



Task Force Danger Progress Report

May 23, 2004

Helping Fatema

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Iraq--The Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division and Task Force Danger are continuing to make progress in North Central Iraq. This is allowing the task force to shift more of its efforts away from combat operations and place more energy into civil military operations. The following are a couple of great stories that illustrate the good work being done.

One great example of providing hope to the average Iraqi family occurred this week in the Task Force Danger area of operations after U.S. officials on both sides of the Atlantic were able cut through mounds of red tape.

An 8-month-old Iraqi girl, Fatemah, is now slated to undergo surgery at Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, within the week to remove a birth defect. Without surgery the baby girl may die from a cavernous hemangioma, an abnormal growth of a blood vessel on the right side of her face and neck. It took a massive coordination from many people to make this all happen in timely manner. On May 14, the 1st Infantry Division Surgeon, Lt. Col. (P) Michael Brumage, received word from US Senator Jay Rockefeller's (D-W.Va.) office advising of the plans to ensure Fatemah receives the desperate medical treatment back in Ohio.



Fatemah's mother, Baday Armir and father, Khaleel, sought the help of U.S. Soldiers deployed near their hometown in Mandali not far from the Iranian border. The couple took their only daughter to the front gate of Forward Operating Base Rough Rider and pleaded for medical help.

The physician's assistant at the Troop Medical Center on Rough Rider, Lt. Col. Todd Fredricks answered their prayers. After seeing

Fatemah, LTC Fredricks worked with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense in Baghdad and the Coalition Provisional Authority to seek medical attention back in the U.S. for the baby.

LTC Fredricks has connections with Ohio State University at Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio and was able to persuade the medical facility's board of directors to waive all costs for Fatemah's surgery.



Fostering Relationships

Task Force Danger continues to help foster a positive relationship with the religious leaders in our area of operations. To prevent rumors of detainee abuse, Dr. Hatem Ahmad Abass, the head Imam in Samarra, was invited to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Detention Facility at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Brassfield-Mora to give a sermon to the detainees. Dr. Hatem is the Imam at the Al Hadi Mosque, also known as the Golden Mosque in Samarra. Dr. Hatem arrived with two associates, Sheik Jasim Dauod, Imam for the Noor Al-Yaqeen Mosque, and Ghazi Abdul-Kareem Abdullah, a court magistrate in Samarra.

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Crop Dusting in Iraq

In a cooperative effort between Task Force Danger and Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture, Iraqi pilots recently began crop-dusting the province's date palm fields. It is the first time Iraqi pilots have flown in their airspace since Operation Iraqi Freedom began over one year ago. This operation will cover nine areas in Diyala province and will continue for two weeks, the end of the date spraying season. The spraying will cover an estimated five to eight square kilometers per day. Spraying is critical to the operation of Iraq's date palm industry. About 60 percent of the

world's dates come from Iraq, and of those, about 65 percent come from Diyala province.

The Ministry of Agriculture's head pilot, Capt. Muntadhar Mohamed, began meeting with representatives over two months ago to help coordinate the operation. Dr. Hussein Ali-Tahir, a pesticide analysis specialist with the Ministry of Agriculture, certified the chemicals, which are not dangerous to humans or animals. They have been spraying the crops for more than 50 years. Spraying pesticide protects the date palm from the white fly and fruit fly,

which were very damaging last year. The aircraft used for crop-dusting are Russian-made MI-2 helicopters, purchased from Poland in 1985. These were initially meant for the military, but the Ministry of Agriculture took them for use as crop dusters. Following the completion of the date palm operation, the pilots will continue to spray other crops such as wheat, rice and corn. Based on the success of the operation, they will most likely move on to other provinces throughout the country and continue spraying throughout the year.

Relationships (cont. from p.1)

LTC Kirk Allen, Task Force 1-26 Infantry commander, greeted Dr. Hatem when he arrived at the detention facility. Following introductions, Dr. Hatem was provided a loudspeaker system so he could give his sermon. The sermon focused on being patient, hope and that there is always a light at the end of the tunnel. After the sermon Dr. Hatem and his associates talked with several detainees and were given a tour of the facility.

The Military Police platoon leader showed Dr. Hatem the facility's aid station, latrines, showers and even the contents of one of the Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) that the detainees are given three

times a day. Dr. Hatem was pleased to see that the detainees had access to copies of the Quran and were allowed their religious freedom.

After their visit Dr. Hatem and his associates admitted that they had been pleasantly surprised at how well the detainees were treated. They commented on the fact that all the detainees which they had spoken with told them that they were well fed, cared for and treated with respect by everyone at the detention facility. Dr. Hatem mentioned that he had expected far worse conditions at the detention facility given the recent events in the news and from rumors. As the guests left they thanked LTC Allen for allowing them to give a sermon and talk with some of the detainees.



Conclusion

Our Soldiers are making a huge difference in Iraq. The price has been high, but we are resolute and steadfast. We will accomplish the mission. We have made great strides in partnership with the courageous people of Iraq towards their future of civil and military self-reliance. Our families and the American people should be very proud and confident in the outcome of the Operation Iraqi Freedom mission.

Duty First!