

Securing Baghdad no short-term operation

DONNA MILES

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The ongoing effort to secure Baghdad is an evolution, and solutions must be long-term, the spokesman for Multinational Force Iraq told reporters in Baghdad today.

“Abating the extremists in the capital will neither be easy nor rapid,” Army Maj. Gen. William Caldwell said of progress in Operation Together Forward.

A variety of activities are occurring in Baghdad, with Iraqi and coalition forces working together to help quell violence and build stability, Caldwell said.

Caldwell cited some of the statistics that reflect Operation Together Forward’s impact: 3,000 buildings cleared, more than 20 suspects detained, more than 50 weapons and eight cars seized and more than 330 weapons registered.

But the most significant developments are less easily measured. “What really matters is the number of businesses that reopened and will remain open, the refurbished stalls ... in the marketplace there,” he said. “The drainage has improved. The rubbish is removed. And of course, like we’d all like to see, the number of children that you can see during their summer break out riding their bikes and playing in the streets.”

Caldwell said U.S. Soldiers he met with over the weekend in the Dura

district say they’re impressed by the caliber of their Iraqi counterparts. “I was immediately informed Iraqis are inherently better at search operations than coalition forces,” he said. “They know what to look for. They have a sense when something is askew, based not only on their training and experience, but based on their innate knowledge of the language and the people.”

This gives Iraqi security forces an edge over U.S. and coalition troops, Caldwell said.

“The military forces, the Iraqi security forces, the coalition support can help set the stage for peace to occur, but they cannot achieve peace,” he said. “It’s going to take all the other factors. It’s going to take the economics; it’s going to take the governance; and, most importantly, it’s going to take the will of the Iraqi people to make this both work and sustain itself.”

“But they’ve absolutely got the commitment,” he added.

Caldwell quoted colleagues in the

Iraqi Ministry of Defense who have said it serves little purpose to ask when a particular phase of Operation Together Forward began, what phase it’s now in or when it will end. “As they say, ‘Working to counter terrorism is constant,’” he said.

The plan will end when security is achieved, Caldwell said, still quoting Iraqi officials, and when Baghdad residents have restored services, economic opportunities and hope for the future.

President says free world will win war on terror

PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS JOHN R. GUARDIANO

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – In his weekly radio address yesterday, President Bush reiterated American resolve against extremist terrorists and declared that the free world will prevail against enemies of freedom.

“America, Great Britain, and our allies are determined to defend ourselves and advance the cause of liberty,” Bush said. “With patience, courage, and untiring resolve, we will defend our freedom, and we will win the war on terror.”

The president acknowledged the enormity of the challenge that still lies ahead. “America is fighting a tough war against an enemy whose ruthlessness is clear for all to see,” he said. “The terrorists attempt to bring down airplanes full of innocent men, women and children. They kill civilians and American servicemen in Iraq and Afghanistan, and they deliberately hide behind civilians in Lebanon.”

Hezbollah terrorists have been firing rockets into Israel and hiding behind civilians to deter Israeli retaliation in a war that has raged for more than a month. Iraq and Afghanistan, meanwhile, continue to be plagued with ter-

rorist violence.

The past week’s arrests in Great Britain of suspects in an alleged plot to blow up airliners en route from England to the U.S. underscore the need for vigilance, Bush told the radio audience. “If these terrorists had succeeded, they could have caused death on a massive scale,” he said.

Terrorists, Bush noted, “are seeking to spread their totalitarian ideology. They’re seeking to take over countries ... so they can establish safe havens from which to attack free nations.” Defeating them will “take patience, courage, and untiring resolve,” he said.

America today is safer than it was prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, Bush said. However, he continued, “we must never make the mistake of thinking the danger of terrorism has passed. ... This week’s events demonstrate the vital importance of ensuring that our intelligence and law enforcement personnel have all the tools they need to track down the terrorists and prevent attacks on our country.”

Bush pledged continued diligence in fighting terrorism and urged Americans to stand behind the effort. “With patience, courage, and untiring resolve, we will defend our freedom, and we will win the war on terror,” he said.

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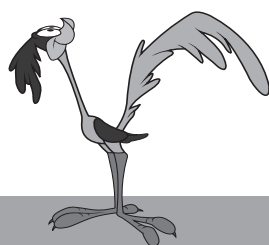
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