

some as patriots and others as bystanders. In particular, I want to offer my condolences to their families. These attacks by Iraqis on Iraqis or terrorists have killed and wounded innocent Iraqi citizens. We, too, have paid in blood with American killed and wounded. In Al Anbar, we, the Iraqis and coalition forces remain absolutely determined to stop this senseless violence which is intended to instill only fear and terror.

As some of you probably recall, for the past seven months Task Force All American has been composed of several very special combat-ready units consisting of over 18,000 troopers, which include armored cavalry, mechanized infantry and paratroopers from our active and reserve components, as well as a company from Azerbaijan. This was a remarkably diverse and uniquely qualified organization which came together as a team and made a significant, positive difference in the lives of over 1.5 million Iraqis. These highly motivated, highly trained and skilled warriors have defeated terrorists and those that harbor them in every engagement. Most remarkable, though, is their ability to demonstrate compassion and put the human touch in the relations with the Iraqi people.

Before I take some questions I want to take a few minutes to explain where I think we are today out west and what Task Force All American has contributed to the great province of Al Anbar. We assumed control of Multinational Division West last September. Let me give you a feel for the landscape back then. There was no Iraqi Civil Defense Corps -- had been recruited, trained or equipped. There was a lack of organized control over the borders. There were 92 large ammunition depots spread out all over the province. Police existed in the cities but had little to no training or equipment. Many schools could not open. Employment opportunities looked bleak for Iraqis. The majority of factories were non-operational. Minimal essential services. Minimal security. And most, if not all, cities were assessed as having high anti-coalition activity.

You can see how tough a task we had before us. It appeared almost insurmountable at first. However, our three-pronged strategy has paid off. First, our combat units set out to kill or capture anti-coalition forces, those former-regime elements, foreign fighters and extremists who facilitate and conduct acts of terror and violence against coalition forces, Iraqi security forces and innocent Iraqi citizens. We have conducted almost 600 company-size or higher operations, which resulted in killing or capturing over 30 high-value targets, numerous enemy directors, financiers, facilitators, as well as combatants. We conducted over 32,000 patrols and 500 coordinate searches, resulting in the questioning of over 3,500 suspects and the long-term detention of over 700 terrorists. Most important to establishing long-term security, Task Force All American sought to stand up ICDC battalions, border police, Iraqi police and the Facility Protection Services. This included not only the training but also the equipping of almost 10,000.

I can tell you today we have achieved our goal of recruiting and training all the required forces. We have trained 10 border police battalions, for a total of almost 2,100; six ICDC battalions and a brigade headquarters of just under 6,000; hired and trained almost 2,000 Facility Protective service; and retrained over 800 of the 5,000 local police in our security college. This is not only encouraging, but is evidence that the citizens of Al Anbar want to protect and secure innocent Iraqis and their families. Even given the most recent violence specifically attempting to frighten Iraqis dedicated to peace and sovereignty, there is no shortage of volunteers eagerly wanting to help defeat the threat, and this is certainly a great-news story.

Not only are the security forces bravely leading the fight against terrorists, they are in some cases insisting on doing it alone, not depending on coalition forces. They want to defeat these enemies of a new and free Iraq. If we had the equipment for these brave young men, we would be much farther along. We are still short a significant amount of vehicles, radios and body armor to properly equip them. But the good news is that most of this equipment is due in by the end of this month.

Jobs creation has been one of the essential pillars of our strategy. It didn't stop with recruitment of just these security forces. Our estimate of unemployment in September was approximately 60 percent of the employable population. Since that time, we've created 24,000 short-term and durable jobs, and our construction projects have employed thousands of other Iraqis temporarily. It is clearly evident that Iraqis want to work with us to