

soldiers have done working hand-in-hand with the Rashid district council.

In closing, I'd like to thank the American public for their support. We receive care packages from family, friends and caring and patriotic people that we've never met from all across America, from an elementary classroom in Frankfort, Kentucky; Cub Scout Pack 773 in Houston, Texas; volunteers from Operation Gratitude from Encino, California and many others.

Thank you very much.

At this time, I'm prepared to take your questions.

MR. WHITMAN: All right. Well, thank you for that overview. And we'll get right into it. And we'll let Jeff start us off today.

Q Hi, Colonel. Jeff with Stars and Stripes. Just a really quick housekeeping question.

I think you said initially attacks had dropped from an average of 5 in April, 5 per day, to 1.5 per day in July. But later I thought I heard you say it had dropped from 4 per day to 1.5 per day. Can you kind of clarify that?

COL. MARTIN: Yeah. If I confused you there, it should be -- it's averaging right at 5 attacks per day when we arrived. It's down -- (off mike) -- a day now.

MR. WHITMAN: Go ahead, Al.

Q Colonel, it's Al Pessin from Voice of America.

You mentioned that some of the folks you've captured have gotten support from Iran. Can you tell us what the time frame of that support was? Is that still going on? And what sort of support are they getting?

COL. MARTIN: Well, I can only speak for the Rashid district. But I can guarantee you that we have found Iranian-made munitions inside of the Rashid district. Upon arriving into the battlespace in March of this year, pretty much we coincided with the uprising of the Special Group criminals. We started uncovering caches.

Some of these, we uncovered through reconnaissance operations, through active patrolling. But many of them were -- actually the people of Rashid district called in on our tip lines. And just as an example, within the last two weeks, we found a cache of munitions hidden inside of a water tank. That was a combined operation between the national police and my forces in the vicinity of the town known as Abu T'shir. Inside of that water tank, we found 107-millimeter rockets that were clearly Iranian made.

Now, I am not an expert on munitions. I rely on the experts, in the explosive ordnance disposal company and the other assets we have in Baghdad that can determine the origin of these weapons. So in this case, we found rockets which had obviously been used or been planned to be used against the people of Iraq; Iranian-made, I believe, February 2008.

Q And just to clarify, I'm sorry, exactly when did you find those? And through your interrogations of these people, have you got some sense of whether this Iranian support is continuing even now?

COL. MARTIN: Well, that's the -- again I can only speak for the Rashid district. And we did not capture anybody who was associated with that particular cache. But we could tell from what was in it. It was rifles, rockets, mortar rounds. And both the rockets and the mortar rounds were determined by the explosive ordnance disposal folks as being Iranian-made.