



U.S. EMBASSY - BAGHDAD

2008 Provincial Reconstruction Team News

-Securing The Iraqi Province...And The Relationship-

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Combat Outpost 6, Muthanna Province - Representatives of the 82nd Airborne, Iraqi Police and Highway Patrol units, and the Muthanna Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) inaugurated a new Joint Security Site (JSS) on May 10th to facilitate the flow of information and resources between U.S. and Iraqi forces.

The location of the JSS, directly adjacent to the 82nd Airborne's Combat Outpost 6 (COP-6), will share intelligence and information with the Iraqi military and police and is a key focus of Coalition Forces strategy to coordinate operational movements in Muthanna with the provincial leadership as well as help train security forces.

Brigadier General Khadim Abulheel, the commander of the Iraqi Police contingent in the province, delivered welcoming remarks at the ceremony inaugurating the JSS. He said the facility will "promote security, cooperation, and training in the province," and he expressed his gratitude to the Americans "for building this kind of facility."

Police Lieutenant Natham, a 30 year-old Muthanna native who will be working in the new JSS, said he is a strong supporter of the concept behind it. "It's a great thing" to have the JSS so close to COP-6 where Coalition Forces operate; to be "working together to build our country."

Natham recently participated in a U.S.-led training program to identify potential Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) along the main highway running through Muthanna as well as to conduct vehicle searches. "I am proud to be a member of the Iraqi Police...and proud to be saving my country," he said.

Muthanna, the first province to be returned to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC) following the collapse of Saddam's regime in 2003, is widely recognized as one of the most peaceful Arab provinces in Iraq, thanks in part to cooperation between Iraqi and U.S. forces.

"My soldiers are absolutely committed to working with all Iraqi Security Forces and Government of Iraq officials" noted 82nd LTC Fred Drummond, commander of the Special Troops Battalion that controls COP-6.

"The JSS in Muthanna is designed to do just that -- to facilitate responsive operational and intelligence sharing between all security members in Muthanna with the primary focus of supporting the great citizens of the province, Drummond explained.



Coordinated through the PRT the US 82nd Airborne and Iraqi forces raise the flags over a new Joint Security Station serving the province.

COP-6, next to the JSS facility, is the only U.S. military installation in Muthanna, was originally constructed as a relay station for U.S. military communications. Yet U.S. diplomats serving in Iraq quickly recognized the potential for this base as a focal point for outreach efforts within the local community.

Paul O’Friel, a U.S. Foreign Service Officer serving as Team Leader of the Muthanna PRT, commissioned the construction of a traditional reed guest house as well as a training facility next to COP-6 and the JSS to serve the needs of Muthanna’s residents.

“The proximity to COP-6 of the JSS, training facility, and guest house should send a clear message to all residents of Muthanna,” noted O’Friel, “that the U.S. presence in the province is meant not only to promote a stable security situation but also to demonstrate the premium we place on educational opportunities to improve people’s lives.”

O’Friel echoed General Khadim’s sentiments on the importance of maintaining close ties with Iraqi counterparts. “We’re all about deeds, not words,” he said, and the deeds of the Coalition in having constructed the JSS and training facility reinforce the message that “we are committed to the future of this province.”