

The Daily Roar

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Iraqis 'have a ball' in Doura

*Trust built through sports,
friendly competition*

By Spc. Nathaniel Smith

4th IBCT PAO

BAGHDAD – The game was only an exhibition. There were no statistics kept, no trophies given out, and nothing on the line.

When a team of 'shurta,' or police, from the 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division faced off against a team from southern Baghdad's Doura neighborhood on Dec. 17, there was little on the line besides bragging rights, but that's not to say the game did not carry a special significance.

"The INP's, who don't interact with the neighborhood very much, interacted with them through a soccer game," said Waterbury, Vt., native Capt. Shane Sandretto, commander of Troop B, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div. "It was a nice, friendly-spirited competition; the game was well-taken on both sides."

The game was proposed by a citizen from the neighborhood, and the commander of the 3-7-2 NP's jumped on board.

Mohammed Abdul Hamir, a player on Doura's team, said a few months ago the game probably wouldn't have taken place, but improvements in security made it possible.

"The main road was very dangerous, but now we're safe," he said. "We have guards, and everything's good."

"I don't think they would have played. It would have been that simple," Sandretto added.

Getting two groups that used to trade gunfire on a nightly basis to cooperate is never easy, but that's what 1-4 Cav. is trying to do in Doura.

Sandretto said the game was an important step in progressing toward not only cooperation between the citizens and the INP's, but it was a sign of the overall progress of the neighborhood.

"As a step toward transition, we have to raise the trust



by Spc. Nathaniel Smith, 4th IBCT PAO

The Iraqi National Police soccer team takes the field in southern Baghdad's Doura neighborhood, Dec. 16. The police played a team from the Doura neighborhood in order to build more of a rapport with the people.

and legitimize the national police in the eyes of the folks," he said. "We've done that through joint patrols, but I don't think it makes as much of an impact as something simple like a soccer game does.

"It's getting the folks in the Muhallah to trust and like the National Police more through sports."

"This is a nice way to get to know each other," Hamir said. "It's a friendly game."



CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Gen. David Petraeus, commanding general of Multi-National Forces – Iraq, paid a visit to the 2nd Stryker Brigade Dec. 13 to present 10 Soldiers with coins, reenlist four Soldiers and promote one to the rank of staff sergeant. “This brigade has really made a difference out here,” Petraeus said. by Pfc. Samantha Schutz, 4th Inf. Div. PAO

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

WEDNESDAY
 Mostly Sunny
 HI: 64F/17C
 LO: 43F/6C



FRIDAY
 Mostly Sunny
 HI: 56F/13C
 LO: 37F/2C



THURSDAY
 Mostly Sunny
 HI: 54F/12C
 LO: 37F/2C



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 Multi-National Division - Baghdad

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Taji Joint Rural Planning Committee works to improve essential services

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- Representatives from ministries within the government of Iraq held the first meeting of the Taji qada's Joint Rural Planning Committee in Baghdad with the Baghdad Provincial Governor's office and Taji qada (a Baghdad rural district council) officials Dec. 12.

The directors general of the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works, the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture attended the meeting along with Fakher Najem Abdullah, the Taji Quaim Makam (equivalent to a city district manager in the U.S.); Subhai Mashadani, the rural services committee chairman and Radhy Ja'afar Muhssin, the director of the qada's Sab Al Bor, Iraq nahiyah (similar to a neighborhood council) were a few of the guest speakers.

Some of the topics for the first meeting included such things as road projects, agriculture, essential services such as water and sewer projects, education and the construction of schools along with the budgets that make those projects possible.

Senior leaders from the 1st "Ironhorse Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division to include Lt. Col. Kevin MacWatters, commander, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, along with the brigade's embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, ePRT Baghdad 5, were on hand to support the meeting. Leaders from the Provincial Reconstruction Team-Baghdad and the Gulf Region Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also attended the JRPC.

According to Anchorage, Alaska native Col. Mike Bridges, governance group advisor for ePRT Baghdad-5, the JRPC is an outgrowth of the Joint Planning Committee which began 18 months ago for the city districts in Baghdad. The JRPC is intended for the six rural qadas (rural districts) to receive the same visibility and support from the central government ministries in the Baghdad Provincial government as the city districts receive.

"The Joint Rural Planning Committee's primary goal is to coordinate and deconflict projects between government of Iraq entities such as ministries and other levels of gov-



Courtesy photo

ernment using their own budgets while also working with Coalition Forces and agencies," said Bridges. For the past five months, ePRT Baghdad 5 has been working with local governments in the qadas in the Ironhorse area of operations through a mentorship program that involves bi-cultural bi-lingual Iraqi instructors teaching the local government officials an understanding of the concepts of governance to include everything from how to fund and provide essential services as well as how to manage and allocate a budget.

"Taji was put forward as the first (qada to hold a JRPC meeting) because we felt it was the most developed of the qadas since beginning the local government training program in mid-July," added Bridges. "They in fact presented a well-developed 2008 project budget request to the provincial council in late November and (this first meeting) was an opportunity for it to be publicly presented to the larger group."

The meeting marked the first of what will become a bi-weekly program where different qada representatives present information in a shared environment.

"The goal will be to coordinate construction and reconstruction projects and to lead toward all levels of government in Iraq preparing, funding and completing their own infrastructure programs and public services," said Bridges.