And we're making progress in each of these areas every day. And while these efforts are progressing at a different pace, they're all moving forward in a positive and tangible manner.

Today, the Multinational Corps Iraq is operating in more areas of the country with fewer troops, and our security gains continue to trend in a positive direction even after the redeployment of five brigade combat teams, and most recently the Georgian brigade. We've been able to achieve this success because of an increasingly effective Iraqi security force, one that is growing in capability and in confidence. And as a result, we have seen signs of hope and prosperity return to many parts of the country that were once previously threatened by criminals and terrorists and others who don't want Iraq to achieve its full potential.

For 10 of the last 11 weeks, we've sustained less than 200 attacks per week nationwide. It is undeniable that Iraq is in a much better place than it was several months ago. And we're very encouraged by these positive trends, but we realize that there remain threats to the population and there is still much work to be done.

In the north, al Qaeda is in disarray, and its capability to conduct well-planned and coordinated attacks is limited, but they still pose a real threat to the population. And a couple of weeks ago, I walked through an open market in Mosul that was several kilometers long, and it was overflowing with Iraqis. Now that's something that would not have been possible just a couple of months ago, and this is a clear sign that we are making progress indeed.

We must, however, keep sight of the fact that al Qaeda retains the capability to perform high-profile attacks on the population. Suicide vests, which are a trademark of al Qaeda, account for less than 3 percent of the total number all of all attacks, but they account for 65 percent of all casualties. And most of those casualties are innocent civilians. So you can see that while al Qaeda is in disarray, they are still capable of ruthless attacks.

Iraqi-led operations in the north, specifically in Mosul and in Diyala, are directed at the remnants of al Qaeda. In addition, our operations along the borders are directed at interdicting foreign fighters from flowing in and regenerating the al Qaeda leadership, and we'll continue to pursue them wherever they are as long as they pose a threat to the Iraqi population.

In Baghdad, we're seeing life steadily return to normal as well, and al Qaeda has been largely pushed out of the city. Today we're experiencing 83 percent fewer attacks than during the same time last year. In Sadr City, there's been improvement in terms of security, and the government of Iraq is beginning to provide essential services to its citizens. They've begun several projects that are providing essential services like sewer, electrical, health facilities, security and other services.

And debris is being removed, and roads are being repaired and opened, and solar-powered street lights are going up. And the results are indeed remarkable.

You know, Sadr City is a great example of the work that's ongoing to help provide the Iraqi people the basic services that will improve their quality of life. And families are walking the streets, and markets are open, and the quality life is improving on a daily basis. And I've seen similar progress across the rest of the country as well.

As you look to the south, you will also see an improved security situation. Since the Iraqi security forces began operations in the south last March, and caused many special groups' leaders to flee to Iran, the Iraqi security force has been increasingly successful in isolating the special groups, which is the principal threat in the south. As a result of the improved security in places like Basra and Amarah, we're seeing fewer numbers of lethal accelerants making their way into Baghdad. Today these militias are largely disrupted and ineffective because of Iraqi operations and because the people have turned against them, much like the Anbaris turned against al Qaeda in the west a year ago. And even though we anticipate that some of these leaders will attempt to return