



15 June 2004

Flashpoints

Baghdad, Najaf, Basrah, Kirkuk, Fallujah.

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, Kufah and Karbala should be avoided, as should those around al-Kut.
- Amarah is likely to witness further attacks and travel on roads to and from the city should only be undertaken with caution.
- The route from Baqubah to Mosul has been subject to a number of attacks over the past 48 hours and should be considered dangerous.
- 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

A statement posted on an Islamist website on 14 June refers to a letter, purportedly from Musab al-Zarqawi to Osama bin-Laden, which states that the fighters of al-Qaeda and its affiliates are being “squeezed” by US forces in Iraq. From the wording of the statement, it appears that plans are afoot to seriously disrupt the formation of the Iraqi government, set to take place following the January 2005 elections. Indeed, the four month period prior to this is specifically mentioned suggesting that al-Qaeda militants may step up their operations in Iraq markedly from September. The letter is also believed to indicate, as anticipated, more attacks on Coalition Forces, those involved with the reconstruction and Iraqis viewed as “the occupier’s eye, ear and hand.” Furthermore, four categories of enemy are believed to have been defined and include ‘the Americans, the Kurds, Iraqi police and soldiers and the Sunni’s.

The incidents of kidnap for ransom of both wealthy Iraqis and foreigners have continued and the payment of at least one ransom demand has set a dangerous precedent for more incidents of the kind. Indeed, those groups that have thus far focussed on Iraqi’s may move to targeting foreigners in the hope of achieving higher financial rewards.

The growing tensions between Iraq’s Kurdish and Shi’a population (detailed below) is worrying, particularly given the fact that both groupings have armed supporters willing to further their cause. Much is known about the Shi’a militia groups and the Kurdish Peshmerga, however, the fact the KONGRA-GEL, the former PKK has recently declared the end of its five year ceasefire suggests that it may be involved in any future clashes. Furthermore, it should not be noted that one of the key and continuing aims of Musab al-Zarqawi, the al-Qaeda figurehead in Iraq is to induce civil war and such tensions may indeed be a focus of his attentions in

the coming days and weeks.

Summary

As threatened by Musab al-Zarqawi in a memo penned by him and uncovered by Coalition Forces in February of this year, the month of June has been particularly bloody and the past weekend has been no exception. Targeted assassinations have been particularly evident over the weekend of 12-13 June as predicted in AKE's *Iraq Security Briefing* of 10 June. In addition suicide and vehicle-borne explosive devices have also been abundant, causing high numbers of fatalities in recent days. Such devices have targeted civilian contractors involved with securing the reconstruction effort, military forces and Iraqis associated with the Coalition. Ambushes and hi-jackings have been in evidence and are a continuous threat on nearly all routes throughout the country. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) remain a preferred weapon and are likely to get larger and more spectacular in the coming weeks. Attacks including Small Arms Fire (SAF), rockets, Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) and mortars have also taken place. Kidnappings have persisted also look set to continue.

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Areas of continued concern











- 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
- All facilities relating to the energy industry in Iraq remain at risk of attack, including offices and vehicles
- Police stations, local government and Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) facilities continue to be the target of demonstrations and suicide attacks
- The homes and offices of those involved in the political development of Iraq, those of personnel involved in the former regime (i.e. low level Ba'athists) and those of tribal leaders are believed to be under an increased risk of attack or assassination

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)

For more in-depth analysis of the security situation in Iraq as well as other world hot spots see [Global Intake](#), AKE's online strategic information and intelligence tool.

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