



'Vision of Hope' in Tarmiyah

CAMP TAJI — Residents of Tarmiyah, a small city on the Tigris River northwest of Baghdad, stood tall with smiles on their faces Oct. 22, as they spoke words of hope and reconciliation.

According to those gathered, the date was yet another dramatic turning point in their recent history.

Led by Sheik Sa'ed Jassim al-Mashadani, chairman of the Municipality Committee of al Tarmiyah Qada, Tarmiyah's local officials hosted a number of provincial and government of Iraq representatives at their first Civic Expo.

City residents hope to accomplish a number of tasks in the future, and they chose a unique, effective way to accomplish their goals, such as bringing government of Iraq officials to them so they could show, firsthand, the economic and political progress they've made in the area.

"Two years ago, an event like this would not have been possible," said Capt. Calvin Kline, an information operations officer with 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment-

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Iraqi Sheiks Nadeem (left) and Sa'ed Jassem say goodbye to other area sheiks at the end of ceremonies in the city of Tarmiyah, Iraq, Oct. 22, 2008. Photo by Ken Griffin.

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CAMP STRIKER — The Iraqi Army (IA) officially assumed authority of Patrol Base Inchon during a base turnover in Qarghuli Village, Oct. 20.

The 1st Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Brigade, 17th Iraqi Army Division took over from Co. D, 3rd Bn., 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

"This day will be the strong hand that finishes [criminals] and makes our area safe," said Capt. Ahmed, 1/1/23/17th IA commander.

"Making our people safe in this area and all of Iraq has been our goal."

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A boy writes at his desk during class at the Cortoba school in the Mansour District of western Baghdad, Oct. 21, 2008. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brock Jones.

School Renovations Complete

BAGHDAD — Teachers, children and Coalition forces celebrated the completion of construction and renovation projects at the Cortoba school in Muhallah 603 of the Mansour District of Baghdad, Oct. 21, 2008.

The projects included building a new bathroom for the students, replacing tile floors, fixing lighting and electrical problems and a fresh coat of various shades of blue paint.

“For this school, we would come here about once a week to ensure that the quality control was up kept,” said Capt. Tom Mcinnis, who serves as a civil affairs team leader with Company A, 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion.

Mcinnis and his team oversaw the project and ensured the work of local contractors was up to par with the agreed upon standards. “This is certainly not a new school, but it is much better than it was.”

With improvements in security throughout Baghdad, the focus of U.S. and coalition efforts shifted from fighting, to seeking out areas in which improvements were sorely needed, such as schools, and then seeing those projects through from start to finish.

“With schools, they’re such a bang for the buck because everyone sends their kids to school, and no one wants their kids to be in an environment where they’re not able to learn or focus on learning,” said Mcinnis.

“And with the security being better, the ministry of education is now able to maintain its schools much better.”

Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby, commander of 4th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., attended the ceremony and took a tour of the school, greeting the students and listening as they recited chants and songs.

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Economic Progress Now Top Priority in Al-Anbar

WASHINGTON — With life returning to normal in Iraq’s Anbar province, the way forward now is driven more by the economy than security, the commander of Multi-National Force - West said yesterday.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. John F. Kelly spoke to Pentagon reporters from his headquarters in Fallujah (Transcript). He said Coalition forces continue to mentor Iraqi security forces, but the Iraqis are in the lead and have become more capable and confident.

Anbar has been under provincial Iraqi control since the beginning of September, and the Coalition and Iraqi forces are putting in place policies that minimize the military disruption to life in the province.

“We started a share-the-road program, where no longer would Iraqi traffic have to do anything particularly different when they came upon military convoys,” Kelly said. The command also moved most of the convoys off the roads during the day. The long lines of military vehicles and civilian big rigs now travel between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.

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A U.S. Soldier on the banks of the Tigris River, Oct. 14, 2008. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Rzepka.



A U.S. Airman plays with Iraqi children on Camp Bucca, Oct. 9, 2008. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Raheem Moore.



An Iraqi Army T-72 tank pulls security during a training exercise on Camp Taji, Oct. 14, 2008. Photo by Sgt. Jacob H. Smith.