Good afternoon and A'salaam A-layQoom.

I am pleased to be joined this afternoon by Lieutenant Commander Keith Dowling of Task Force Troy, the unit responsible for explosive ordinance disposal under Multi-National Corp-Iraq. Keith and I would like to provide you with an overview of the work that continues to remove dangerous military munitions and other explosive materials from throughout Iraq – what we refer to universally as caches.

My remarks will address the overall cache situation in Iraq, detailing some of the larger discoveries found recently, and what this means for security forces and Iraqis. Keith will share insights into how Task Force Troy goes about its work of classification and disposal of munitions and provide details on the items they have recovered that you see here in front of us.
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In the first ten months of 2007, coalition and Iraqi security forces have found and cleared 5,364 caches. That is twice the volume of material found and cleared in all of 2006, some 2,667 caches.
This first slide gives a month by month comparison for 2006 and 2007. You will notice that starting in April, when the majority of the surge forces had arrived in Iraq, the number of caches found spiked considerably and in the ensuing months we've seen a steady increase.

By way of definition, a cache is a source of supplies, such as weapons, munitions and improvised explosive devices, or IED components, that are concealed to facilitate the conduct of insurgency operations.

Simply put, it's the fuel that drives the insurgency that has led to the death and destruction witnessed here in Iraq for the past several years.

We highlight caches because they are the primary source of weapons used to target Coalition forces, Iraqi security forces, and innocent Iraqi civilians. These caches consist of a range of munitions, homemade explosives, and other items necessary to build Improvised Explosive Devices and the highly lethal Explosively Formed Penetrators … conduct indirect fires … supply forces with small arms and ammunition … and support surveillance and communications.
This also includes rockets, mortars, mortar tubes, C4 explosive, land mines, detonating cord, RPG launchers, grenades, copper discs, batteries, nitric acid, small arms, ammunition, TNT, blasting caps, timers, relays, and fuses.

The increase in caches cleared and found can be attributed to many factors. I will outline a few of them by highlighting some of the provinces that have seen a significant increase in caches found and cleared in 2007.
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In al-Anbar, security forces doubled the number of caches found and cleared in 2007, from 1,217 to 2,525, making it the highest concentration of caches found anywhere in Iraq.

For example, northwest of Fallujah on Saturday, the Iraqi Army uncovered one of the larger caches in recent memory. This slide outlines the various items found. They include over 1,000

mortar rounds, 278 of which were modified for IED use. There were also timers, timed fuses, blasting caps, and batteries, all of which are the key components in constructing IEDs.
This was an incredibly lethal cache and is a great credit to the Iraqi Army in locating and destroying its contents before the enemy had a chance to use it.

The increasing effectiveness of the Iraqi security forces has led to many finds such as the one in Fallujah, taking components used to make IEDs off the streets. In the last several weeks, Iraqi security forces have uncovered numerous caches in Balad, Baghdad, Kirkuk, Iskandariyah, Baqubah and Taji. Their efforts have no doubt helped lead to the decrease in IED explosions we are seeing across Iraq.
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Diyala province, which has seen a dramatic four-fold increase of caches found and cleared over last year, from 165 to 529, has been a direct beneficiary of the surge of coalition forces. The surge has allowed our forces an opportunity to develop relationships with local citizens. Gaining their trust and confidence, these local citizens have contributed greatly to the increase in caches found, IEDs cleared, and insurgents detained.

Last week in al-Anbar, Coalition forces received 37 tips from local Iraqis. These 37 tips led to 25 caches, the clearing of 9 IEDs, and the detention of 11 insurgents. Iraq-wide, security forces receive an average of 16,500 tips a month, many providing information leading to the location of hidden caches.
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In Sa'ada (Saw-ah-duh) village last month, a local citizen led coalition forces to one of the largest caches of Explosively Formed Penetrators, or EFPs, found in Iraq to date. The find included more than 120 fully-assembled EFPs, more than 150 copper discs, 600 pounds of C4 explosive, 100 mortar rounds, and 30 107mm rockets.
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And on Wednesday, a citizen in Husseiniyah led Coalition Forces to a building where explosively formed penetrators and improvised explosive devices were being constructed. The soldiers discovered a large cache of explosives, including approximately 10 fully assembled EFPs of various sizes including one 12-inch EFP – among the largest found here in Iraq – approximately 90 copper plates of various sizes, more than 200 pounds of C-4 explosive, other explosive materials including TNT and numerous other materials used in manufacturing EFPs.

I will now pass the microphone to Commander Dowling. Keith will explain some of the munitions seen here, and the role his organization plays in classifying and destroying them and then I'll close out our formal remarks with some general comments and observations.

Thank you, Keith. The increasing effectiveness of Iraqi security forces, the surge, and cooperation with Iraqi citizens have all contributed to the increased numbers of caches found and cleared. The clearing of these caches has helped contribute to the downward trends we are seeing in IED explosions and indirect fire, also known as IDF.
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This slide depicts the decrease in IED explosions. Notice that IED attacks in October are in line with numbers last seen in September 2004. Overall, IED attacks have decreased by 50 percent since the start of the surge.
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We also see the same trend in regards to indirect fire incidents, which include such things as mortar and rocket attacks. Notice once again the downward trend since the start of the surge in June.

Let me turn to the source of much of these caches we have found. We have spoken previously of Iran's malign influence here in Iraq through supplying terrorists and criminals with rockets and EFPs. The cache finds mentioned and much of the munitions here before you originated in Iran.

However, the two EFP caches recently found and mentioned previously in my remarks appear to contain components that arrived prior to Iran's commitment to Iraq to stop the arming, funding and training of extremists. We hope in the coming weeks and months to confirm that Iran has indeed honored its pledge through further verification that the flow of munitions and other lethal aide has stopped.

We expect another round of the trilateral working group level talks soon, with representatives of Iraq, Iran and the US, to further examine security issues in Iraq.

I would note, it is our intent to release nine Iranians currently held in our custody in the near future. These individuals have been assessed to be of no continuing value, nor do they pose a further threat to Iraqi security. Two of them were detained in Irbil in January of this year.
While the trends we are seeing in the clearing of Caches in 2007 are encouraging, we re-iterate that innumerable challenges remain in Iraq. Coalition forces will continue to work with our Iraqi partners as we move to sustainable security, a self-sustaining economy, and viable local, regional and national governance.
With that, we would be happy to take your questions.