



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Interactive Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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Admiral: Iraq fight 'winnable'



Rear Adml. Mark Fox, communications director, MNF-I, speaks to bloggers via telephone Friday. Official DoD photo.

BAGHDAD — While the situation in Iraq is challenging, it is “winnable,” U.S. Navy Rear Adml. Mark Fox told a group of online journalists and bloggers Friday by telephone.

Fox, who has flown combat and contingency missions over Iraq in Operations Desert Storm, Southern Watch and Iraqi Freedom, is now communications director for Multi-National Force, Iraq.

“Sectarian violence is now the gravest threat to our strategic objectives in Iraq, and to be honest, Iraq is a more complex strategic problem entering 2007 than it was this time last year,” he said.

However, he noted, he’s seen cause to believe the struggle is winnable.

“I draw hope from the fact that we are joined, not opposed, by the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people in this struggle,” Fox said. “In polling conducted in November, 89 percent of Iraqis nationwide agreed with the statement: ‘My first loyalty is to my country rather than my sect, ethnic group, or tribe.’”

Fox said he’s pleased to be “working in partnership with the liberated people of Iraq as they work to build a stable, secure, and self-governing country.”

The fact that more Iraqis are joining police forces is cause for optimism, he said. In December, 1,115 Iraqi men signed up to join the Police Forces. “To put this in context,” Fox said, “eight months ago we had zero recruit

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Commander's Commentary:



Progress in Iraq: Moving Forward

By Gen. George Casey, Commander, MNF-I

Today Iraqis are poised to assume responsibility for their own security by the end of 2007, still with some level of support from us. The path that...

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Soldiers, Iraqis work to halt corruption

BAYJI — Providing security for facilities with economic and strategic importance has been one of the primary missions of Soldiers serving here. Helping Iraqis stem the corruption that was commonplace during Saddam Hussein’s reign often goes hand in hand with that mission.

When the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, deployed last August in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, leaders saw fit to place the task of providing security for the Bayji Oil Refinery to the paratroopers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry

Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, in hopes of preventing corruption and ensuring security. Capt. Kwenton Kuhlman, Company B’s commander, works diligently trying to end the corruption at the refinery and to help form a foundation which incoming units could continue to build on.

The Bayji Oil Refinery is one of the three largest refineries in Iraq, producing more than 75 percent of Iraq’s refined products, making it one of the more important infrastructures in the country.



A Soldier mans a checkpoint near the Bayji Oil facilities. Official Department of Defense photo.

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Thank You,
MNF-I Web Team