



Field Report: IRAQ

September 22, 2004

Centurion Risk Assessment Services

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GENERAL

There have been significant attacks on the Green Zone in recent weeks since the Najaf fighting has diminished. The attacks have consisted of mortars, rockets of various calibres (107mm, 122mm and 127mm) and continuous small arms attacks.

Incidents occur frequently around the cities and towns in Iraq, ranging from suicide attacks to well co-ordinated assaults utilising 30 to 50 armed assailants.

The past days have seen an increase in activity in areas such as Fallujah, Ramadi and Sadr city. IEDs and suicide bombers with the usual small arms fire have been used more frequently.

Safety for any foreigner in Iraq cannot be guaranteed 100%, with or without security guards. Terrorists are "doing their homework" on planned attacks on anyone that is believed to be a target. Both Iraqis and Westerners are all targets and if they are seen to assist the Coalition forces in any small way, they will be a target.

As mentioned on major news networks by Western leaders, "Iraq is getting worse", especially with the forthcoming elections.

There will be new and untried tactics by the insurgents against any potential target, both rural and urban.

The threat to all Western females remains high.

Money often outweighs safety - this should not be the case

The majority of foreigners working in Iraq can leave at any time and should not feel forced to work in the country. Most foreigners working in Iraq are attracted by good salaries, a factor which has to be weighed against the good, safe life you could have back home without the fear of kidnapping, injury or death. It is their personal decision to work in this dangerous environment.

Most foreigners working in Iraq do so voluntarily and should be educated to realise the risks prior to going to such places. Money often outweighs safety. This should not be the case. All personnel from the media, NGOs, aid agencies and businesses should be made aware of the potential threats to their staff whilst operating in these areas. Such awareness training should be mandatory to all. Training in all aspects regarding these places should be compulsory. Cost should not be an issue.

NGOs, aid agencies and businesses should follow the many steps already in place regarding the safety training that the majority of the media have already taken.

We all realise that safety training is not 100% life-saving but it does help. Ask the people who have been through such life threatening incidents who have managed to conduct some form of training prior to their deployment.

Many thanks to Centurion advisors, media and others in Iraq for providing information for this Field Report.

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VEHICLE & ROAD SAFETY

Continuing attacks remain on the main road to the airport, even though it is patrolled by the Coalition forces.

The road between the Jordanian border and Baghdad is still rife with attacks, with hostages being taken and sporadic high-speed chases with small arms fire. Again, this route is not really safe, however some vehicles are passing without any incident and others are fraught with difficulties.

With the increase of US vehicle convoys along the major routes, there has been an increase in roadside IEDs.

Sniper attacks are increasing on the road between Kirkuk and the Baiji road.

The threat of grenades being dropped on vehicles by insurgents young and old remains. Be vigilant and constantly look ahead for any movement that may give you concern. If in doubt, stop, turn around and use another route if possible.

AIR TRAVEL/AIRPORT ROAD

Royal Jordanian flights continue to be the main carriers from Amman to Baghdad. There is a good security company at the airport at present, which assures and comforts most travellers in and out of the airport. The airport road is still under threat from attacks.

KIDNAPPINGS

As we all know from the reports from the media and from within Iraq, kidnappings and abductions are still in progress, with three of the latest making headline news. These events are bringing home the reality of a lack of awareness by contractors and some media personnel operating in Iraq. There have been numerous reports that kidnappers have been observing their potential targets days in advance, but the victims have not been aware of this happening. It is crucial that all Westerners operating in these areas are more observant and prepare themselves for such

activities. Too many people are becoming complacent on the basis that "it will never happen to me". Again, the latest reports on these kidnappings will hopefully come as a wake up call to us all.

An unknown source has disclosed that, "they would ideally like to grab/take a hostage from a big news organisation". Three big media company names were mentioned and now all hopefully have been informed internally. Staff movement is being closely monitored.

Aid agencies are seriously considering the withdrawal of their staff from Iraq due to the increase of kidnappings.

This has to be high on the threat list, as the US military has been conducting sessions with the media on kidnapping and ransom. Basic as it is, all lessons should be taken on board.

IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices)

These continue to be a major threat with the same modus operandi as before: devices are disguised as anything imaginable. They are used on the side of roads, in vehicles and as suicide attacks.

BUILDING SECURITY

KBR look as if they will be moving out mid-November so security is still under question around the hotel complexes as the security company starts to move out. Organisations fear the worst and are seeking alternative accommodation and offices. If mortar and rocket attacks find their targets there will inevitably be casualties and even fatalities. Due to the number of Westerners residing in and around these complexes, the situation gives cause for grave concern for all nationals in the area.

Specific threats have been made to individual hotels and local police have managed to warn people. All areas were searched as well as the perimeters, and police patrols searched local streets. All threats need to be taken seriously no matter how inconvenient and how trivial it may seem at the time.

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OTHER INCIDENTS

- Oil exports have been re-established from Kirkuk to Turkey.
- Drive-by shootings continue against local officials and main police stations.
- Kirkuk airbase has been the victim of recent attacks involving mortars and rocket attacks.
- Attacks on the oil installations south of Basra have recently seen reduced production. Security has been increased in order to cancel out these attacks.
- The Georgian defence minister has assured that his country will be deploying 300 troops to Iraq who will join the 159-strong contingent already there. Most of these troops will be deployed in and around Tikrit.
- Protest and disturbances continue approximately once a week in some of the major cities.
- Militants are still smuggling weapons and munitions around the towns.
- Attacks against ministries, local police stations and infrastructures will continue, despite so-called improvement in security.
- Basra has been fraught with attacks on a daily basis. A heightened security alert has been issued warning of more sustained and well-planned attacks.
- Sniper attacks are quite frequent throughout Iraq.

People who have usually been quite friendly to Coalition patrols in the streets of major towns have become rather subdued. This may be another “combat indicator” – a warning that something could happen in the near future or a personal threat.

PERSONAL SECURITY AWARENESS

The threats and dangers remain to all ranging from:

- Small arms fire
- Theft
- Car-jacking
- Kidnapping
- Sniping attacks
- IEDs
- UVIEDs
- Fraud
- Rocket attacks
- Mortar attacks
- Suicide bombers

- Parcel and letter bombs
 - Co-ordinated attacks
 - Crossfire and friendly fire
 - SAMs
 - Celebratory fire
 - Civil disturbances and associated violence
 - Grenade attacks
 - Unexploded ordnance
- ...and even your HEALTH is affected by living and working in Iraq despite illness, bad first aid and heat injuries.

Personnel working on contracts in Iraq are still under major threat, as well as NGOs and aid workers. These people remain a high priority target for the insurgents as they do not use armed safety or local military for added security.

Attacks will not cease for the foreseeable future, as the increase in surveillance by the insurgents intensifies prior to any attack.

Anyone entering Iraq should receive a thorough update on activities and threats in the area prior to their employment in order to bring them up to speed about the dangers they are likely to encounter.

All personnel should be reminded that when operating near Coalition forces you might become a target, either directly or indirectly. The threat increases from opportunist shooters to well planned IEDs.

Even media crews filming burnt out military vehicles could suffer severe consequences. In one such incident, a cameraman died whilst filming a burnt out Bradley vehicle as it was fired on from a US gunship.

Due to the increase of attacks and threats to all in Iraq it is reminded that an emergency grab bag should be packed by every individual in case you need to move at short notice.

The danger areas remain any government and military establishments, flyovers and tunnels, military and police stations, checkpoints and convoys, shops, mosques and churches, hotel complexes and the Green Zone.

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There are reports that there is a new group in town preparing for a “spectacular” - an attack involving some form of mass devastation - before the US presidential election in November or Iraqi elections. Again, anything suspicious should be reported immediately no matter how trivial it may seem.

Good security of the residence, work place, personal awareness and good anti-surveillance whilst travelling around may be enough to deter an attack against you. Do not make it easy for the attackers.

A few safety points (again)

- Do not discuss any work issues with any stranger or when you are on the telephone.
- Keep your voice quiet as possible when on the phone so by-passers cannot hear the conversation.
- Be vigilant at all times - especially when you leave your workplace, home, travelling to and fro from work, and when you enter your residence.
- Report anything suspicious immediately to the Coalition forces, police and your security advisors.
- Do not tell any stranger who you are or work for.
- Carry the correct papers.
- Avoid routine, do not leave and depart at the same time each day. Vary routes as much as possible.
- When travelling and walking, glance over your shoulder to see if the same vehicle or person is behind you. If so, stop and see if they pass you. In the event of any suspicious behaviour, drive or walk to the nearest safe place (US military checkpoint for example) and report it immediately.
- Do not wear your IDs or passes openly except when approaching checkpoints and police.
- Get into the habit of physically checking your car for IEDs and signs that the vehicle may have been tampered with.
- Carry out good security checks on all places where you work and reside.
- Do not wear any Western logos on the outside of your clothes and cut out the tag “Made in ...” from inside the garment.
- Do not wear anything remotely resembling military clothing.
- Be aware of children trying to make friends with you. They may suddenly steal something and run off. Do not chase after them; it could be a “come on”, as

once around the corner kidnappers may be waiting.

- If asked what media organisation you work for, be very careful in answering and do not tell them you are American or British or any other Coalition nationalities.
- If using a radio, be very careful where you are seen using it as some people see this as spying.
- Always take body armour with you, you never know when you will need it, and remember it is designed to assist in saving your life! Even covert lightweight body armour, worn under a jacket, etc, will protect you in sensitive and populated areas and may not bring unwanted attention to you.
- In the event of a mortar or rocket attack, grab your body armour and get on the floor as fast as possible. Whilst on the floor put on the body armour and helmet.
- Know the muster emergency point. (Listen for orders and directions from your safety advisor).
- Know all escape routes and routines.
- Do not go off chasing a story. Clear it first and take security with you.
- Let people from your organisation know where you are at all times.
- Do not open the door to anyone you do not recognise.
- Lock all doors on vehicles when travelling between locations at slow speed or stopping. Leave locks open if travelling at high speed.
- Do not make any sudden movements when approaching the military.
- Do not approach military checkpoints at night – stay away.
- Use appropriate signs when approaching the checkpoints, e.g. MEDIA, etc.
- When approaching a military convoy, stay well back and only over take when you are given the sign (thumbs up in most cases).
- Do not overtake military convoys under bridges or in tunnels.
- If cleared to overtake then pass the convoy as quickly as possible.
- Do not film police or military without permission.
- Do not rush out to explosions, etc as a secondary explosion could take place.
- Try to avoid main crowds whenever possible.
- Keep the time at an incident to a minimum.
- Stay as a team if deployed.

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- Discuss all plans and emergency procedures prior to going out as a team so all will know what to do if a threatening situation arises.
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- Stick to the story that you have rehearsed if captured or detained.
- Do not stand around; keep moving.
- Keep a low profile whenever possible when walking or driving.
- Women should carry a headscarf at all times and wear it as much as possible to disguise the fact they are a foreigner.
- Stay away from any military activity as these are a prime target for attacks.
- Inform all people at workplace and residences of potential danger areas.
- Destroy all paperwork properly either by burning it or shredding.
- On arrival in Jordan or any other neighbouring country prior to entering Iraq, ensure you have correct ID, correct equipment, an up to date security brief of bad and good areas, places to avoid, etc.
- Once in situ in Iraq ensure you receive another security brief from someone who has been there for a period of time.
- Do not be afraid to ask any questions concerning the area you are going into and the security issues.
- Ensure there is kit packed ready in case of a country evacuation by road. The list should include the basics such as:
 - Spare fuel cans
 - Water jerry cans
 - Food
 - Sleeping blankets
 - First aid kit
 - Breakdown equipment
 - Maps
 - Communications and spare batteries

Ensure you receive some form of safety training prior to departing your country.

In the UK, the British have a legal requirement to look after their employees in any area of the world if employed by a company, so therefore it is your right to demand some form of awareness training and first

aid training prior to deployment. Receiving it in Iraq or Jordan is far too late, and potentially a waste of employers' time and money if you decide then not to venture into Iraq.

On entering Iraq and when in Iraq the safety points that should be given to you in a brief should consist along the lines of the sub-headings below (these are not in any specific order):

- Overall situation in Iraq
- Geography/map
- Major threat update
- Latest incidents
- Route into Iraq
- Actions on incidents that may occur whilst travelling to final destination
- Dress and routines
- Team configuration
- Locals used by company (include names/jobs, etc)
- Vehicles being used (explain armour, etc)
- Use of body armour, etc
- Danger areas
- Threats specifically against your organisation
- Places you will be frequenting
- Security checkpoints/routines
- Day to day schedules
- Rotation procedures
- Residence security guards
- Vehicle checks
- Out of bounds areas
- Hospital locations
- Ambulance service
- Local doctor your company may be using
- Credentials/ID cards/relevant paperwork
- Police stations
- Bolt hole in an emergency (emergency place to head to in cases of over run of residence, etc)
- Embassy locations
- Communications (include sat phones/personal mobiles/use of radios/voice procedure/call signs/routines/route names/emergency routine and numbers, etc)
- First aid kits (location and contents)
- Casualty evacuation procedure (CASEVAC – what will happen if you are injured, etc)
- Insurance
- Fire fighting equipment in residence (how to use)
- What to do in case of mortar or rocket attack, etc.

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- Security around your residence (CCTV/local guards/routines/signing in and out, etc)
- Emergency power systems and routines
- Driving in Iraq
- Vehicle equipment (breakdown procedure, etc)
- Emergency grab bag and suggested contents
- Route selection
- Anti-surveillance
- If using Western armed advisors – what is expected from them and what is expected from you.
- In-house training in emergency situations/first aid/awareness
- Routine in the operations room (if using)
- Alert states/procedures
- All daily/weekly meetings
- Who are the main contacts (locals/officials, etc)?
- Routine on entering Baghdad International Airport
- Other Western company locations and points of contact
- Main escape routes on foot and by vehicle
- RV meeting points

A personal form should be completed if not already done from place of departure (UK, for example, and consist of the following headings (Again, this is not exhaustive, but gives you an idea): Full name, date, company, blood group, any current medication, allergies, doctor's details, next of kin, passport details, any special instructions, etc.

This list is endless, but hopefully will ensure your people will at least receive some form of brief and let them know exactly what they are getting into.

As mentioned before, REMEMBER you are possibly a volunteer going into Iraq and should understand that the country you are visiting is fraught with danger - either being shot, blown up or even kidnapped. If you are not able to handle this then DO NOT GO! It is that simple, even in most cases where the financial award is attractive. It is too late to complain on your return or when you are being fired on.

Reports stress that the continued threat to individuals within the international zone and immediate surrounding areas remains significant. As always we advise all senior management of all

organisations who have employees over in Iraq to seriously consider their security and safety issues. Pre-deployment awareness and first aid training is essential; contact us if need be for advice.

Many thanks to Centurion advisors, members of the media and other essential personnel in Iraq for providing information for this Field Report. It really is very much appreciated and essential for all operating in Iraq.

Centurion Risk Assessment Services Ltd.