



08 July 2004

Flashpoints

Baghdad, Fallujah, Ramadi, Basrah, Kirkuk, Samarra.

The following highways and routes should be considered extremely hostile:

- **The roads from Baghdad to Fallujah have reopened although they remain extremely dangerous. A number of checkpoints have also been erected on the routes and are being manned by both Coalition Forces (CF) and the Iraqi police.**
- **The Baghdad to Amman Highway remains particularly dangerous and should be avoided if at all possible.**
- **The route to Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) is extremely dangerous. Restrictions have been applied to this route.**
- **Routes in the vicinity of Najaf and Karbala should be avoided as should those around al-Kut**
- **Kirkuk and the surrounding area remains dangerous and personnel should stay clear**

While these routes have been highlighted, it should be noted that transit throughout Iraq is dangerous and no route can be guaranteed as being safe.

Projections

Kidnapping is likely to continue and it is by no means guaranteed that hostages will be released without harm. Despite the fact that it appears that the US Marine, Wassef Ali Hassoun has been freed, as has a Pakistani national, it should not be assumed that insurgents snatching foreigners are becoming more lenient. Indeed, both of the last two individuals freed were Muslims and while attacks in Iraq have often targeted Muslim Iraqis, the brutal nature of execution preferred by the captors and the individual nature of each case would have likely caused outcry across the Islamic world. This is not to say that every Muslim captured will escape the fate of other captives.

The sporadic use of vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) and suicide car bombings over the past few weeks is likely to increase in frequency. Indeed, a large-scale planned operation may be afoot given that the last large co-ordinated attacks (24 June) took place after a similar pattern of sporadic vehicle-related attacks.

Violence could occur on 14 and 17 July because of the anniversary of the overthrowing of the monarchy in 1958, commonly known as Republic Day and the coming to power of the Ba'ath Party in 1968 respectively. The 14 July may also see some increase in activity against the British presence in the south of the country as it was the British that held mandate in Iraq in the early part of the last century and who put King Faisal I on the throne in 1921. Furthermore, an increase in the activity of the Former Regime Loyalists (FRLs) can be anticipated on 17 July.

Although speculative, it is possible that 14 July may witness a symbolic or actual attempt to overthrow the caretaker government by hostile elements in Iraqi society in commemoration of 14 July 1958 when the 'imposed monarchy' was overthrown.

Summary

The past 48 hours have been relatively quiet across Iraq although a number of significant incidents did occur, not least a large-scale gun battle in central Baghdad between insurgents and Iraqi and US forces. A suicide car bombing resulted in the death of a number of people in the central region, while another car bombing was prevented by security forces in the capital. Another foreign worker has been

seized by insurgents and threatened with death. In addition, the usual array of attacks and violent incidents have persisted and IEDs have been a continued favourite weapon.

Areas of continued concern

- All facilities relating to the energy industry in Iraq remain at risk of attack, including offices and vehicles. Personnel are also at risk.
- It is feared that Mosques are potential hot spots for demonstrations, and possibly suicide and other explosive attacks in the coming days and weeks.
- Hotels remain at risk of attack, particularly those providing residence to Western personnel, including those in the 'Green Zone', despite increased security .
- Police stations, local government and Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) facilities continue to be the target of demonstrations and suicide attacks.

The following other buildings and facilities are consistently at risk:

- Any building, element of infrastructure or machinery involved with the reconstruction effort (particularly the energy industry)
- Coalition facilities of all nationalities (inhabited by contractors, NGO workers, diplomatic and military personnel)
- Civic buildings, particularly police stations, diplomatic offices and those of NGOs and media organizations
- Any convoy/vehicle carrying personnel from the media/NGOs or indeed contractors and diplomatic staff is at risk of attack at all times.











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	1-9	Generally stable and secure
	10-19	Instability
	20-29	Hostile
	30-39	Highly unstable
	40-49	Widespread militancy
	50-59	Low intensity conflict
	60-69	Advanced guerrilla war/civil war
	70-79	Limited conventional war
	80-89	Regional war
	90-100	Total war (sub-nuclear)

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