

IRAQI DESTINY

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Joint efforts bring local food to Iraqis

Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis
22nd MPAD

Governmental and Non-governmental agencies have been working together to help Iraqi food distribution agents get food to the Iraqi people.

The food distribution began Tuesday, according to Brig. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, assistant division commander (operations), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). "More than 40,000 flour sacks have been delivered to about thirteen shires in the area so far."

"If Mosul is the bread basket of Iraq then the bread should be available to all the people of Iraq," Freakley said. "As these programs come together, we need to show that food organizations here can

distribute anything that is put before them"

The upcoming Mosul harvest is scheduled to be sent to the mills helping fill the silos and feed the people.

This is a time to restore the faith of Mosul people, and show them that the Mosul area can return to a normal way of life, he said.

There have been some issues of security with the food agents in Mosul. They were afraid to take their trucks to distribution points because of the looting.

"Trucks have been forced off the road and their contents have been taken. This has happened with both propane and flour," said 1st Lt. Tyler Vanhorn, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Division, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

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Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

An Iraqi flour mill worker loads a truck in Mosul, Iraq with sacks of flour May 13, 2003, for distribution to the people of Iraq.



Pfc. Thomas Day

A patient is helped onto a United Arab Emirates Air Force C-130 by doctors and workers of Red Crescent. Red Crescent is supporting allied missions to airlift patients with medical emergencies to U.A.E.

Gulf neighbors lend hand to Iraqi sick, wounded

Pfc. Thomas Day
40th PAD

With medical facilities in and around Mosul severely behind in pediatric medications and often unable to provide adequate healthcare for medical emergencies, the tiny country of United Arab Emirates has teamed up with American forces to jumpstart medical supplies and save patients in urgent need.

A U.A.E. Air Force C-130 airplane airlifted 10-12 tons of pediatric supplies to the city of Mosul Tuesday, then picked up five patients suffering from medical issues that could not be resolved in Mosul, ranging from lower limb paralysis to separate cases of severe eye injuries.

"It shows that this isn't just a U.S. effort, this is several countries that are working together to bring Iraq back to normalcy," said Brig. Gen. Edward Sinclair, assistant division commander (support), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Sinclair was on hand to greet workers of the Mosul chapter of Red Crescent, the Muslim equivalent of Red Cross, who is supporting the airlift missions. "Our main thing," according to Doctor Jaman al Kaapi, "is to bring food and medication to the children of the hospitals."

Sinclair commented that American forces have been instrumental in the rebuilding process for the people of Iraq, including restoring fuel and water to the people of Mosul. "This is part of

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Pfc. Thomas Day

The Mosul Dam, formerly the Saddam Dam, provides much of the electricity for Northern Iraq and Baghdad.

Mosul Dam oiled, inspected

Pfc. Thomas Day
40th PAD

The Mosul Dam, formerly the Saddam Dam, is now receiving emergency repairs with the help of the 431st Civil Affairs Battalion, Little Rock, Ark. The dam, located roughly 40 kilometers north of Mosul, supplies power for cities all across Iraq and was in danger of shutting down after the overthrow of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The soldiers of the 431st ensured that a specific type of turbine oil, T-46 oil made by Shell, was delivered to the dam from Kuwait. The oil was paid for before the war.

With the dam's foundation holding tenuously, the 431st is also overseeing operations aimed at restoring the foundation by simply injecting cement into the dam's base.

"These operations are required for continued operation and electrical generation at the facility," said Master Sgt. William McGunkin, 431st Civil Affairs public works and utilities team leader. The dam's four turbines, according to McGunkin, have the capacity to generate up to 750 megawatts of power.

With power still off on many streets throughout Iraq, the 431st mission may pack quite a punch in the continuing effort to rebuild Iraqi communities after the second Gulf War. Power lines connecting the dam to energy needs in Baghdad were destroyed during allied missions and are in the process of being restored, according to McGunkin.

Operations guaranteeing the stability of the dam will continue, with local civilian authorities manning the job. "They're pretty self sufficient," said Staff Sgt. Trice Ellis, 431st Civil Affairs Battalion. "The whole problem was logistics."

Civil Affairs addresses Mosul's public transit issues

Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

Soldiers with the 431st Civil Affairs Battalion visited a number of garages housing public transportation May 14 to discuss management and any problems that may have arisen.

While most of these sites were running smoothly, one had a few kinks, according to Command Sgt. Maj. Edward Barnhill, 431st CA Bn.

"One of the garages had a

guy who had placed himself in charge based on past ties with the Ba'ath Party," Barnhill said. "He has his own bus line that is charging more than three times what the government buses are charging for a ride."

A part of the day's operations involved urging all local transportation officials to denounce any ties they may still have with the former Ba'ath Party.

The government buses currently charge 25 dinar while the other charges 100. "This is highway robbery," said Spc. Kevin Fletcher, 431st CA Bn.

"Now that the government buses are up and running, he has been trying to stop them so he won't lose money."

In an attempt to stop the government buses, threats have been issued to drivers and their families, according to Fletcher. "We're trying to establish that threats will not be tolerated in a democratic society," he said.

Keeping with the idea of democracy in Iraq, they have no means of trying to shut down the man's operation. "We are giving the public the right to choose which bus

they want to ride," said Barnhill.

Aside from this problem, other objectives involved letting the managers know who to report to if they were facing any problems. "They need to report to the military authority or the local law enforcement for any problems they may face," Barnhill said.

Getting public transportation back on its feet is a task to benefit the poor, Barnhill added. "We're trying to help the government buses so the average person can get to and from work," he said.

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Kurdish, Arab farmers agree

In a private meeting, farmers split harvest profits

Iraq's fertile crescent, oft referred to as the birthplace of civilization, may today be closer to a new birth—of democratic society.

Arab and Kurd representatives met in the important farming community of Makhmor, roughly central to Mosul, Erbil and Kirkuk, to settle a farmland dispute stemming back to the "Arabization" policies of the Ba'ath Party regime.

Infantrymen of the 101st Airborne Division secured the meeting area, Apache and Black Hawk helicopters flew overhead as a show of force, and a crowd of Kurds gathered chanting, "We don't want them! We don't want them," referring to the Arab farmers now living on land once theirs. One banner read, "Thank you to the Coalition Forces for freeing us, now keep the usurpers off our ground."

Elected representatives of the regions affected by the farming dispute met with Brig. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, assistant division operations commander, 101st Abn. Div., who would serve as chief mediator. Attending were Saad Abdulla, agricultural minister for the Kurdistan region; Khanim Al Basso, mayor of Mosul; Akram Mintik, mayor of Erbil, Sheik Al Said Najim, the Arabic farmers' representative, Khalid Saaed, the Kurdish farmers' representative, and Abdul Rahman Belaf Al Barazanji, the district manager for Makhmor.

At one point early in the meeting, the

delegates asked if they could break from the U.S.-led discussion and have a private Arab-Kurdish meeting.

"We said, 'By all means,'" Freakley said. "They had a caucus, if you will, in a small room with a small group, for about 40 minutes alone. They came out with a signed document."

The resulting Makhmor Accord may be the first democratic document signed into law in northern Iraq, if not the country, said Freakley, who hopes that the peaceful, democratic solution will be the model for the rest of Iraq, which is beset with historical, ethnic and religious divisions.

The Makhmor Accord's five points provided for the fair sharing of money from the sale of this year's wheat and barley crops and, because they did not call for the expulsion of Arabs, may have strengthened the Arab-Kurd relationship.

According to the first point, in the area outside Makhmor the owners of the land and the farmers would split the proceeds in half. In the contentious area of Makhmor, they decided to give 55 percent to the Arab farmer and 45 percent to the Kurdish Farmer.

Going into the meeting, the Kurdish position was to give Kurdish farmers and land owners 100 percent of the revenue from this year, and leave the Arabs nothing. In fact, Kurds also wanted to be repaid for more than ten years of lost revenues in their land.

"This is quite a concession on the part

of the Kurds," Freakley said. "I think they wanted to use this harvest as an example, in a new time of freedom, of being able to work together as Iraqis, Arab and Kurd."

In the second point, the delegates decided that regardless of who owned the combine used to reap the harvest, the owner of the land would pay for the combine to be employed.

The third point states that all the barley harvested to date would be brought to a silo, secured by the 101st Airborne Division, and split between the owners and the farmers to ensure fairness.

Fourthly, the harvest would be stopped until all of the farmers went to the local town leadership of Makhmor and registered for the harvest.

The fifth and final point declared that anyone who brings a combine to the area could compete to harvest the crop. This would include Arab farmers from the Mosul area going down to Makhmor, a Kurdish area, and bidding on each field.

After the agreement was reached, each leader took his turn speaking to the crowd in support of the accord, drawing nearly as much applause as there was rancor before the meeting.

"There will be people that are very disappointed," Freakley said. "I think there will also be people that understand that instead of some arbitrary whim of an oppressive dictator being carried out, that they are being governed by law, elected officials, and principled men who have agreed to have the best outcome for all

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"Food" from page 1

The truck drivers who work for local food agents fear certain tribal groups in the area, because of the pillaging. U.S. forces have been supplying security for food agents traveling on the roads throughout northern Iraq to deter any looters.

"We've been making sure the trucks carrying supplies get to their destination safely," Vanhorn said.

Several organizations that are currently in Iraq have

been working together to regain what the Iraqi people had before the war and then make it better.

He said, "If the systems don't change a little, then what's going to be the response when down the road the people are saying, how is my life any better?"

Five of the ten major silos in the area are not operational, and scales and computer systems were looted

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a larger effort."

Powdered milk, cereal and biscuits along with medications were delivered to an air base in Mosul, then loaded onto several trucks to be distributed to local medical facilities.

Missions helping restore sufficient healthcare to Mosul will continue for the next four months, according to Maj. Steve Lyell, 431st Civil Affairs Battalion. "We are looking at production

facilities for medicine, hospitals and clinics...these shipments from U.A.E. will help us out a lot."

The 431st Civil Affairs Battalion now serves as a liaison, according to Lyell, between American forces (often the 101st Airborne) and non-governmental organizations such as Red Crescent.

"Those organizations are then able to apply their expertise to help the population," Lyell remarked.

Iraq, Syria border crossing opened

The blue passenger bus laden with boxes rumbled through the gap in the concrete wall topped with barbed wire, past the painted face of former Syrian ruler Hafez al Assad, past the lone beige-uniformed Syrian border guard, and drove into Iraq, becoming the first trade vehicle to legally cross into Iraq in nearly two months.

A trade accord governing the reopening of the Rabia border station was signed in the tiny border town Wednesday by Mosul interim mayor Ghanim Al-Baso, Mosul customs minister Turkey Hazaa'a and Sheikh Fenar Ahmad Sfwok of the local Al-Shammari tribe. It was endorsed by Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Coalition forces in northern Iraq.

"Today, everybody wins," Petraeus said.

With the resumption of trade, businesses will profit, the people will be able to obtain necessary goods, competition will drive prices down, and the government will have more funds to operate on, he said.

Petraeus also signed an address to the Syrian border officials on the other side of the crossing, notifying them the Iraqi side of the border was open for trade and the customs office was authorized by Coalition forces to perform its duties, encouraging the Syrian office to open its border to trade as well, Petraeus said.

The agreement was a product of meetings between Mosul officials and the Al-Shammari tribe, gathered together by Col. Michael S. Linnington, commander of the 101st division's 3rd Brigade,

and Lt. Col. Lee Fetterman, commander of 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade. Negotiations and meetings between business officials and faction leaders across the province also played a part in restoring local trade.

"We do appreciate Col. Linnington for facilitating the discussion that led to the agreement. But he will be the first to say that all he did was get everyone in the same room," Petraeus said to local leaders during a celebratory lunch after the signing. "So today we salute you. This is your achievement."

Last week, Petraeus was alerted to a potential crisis by Mosul leaders because the border with Syria was closed. The region, heavily dependent on imports of fuel, raw materials and consumable items, was feeling the strain of the lack of trade from Syria.

"Frankly, we couldn't wait for Baghdad to try and get this process started," said Col. Richard O. Hatch, division staff judge advocate. "The commanding general, exercising his authority as Coalition forces commander in northern Iraq and relying on a statement from Gen. (Tommy) Franks, (commander, Central Command,) that all barriers to movement of people and goods must come down, directed the customs officials and customs police to open their office."

Petraeus met with Hatch to find out what could legally be done to reopen the border. They carefully researched restrictions on trade according to U.S. law and United Nations Security Council resolutions and reinforced the authority of those regulations in the



Pic. James Matise

From left -- Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, 101st Airborne Division, Ghanim Al-Baso, interim mayor of Mosul and the Nineveh province, Mr. Turkey Hazaa'a, chief of the Mosul customs office, and Sheikh Fenar Ahmad Sfwok, sheikh of the Al-Shammari tribe and government of Rabin, sign an agreement regarding the reopening of the Rabia border crossing with Syria Tuesday.

accord, saying that nothing in the agreement is intended to supercede those regulations, Hatch said.

"We ensured we were not in any form attempting to skirt or bypass any existing rules and laws," Hatch said.

The language of the agreement calls for bona fide traders to be allowed access to Iraq, bringing in necessary items such as fuel, building materials, machinery and parts for industrial and agriculture equipment, and personal consumables. Import and export of such items was defined in the agreement as "legal trade," Hatch said.

Banned imports include narcotics and other contraband considered illegal by U.S. law, military equipment and "dual-use" items banned under U.N. resolutions, Hatch said.

"The agreement also directs customs police to prevent travel into Syria of any people Coalition forces are looking for," Hatch said. "(Border officials) will interdict such persons and provide support for the interdiction of drugs and contraband. The only thing that will come in is legal trade."

Nothing is currently being exported into Syria, since their side of the border remains closed for now, but the agreement also provides for the export of items allowed by U.S. law and U.N. resolutions. The only exception to this is the added prohibition of liquid propane gas exports, used for cooking, because of the current shortage on the local market, according to the agreement.

Fetterman will be the ultimate authority over the customs and border operations as the senior Coalition commander in the area. The Al-Shammari tribe, who operated as a private border patrol during the war, will continue to play a large role in the operations, Hatch said.

"(Fetterman) will be assisted by a deputy manager from the Iraq customs minister's office here in Mosul, and by a representative of the area tribe," Hatch said. "The agreement calls for five Mosul customs officials to be present at all times, and directed the employment of 25 members of the local tribe."

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the people in that area.”

At the close of World War I, Great Britain carved Iraq out of parts of the defunct but ethnically diverse Ottoman Empire. The agriculturally rich north was included because the fledgling Iraqi state had few natural resources. Kurds who hoped for an independent state were crushed by the decision, and from then on Arab-run governments in Baghdad promoted the expulsion of non-Arabs from the region to solidify control.

After its rise to power in 1968, the Ba’ath Party proved no different, instituting what Kurds call “Arabization.” Since then, more than 200,000 Kurds were expelled into the far north of Iraq, according to the Erbil-based Committee for Confronting Arabization in Kurdistan.

Arabization, called “nationality correction” by Ba’ath Party authorities, increased after Operation Desert Storm in 1991, when Kurds were periodically given the chance to declare themselves Arabs or be deported north of the no-fly zone. Southern Arabs were given incentives to take their place, such as new housing, plots of farmland, fertilizer, and tractors.

If not for Arabization, said Freakely, Arabs and Kurds would have lived together in relative harmony, and did so for generations. After all, as the cultural center of the north, Mosul is perhaps the most cosmopolitan city in Iraq. It is close to Turkey, Syria and Iran, populated by at least six ethnic groups, and home to both medical and liberal arts universities. Economically, too, the Mosul area is strong, with abundant agriculture resources, good irrigation, and large oilfields.

“The greater-Mosul area posed an intellectual, cultural, agricultural and economic threat to Iraq at large,” Freakley said. “Saddam Hussein purposely tried to drive the people of this area apart so they would not coalesce, build those elements of power together, and be stronger than cities in the south.”

*Contributed by
Spc. Robert Woodward,
101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) PAO*

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The employees, as with all civil servants, will be paid a one-time emergency paycheck of \$20 by Coalition forces. Subsequent salaries will be paid by the government of Mosul, though Coalition forces will ensure the employees get paid on a regular basis, Hatch said.

Import tariffs are set to the level they were prior to the fall of the Iraqi regime, and, to counter corruption, any official who collects more than his due faces immediate termination at the discretion of Fetterman and his deputies, Hatch said.

The parties to the accord paid close attention to the sensitivities of neighboring Syria, which has expressed concerns over the potential political and military fallout of the U.S.-led campaign to free the Iraqi people. The division and local leaders hoped the Syrians would also open their borders soon, Hatch said.

“There are many concerns voiced by the Syrian people,” Hatch said. “(Syrian border officers) were told to close the border so former Iraqi regime officials couldn’t go over but I don’t think they meant to keep it closed to legal trade.”

The agreement was a result of much cooperation, concession and compromise. For instance, in the days that led up to the signing of the agreement, Mosul officials had gone to talk with the Kurds operating the border crossing with Turkey and asked them to lower their tariffs so they would be on the same level as those coming in from Syria, Petraeus said.

“To encourage competition...the taxes on the border of Turkey have been lowered dramatically,” Petraeus said. “So it’s a great example of what can be achieved when there’s compromise on all sides.”

Petraeus told local tribal leaders about the need for continued cooperation between the ethnic factions in this time of rebuilding.

“In Bosnia, those people had been fighting for hundreds of years, but in your lifetime you all remember when you were Iraqis, not Kurds and Arabs. You remember when there was a Kurdish prime minister,” he said. “He was the prime minister because he was a man of good qualities.

“The only man who created problems between Kurds and Arabs, the man who drove a wedge between brothers, fellow Muslims, his regime is gone. So now it’s time to get back together — the wedge is gone.”

Naif Sfook Al-Faisal, a local tribal



Pfc. James Matise

Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, 101st Airborne Division, shares a laugh with a local tribal leader during the reopening of the Rabia border crossing with Syria.

leader, expressing his “deepest appreciation for the U.S. government and people which give us freedom, hope and a democratic future,” told Petraeus the Iraqi people “still have to liberate ourselves from the old and complicated things we have absorbed over the years.”

“We would like to welcome you as a liberator, as a friend, and as a partner in the quest for peace in the whole Middle East,” Al-Faisal said. “We know that with the good people of Iraq and with the help of Coalition forces, we will build a strong country.”

Faisal asked Petraeus if it would be possible to begin building an Iraqi military force so they could protect the recently reopened borders. Petraeus said such a force was already on the way – starting with one infantry company composed entirely of Iraqi forces.

“One platoon is made up of Kurds, the second of (Free Iraqi Forces), and the third of former Iraqi soldiers,” he said.

The trade accord will remain in effect until a national commerce or trade ministry is put in place in Baghdad, which will have the power and resources to form a national trade policy for Iraq, Hatch said.

*Contributed by
Pfc. James Matise,
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431st has some dam fun

Members of the 431st Civil Affairs took some time off to enjoy the water at Mosul Dam, formerly Saddam Dam, while inspecting for needed repairs. (Above) A sign welcomes tourists to Saddam Dam, now Mosul Dam. (Right) Soldiers swim and water fight in the river above the dam. This part of the river was deemed property of Saddam Hussein and no one was allowed to swim here prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Below) Soldiers walk under the water washing over the dam. Mosul Dam produces electricity for Northern Iraq and Baghdad.

