

there are many more -- that were active in this particular tactic. And I can tell you, if asked, some interesting stories about the brave women of Diyala who are helping to counter this particular threat.

In our other two provinces, Kirkuk, which is about the size of Connecticut, and Salahuddin, which is about the size of Vermont, we are seeing many insurgents come forward to reconcile and promise their support to the central government. And in fact, this morning I was in Kirkuk City attending a Civil Service Corps ceremony that saw 500 Sons of Iraq being transferred into some very useful jobs that will support the growing building industry in Kirkuk.

There are still insurgents and terrorists who have left the major cities for the deserts and mountains of these two provinces, so we are pursuing them in these areas as well.

That's a summary of some of the many things that are going on in northern Iraq, but I'm sure you'll all have some very hard questions for me that may be going beyond these opening statements. So I won't waste any more time reading. I'll try and answer your questions.

MR. WHITMAN: Well, thank you for that overview, and I'm sure we can muster up some tough questions. We'll start with Jeff.

Q Hi, Major General Hertling. You had mentioned that the strategy in Diyala is to pursue the enemy. AP is reporting that the Iraqi government is giving insurgents a week -- has called a week-long cease-fire in Diyala in order to give insurgents a chance to turn themselves in. How does that fit into the strategy of continuing to pursue the enemy?

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah. Well, we will continue to pursue with coalition force operations. We have heard of that tactical pause. And I think quite frankly, Jeff, that was a result of a session that was occurring on Saturday, which I attended, with the new deputy prime minister, Mr. al-Aswari (sp). He, in fact, got the governor of Diyala together, as well as the senior military leaders, as well as many of the sheikhs and provincial council members in that particular province, pulled them all together. And as we were conducting operation, he was looking not only to continue to go after the hard-core extremists and terrorists, but also to give those who are perhaps just along for the money or because they are gang members an opportunity to change their mind and perhaps not get killed or captured but instead turn themselves in.

We've seen the success of that particular strategy in other provinces. In fact, in Salahuddin, I can tell you that we've had over 2,000 former insurgents turn themselves in. Some of them have been tried in court, and in fact several of them are serving sentences now. But they came to us and said: Hey, we don't want to run, and we don't want to be killed anymore. We see the power of the vote overcoming the power of the gun, so we're turning ourselves in.

So I think -- I hope this answers your question -- I think what the Iraqi government is doing in this particular case with this cease-fire is as a result of the visit on Saturday of the deputy prime minister, to give those who don't want to fight anymore, the less hard-core, a chance to become a part of the society.

Q If I could follow up, I know Baqubah is in your area of operations. How has the loss of Georgian troops affected your operations there?

GEN. HERTLING: Yeah. That's an interesting question, because in fact, in my old job, before I took command of the division, I was in U.S. Army Europe and was helping train the Georgians.

We had about a company of the Georgian brigade with us. One of our units, one of -- in fact, it was a 1st Armored Division unit that had come up from the central part of Iraq, came to work in our area in Diyala. They brought about a company of Georgians with them, and they are in fact returning back to their area, so they can fly