

Q: I'm sorry, General Swannack. I'm not clear if you can hear me. So I'll keep asking -- I guess you can.

Besides the ICDC, more broadly, Iraqi security forces in general, including army, in your area -- what percentage of, broadly speaking, all Iraqi security forces are fully trained and equipped in your area of responsibility, including the army?

Swannack: Well, that's a difficult question to explain. In terms of border police that we're responsible for, recruiting, training and equipping, Iraqi security police, Facilities Protection Services and ICDC, it's all about the same. They all have received individual equipment. They all received some level of training. However, they're short some equipment; in some cases, are receiving right now heavy machine guns to provide the necessary firepower for their organization. Still no radios -- very few radios and/or vehicles to transport them around is the status right now.

I'd ask this gentleman here.

Q: Thank you, General. In Arabic, please. Radla Azawamin (sp), BBC Arabia. (Continues in Arabic.)

Swannack: Well, the second part of the question is an operational question I can't answer, about techniques we're using to go ahead and combat the enemy. However, in regards to the effectiveness of the attacks against us, the enemy has been limited, in my opinion, in the training and effectiveness of the forces they're employing right now. Former regime elements, I believe we've taken out a good amount of them, so that the folks who are attacking us now have less training, less technical capability and therefore are less effective. As examples, RPG attacks more often than not do not hit the target. IEDs explode but are way in front of a convoy or way behind a convoy, so they don't cause any damage or injuries. More often than not now, about 50 percent of the time or even more, we're receiving tips that tell us exactly where the IEDS are, that we go and then dismantle them before we're ever attacked by them.

So it's a combination of the enemy becoming less effective because of their training and expertise that make the attacks less effective, as well as the great increase in the amount of tips we get from the populace as to whom it is attacking us, who is attacking us and what munitions and where they're located. We're receiving all kinds of tips on the locations where caches are right now. That's a good-news story, very good.

Kimberly?

Q: General, can you give us a breakdown on how many cells you're battling now and what you think is the make-up, Saddam loyalists versus foreign fighters versus other elements?

Swannack: It's going to be difficult to go ahead and give you an exact number, but my take is pretty much that there's probably five or six cells operating in the major towns right now. And over that, there might be one or two directors or suppliers or financiers. We're pretty much down to Al Anbar having one regional leader, director, a couple facilitators, and then four or five, I'd say, cells per large city, one or two in the smaller cities. Foreign fighters, we're still only seeing handfuls of them. Like I said when I was here before, I think it was somewhere around 27 that we had either captured or killed. We're probably somewhere around short of 50 now, but not in any great numbers.

Q: And just a follow-up. Do you see any signs of communication between the cells that remain in your area and places like Tikrit? And also, from the last time you described the number of cells to me, that sounds like you've gotten rid of about half of them in the past three or four months.