ministry of Interior nor the Ministry of Defense would be able to provide an ultimate security level for this country without the assistance and the cooperation of the political leadership of this country."

Ahmed built on that belief, saying, "The people of Adhamiyah, the situation of Adhamiyah depends not only on the presence of the armed forces, it depends as well on the cooperation of the people of Adhamiyah."

Bashar talked about a united plan with the Coalition that includes a list of the Baghdad neighborhoods that most often come under violent and sectarian attacks, saying, "We go by that plan and we go everywhere that is considered a hotspot."

The united plan he spoke of is a result of input provided by political leadership, military leadership and those closest to

the violence – the citizens of Shaab and Ur – the people of Adhamiyah.

In these communities, residents have formed "Neighborhood Advisory Councils." The NAC's work with Iraqi and Coalition forces to help root out criminals in their community, and they lead efforts to identify essential services needed within their community, such as trash and debris removal, generator support and medical screening support.

According to Shields, the number one concern among these locals is security, with electricity a close second, and he says that's consistent across all Baghdad neighborhoods he's been in.

Shields said operations in the Adhamiyah District have reduced the amount of violence and have increased the perception of security in the area and have also set the conditions for Iraqi Security Forces to work with the NACs. But the bigger picture, he said, is more trust and confidence between area citizens and those who protect them.

**See LEADERS, Page 7**

# New training standards key to maintenance

## From TRAINING, Page 3

“The turbo prop engine runs at a constant speed, whereas the straight jet engine has a lag time,” Barry said. “So they chose this airlifter to fulfill the wide variety of needs for the Iraqi Air Force – from passenger movement to cargo movement, and in the future, air drops to some of the more austere environments.”

Barry said the years of experience the Iraqi maintainers have, as well as the fact that the C-130E is widely used throughout the U.S. Air Force, made it easier to put a training regimen together for the Iraqi Air Force.

“We follow a skill-level upgrade system that is very similar to the U.S. Air Force,” he said.

According to that system, a 3-skill level, also known as an apprentice, has graduated from technical school and is able to apply his job skills with supervision. A 5-skill level, or journeyman, is considered to be an experienced airman who is able to function as a front-line technician and initial trainer. The 7-skill level is awarded to an airman whose skills put him at craftsman level because of the years of experience he has in his field, and is responsible for supervising and training those in a lower skill level.

Mechanics are required to become task-qualified in their career field. Regardless of their previous experience they are required to master the lowest skill level before moving on.

Barry said Iraqi airmen will not complete the exact same qualifications as U.S. Airmen because the Iraqi Air Force has a different mission and different needs.

“But, by the time they hit the 7-skill level, essentially they’ve completed about 400 tasks,” he said.

Task certifications are completed through a combination of classroom study and on-the-job training, which provides personnel knowledge and skill qualifications required to perform

duty in their specialty.

Of the 81 mechanics, 49 have received their 7-skill level and 32 are still in upgrade training. After they’ve become proficient in their current skill level, they’ll receive a certificate of completion at the squadron’s skill level upgrade ceremony.

The 23rd Squadron Engineering Flight commander said task

certification is a significant step for his mechanics – both officers and enlisted – because now each airman is receiving training on his own responsibilities.

“Although officers know a lot about the mechanics of an aircraft, they now have to take a step back and get into a managerial role and allow their enlisted troops to run the show,” the commander said. “Our NCOs are now able to take pride in the work they do,” he continued.

Their pride does not stem from just being qualified, but also from other challenges they’ve overcome in getting to this point. “All our mechanics now know English, work with the Americans and eat American food; we’ve become a family,” the commander said.

“Also, all our guys have experience in maintenance, but now they have a technical order (task certification) in the work,” the commander said. “This means they will receive even more training in their skill. And the third, and the most significant, is the new system,” he said.

The new system is one in which enlisted mechanics have greater levels of training and responsibility. In the previous Iraqi Air Force all work that was performed on an aircraft had to be monitored by a commissioned engineering officer.

Now, the enlisted mechanics and warrant officers have the training, the skills and the responsibilities to not only perform the work, but to act as inspectors and evaluators.

As the Iraqi Air Force develops and gains its own identity, Iraqi airmen give credit for their continued success to a new brother.

“We (America and Iraq) were enemies in the war,” said the commander. “Now we’re brothers in peace.”



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Lucia Newman

**An Iraqi airman performs a maintenance check on a C-130E aircraft at New Al Muthana Air Base, Baghdad, Sept. 19.**

# Sending waves to strengthen communication

By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Lucia Newman  
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

**TAJI, Iraq** — As Iraqi forces take over more and more operations, Coalition forces are finding themselves taking a back seat to teaching and training Iraqi troops.

The Signal School at Taji is a multi-service school consisting of army, special operations forces, air force, national police and border enforcement students. The school currently has 60 Iraqi instructors teaching basic communications skills with only three Coalition advisors.

“Our role is strictly advising. We do not get into the day-to-day operations of the school,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Don Schlomer, Iraqi Army Signal School senior Coalition advisor. “And that’s become more evident lately – the last problem we had here at the school, we weren’t even aware they fixed it.”

Located in Taji, the school’s mission has been to improve soldiers’ skills on four radio systems: Barrett, Motorola, Harris and Cordon. In addition, students learn basic computer skills and the fundamentals of electricity and radio waves.

According to Schlomer, this will enhance their communications. When Ministry of Interior students are in class, the curriculum is focused on Motorola and Barrett systems because that is what the police force uses. But they also learn the other systems so that they can communicate with army personnel during combined operations.

“We teach the basics here – how to run and operate the computer,” said Iraqi Army Master Sgt. Kadam, a Signal School automation instructor. “Computer classes are important because many of the radios need to be programmed through the computer, so we start there first.”

Computer training includes basic Windows operations, word processing, file manipulation and radio programming via computer.

After students have grasped the basics of computers, they are introduced to handling the radio systems. They first learn automation before moving on to antennas and theory of propagation – the concept of sound wave transmission through the air – which are taught simultaneously.

“Once they’ve completed the course, they’re not experts, but they are skilled enough to do their jobs well,” Schlomer said. “After we’ve finished automation, antennas and theory, we spend almost two weeks with the radio system, teaching them every aspect of how it functions.”

By the time they leave the school, students have a good understanding of how the radios operate, how to program them and how to configure them into a network. “We are providing them a capability that they can actually talk from Mosul down to Basrah,” Schlomer said.



Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Gerald Ostlund

**An Iraqi soldier learns about the windows software during the automation class at the Signal School in Taji Sept. 10.**

He commented that the skills the students are learning are setting them up to be better Iraqi citizens, regardless if they stay in the military or go back into the civilian sector.

“The most important thing they are taught is that learning a hard skill always builds confidence in them,” said Schlomer. “Once they get that self-confidence, they can learn anything.”

Currently, instructors focus only on teaching radio installation and operation, but by the end of the year they will begin teaching system maintenance as well. The course will consist of three phases: classroom, field training and advanced communication.

**See SCHOOL Page 7**

# Operation leaders say cooperation is key

## From LEADERS, Page 4

And while he admitted that a lot of work remains for the neighborhoods of Shaab and Ur, Shields noted that, “The majority of the people are happy to see us and look forward to better security in this area – they are tired of the militia violence, the kidnappings and the murders.”

He said the essential services work completed so far, tells the story – 135 generators have been distributed to schools in Shaab and Ur, and specifically, to locations that the NAC chairman requested. In addition, more than 2,000 school kits have been delivered and 32 schools have been identified for renovation or for being completely rebuilt.

Contractors are now in the community removing trash, rubble and debris to include abandoned vehicles from the streets, and local contracts have resulted in hiring more than 2,000 workers in the area according to Shields, who added, “And this is just the beginning.”

To help establish presence, the Iraqi Army and Police have set up checkpoints around the neighborhoods, trying to control movement in and out by threat forces. “We continue to target

those who conduct criminal activities, kidnappings and violent murders, and no one is above the rule of law,” Shields said. “These are the people that bring instability and unnecessary suffering to the honest citizens that want to provide for their families.”

Shaab and Ur make up only the second area in Baghdad to be cleared by Bashar’s troops during Operation Together Forward – the first was the Ameriyah neighborhood in the Monsour District – and Bashar readily admits that terrorists groups have not been completely removed. “They still have activities in other areas of Baghdad,” he said. “Even with the clearing operations in these two areas, the terrorist groups will try to come back into the Adhamiyah area.”

Shields added, “If that’s true and they come back, they’ll face the same threat that they faced over the last 10 days – we’re continuing to target and hunt those that are a threat to the security of the people.”

Bashar candidly said his instructions are clear. “The orders that we received by the Iraqi armed forces at the beginning of this operation are that anybody who is armed and that threatens the security

of the people on the streets of Baghdad – these types of people are targets of this clearing operation,” he said.

Bashar’s 9th Mechanized Division currently has responsibility for a large part of Baghdad and he believes the city is the key to winning the war. “Baghdad is the capitol – the political leadership is in Baghdad,” he said. “For that reason the terrorists are trying to attack Baghdad all the time to show the people that the political leadership is weak, and for that reason, the security operation in Baghdad has the priority over all of Iraq.”

The operation in Shaab and Ur now moves into a “protect and secure” phase, allowing more work to be done on essential services. Shields said the Iraqi Police will be critical in providing security for the area during this stage

Ahmed seemingly understands this well and looks to the continued combined efforts of the Adhamiyah District police and the Coalition. “It depends also on providing the civil services for the people,” he commented. “Providing all these together will achieve the security matter, and we all trust and hope that our people are true Iraqis – that they would like to and hope to live in peace and prosperity.”

## School provides avenue for students to give back

### From SCHOOL, Page 6

“Install, operate and maintain should be the focus of the school,” Schlomer said. “We’re already teaching them the I (install) and the O (operate). But in order to keep the equipment operating, you should know how to conduct preventive maintenance checks and services – so now we’ll teach them the M (maintenance),” he explained.

The school’s five-week long course is said to be challenging because many students are enrolling with no previous experience in this field. However, giving them the skills does not ensure they’ll be put to use in the Iraqi Army.

While some of the course graduates may not get to practice their craft immediately upon returning to their unit, course leaders say the majority of them still want to learn more about computers and radio systems.

Maji, a 21 year old Iraqi soldier, volunteered to enroll in the Signal School because he wanted to find a positive way to help his country and the Iraqi Army, even though, he

said, computers and radios were not his first choice.

“My passion comes from wanting to get more knowledge,” Maji said with the help of an interpreter. “My unit will get new equipment and because no one knows how to use it, we have to take it to the Americans to fix. So I wanted to be able to help by learning how to fix our own equipment,” he said.

And Maji said even if he doesn’t stay in the Iraqi Army, he’ll be able to use the skills he’s learned to better his family’s life and his community.

“The more knowledge you have, the better you’ll be able to find a job and be a better person,” he said.

Schlomer agreed and said the skills soldiers learn can only have a positive return.

“We’re educating the Iraqi soldiers to better themselves,” he said, “whether they use the skills we’ve taught them in their specific career fields or not, when they leave here they are better suited to go and positively give back to the Iraqi community.”

## Iraqi Security Forces / in brief

### Soldiers discover two large weapons caches

**MOSUL** — Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division, along with Coalition forces, detained four suspected insurgents and discovered a large weapons cache during a raid in Mosul Sept. 27.

During a search of the residence, the joint forces discovered a crawl space in the roof which revealed a hidden weapons cache.

The cache contained 41 rocket-propelled grenades, three RPG launchers, nine rifles, one sniper rifle, two mortar tubes and several military-style maps and propaganda.

A second cache, hidden behind a 16 inch-thick concrete wall in the basement of the building, was discovered when the soldiers snuck up on the suspects and overheard them talking about it.

The second weapons cache was considerably larger than the first and contained grenades, ammunition, machine guns and mortar rounds.

There were no injuries during the course of the operation.

— *Multi-National Division – Iraq Public Affairs Office*

### Iraqi Security Forces capture two terrorists

**BAGHDAD** — Iraqi Security Forces captured two individuals suspected of kidnapping and murdering Iraqi civilians during an early-morning raid near Tarmiya Sept. 26.

The raid was part of Operation Together Forward.

The suspects are believed to belong to a terror cell that commits acts of violence against innocent Iraqis, in addition to having ties to al-Qaida in Iraq insurgent forces and have allegedly targeted Coalition forces in improvised explosive device attacks.

Iraqi forces detained the suspects without incident.

No injuries or damages were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs Office*

### Iraqi Security Forces target IED cell

**HASWAH** — Iraqi Security Forces captured six terrorists suspected of building improvised explosive devices and targeting Coalition forces with those IEDs, during a raid near Haswah Sept. 26.

The suspects all had outstanding Ministry of Interior arrest warrants and were believed to be responsible for an IED attack that resulted in the death of a U.S. Soldier.

Iraqi Security Forces raided the suspected terrorist's residence and captured the six wanted individuals without incident.

Components for building IEDs and a vehicle that tested positive for exposure to military grade explosives were discovered during the search of the residence.

No injuries or damages were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs Office*

**Iraqi and Coalition Forces assigned to the Air Reaction Force brace against the prop wash of an approaching helicopter at a landing zone at the Basrah Airport Sept. 27.**



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Crawford

## Iraqi Security Forces / in brief

### Iraqi Police capture two terrorists

**GHAZALIYAH** — Iraqi Police captured two individuals during a raid in Ghazaliyah Sep. 25 who were suspected of promoting sectarian violence by kidnapping and murdering Iraqi citizens.

Iraqi Police conducted simultaneous raids on separate residences and captured the two men without incident.

Both men are suspected of recruiting and leading members of a cell involved in the murder of civilians. They are also believed to have conducted these criminal actions for an illegal armed group in the area.

No injuries or damages were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs Office*

### Iraqi Army captures illegal armed group

**BAGHDAD** — Iraqi Army and Coalition forces encountered gunfire and rocket attacks during an early morning raid in southwestern Baghdad Sept. 24. The attack came from suspected insurgents associated with illegal armed groups.

The joint forces detained 12 suspects connected with attacks against Iraqi citizens and Iraqi Security Forces. They are also suspected of establishing illegal checkpoints and armed patrols around a building used to construct improvised explosive devices.

Iraqi citizens who have questioned or disagreed with these actions have allegedly been kidnapped, tortured and murdered.



Photo by British Cmdr. Jane Allen

**An Iraqi Navy aluminium “fast-boat” patrols in the Um Qasr Waterway Sept. 17. The Iraqi Navy also uses larger patrol boats to work with Coalition warships in the North Arabian Gulf, safeguarding Iraq’s maritime interests and oil platforms.**

Iraqi Security Forces received numerous RPG, hand grenade and small-arms fire during the raid. Fire was received from several fighting positions. Iraqi Security Forces engaged the attackers, killing one suspect.

Two Iraqi soldiers were wounded during the attack.

The raid was conducted in connection with Operation Together Forward.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs Office*

### Iraqi and Coalition troops detain 25 terrorists

**YUSUFYAH** — Soldiers from 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, along with Coalition forces, detained 25 suspected terrorists and seized a weapons cache southwest of Yusufiyah Sept. 23 during Operation Hurricane Wind.

During the operation, which targeted a mortar cell, the combined forces captured nine 60 mm mortar rounds, a 60 mm mortar system, a Dishka heavy machinegun, three rocket-propelled grenade launchers, a Katusha rocket and multiple AK-47 assault rifles.

No injuries or damages were reported.

— *Multi-National Division – Iraq Public Affairs Office*

### Soldiers detain 21 suspected terrorists

**BAGHDAD** — Iraqi Army and Coalition forces detained 21 suspected terrorists in separate incidents in several areas of Baghdad Sept. 23.

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division were attacked by terrorists using rocket-propelled grenades and machine gun fire in an area south of Baghdad.

The soldiers engaged the attackers and detained eight suspected terrorists.

One Iraqi soldier was killed during the attack.

In a separate incident, Iraqi and Coalition forces stopped eight vehicles attempting to speed through a checkpoint south of Baghdad.

A search of the vehicles revealed several illegal weapons and led to 13 suspected terrorists being detained.

— *Multi-National Division – Iraq Public Affairs Office*

### Iraqi Army captures members of AQIZ

**SAMARRA** — Iraqi Security Forces captured two al-Qaida in Iraq members during a raid in Samarra Sept. 22.

The Suspects were wanted for attacks against Iraqi and Coalition forces.

The individuals are believed to be responsible for improvised explosive device and sniper attacks against Iraqi police, Iraqi soldiers and Coalition forces.

An additional 13 suspected insurgents were detained during the raid.

A cache was also discovered during the raid containing a large amount of mortar ammunition and weapons.

No injuries or damages were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs Office*