



13 July 2004

Flashpoints

Baghdad, Baqouba, Mosul, Samarra, Baiji, Basrah, Fallujah.

The following highways and routes should be considered extremely hostile:

- **The route from Saudi Arabia to Baghdad has been dangerous in recent days**
- **The route from Syria to Mosul in the north of Iraq has also proven dangerous in the past week.**
- **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.**

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

Personnel are reminded of the threat from secondary explosive devices or 'come on' attacks in Iraq (specifically Baghdad). This threat is particularly relevant to first responders, security or media personnel who are most likely to attend the scene of an initial attack.

Thirty additional Australian soldiers are to be deployed to Iraq according to reports on 13 July. It is believed that the soldiers are required to protect Australian instructors and diplomats. It is possible that insurgent groups may focus their attack on Australian personnel. It is clear that groups such as those led by Musab al-Zarqawi are still keen to drive out foreign forces from Iraq and continue to target civilian personnel of those nations with contingents within Iraq. In this regard, Australian civilian personnel working for NGOs, contractors or other non-military groups could be at an increased risk of targeting, perhaps in the form of kidnap.

Information from 13 July suggests a possible growing fragmentation of insurgent groups operating in Iraq. Of course, most obvious was the threat issued by the Salvation Movement which pledged to kill al-Zarqawi if he did not leave Iraq. According to media reports, the emerging schism is largely between foreign and domestic elements. Both groupings have been using each other to their own ends and may now seek to pursue their own separate goals. In Iraq, as elsewhere in the world, al-Qaeda has utilised local Islamic groups to carry out attacks while the local affiliates receive training, finance and weaponry from the global terror network. It is unsurprising that rifts have emerged since the transfer of power and it does not necessarily mean that any fragmentation will lead to an improvement in the security situation. Indeed, if schisms are emerging between Islamist groups, the fragmentation may induce further domestic troubles, for example the re-emergence of the supremacy of tribal conflict and the further complications of religion, ethnicity and political goals adding further potentially dangerous problems.

Fighting between the Iranian military and KONGRA-GEL Kurdish rebels has been reported in the mountains that separate Iran and Turkey. Ten fatalities have been reported, at least two of which were Iranian soldiers. It is possible, given that a number of KONGRA-GEL fighters are currently thought to also be in hiding in the northern mountains of Iraq (the Qandil Mountains, particularly the area of Rania) that similar clashes might occur in Iraq. If this was the case, tensions within the Kurdish community are

likely to increase significantly.

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

Attacks and incidents of violence have gathered pace once again in Iraq. Furthermore, there has been a marked geographical spread in the attacks that are being carried out, particularly kidnap. Previously, most incidents of kidnap of foreign personnel involved the foreigner being snatched in the centre or the central south of the country; however the two most recent incidents took place near Mosul in the north and on the route from Saudi Arabia to Baghdad. While Baiji, Samarra and Baqouba have been sporadic hotspots, the weekend period has witnessed a number of violent incidents occurring in all such locations.

Jama'at al-Tawhid and Jihad has claimed responsibility for the kidnap of the Bulgarian hostages. The group is said to be led by the al-Qaeda figurehead in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. While it has been thought that al-Qaeda has been operating in the north of the country via its affiliate, Ansar al-Islam, this is the first occasion Jama'at al-Tawhid and Jihad group has been identified in the region. Interestingly, and as noted in AKE's Iraq Security Briefing of 6 July, six members of the al-Qaeda-linked group, Ansar al-Islam were arrested in the Oruba district of Kirkuk during the first week of July.

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) have remained a favoured weapon of insurgents throughout the country and IED attacks have often been followed by Small Arms Fire (SAF). Information received suggests an increasing sophistication in weaponry, particularly bombs. Explosive devices constructed by person(s) with evident training have been uncovered. These magnetic bombs are attached to the underneath of vehicles and set on timers to detonate. It is imperative that all personnel check their vehicles thoroughly (inside and out). Sources indicate that the devices are blast only and while armoured vehicles may withstand the blast, the vehicles electrical circuit would not and personnel could find themselves trapped.

On 11 July, officials within the reconstruction effort indicated that the groups and individuals carrying out the increasing number of attacks on Iraq's vital energy infrastructure are now thought to be employees of the Northern and Southern Oil Companies. Some 130 attacks on oil pipelines alone have been carried out over a seven-month period. It is also suspected that some assistance has been received from ETEs inside and outside Iraq.

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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