



# CHEMICAL BONDS:

## *A Historic U.S.–Iraq CBRNE Training Partnership*

*By Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Hauer and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Thompson*

Chemical bonding is a fascinating study. The bonding of chemicals is what makes possible the millions of chemical compounds in the environment that surrounds us—including the very water we drink and oxygen we breathe. However, on rare occasions, it is possible to forge bonds stronger than those we study in science. The focus of this article is on the human element—specifically, on a particular human bond formed 18–19 November 2008, when U.S. Army chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) Soldiers participated in a two-day training exercise with Iraqi counterparts from the Chemical Defense Section of the Iraqi Army Engineer School, Camp Taji, Iraq.

One of the goals of the Multinational Force–Iraq (MNF-I) is to aid in the transition of missions that are currently performed by coalition forces to the Iraqi army and the government of Iraq. The elimination of the remnants of Iraq’s chemical weapons is one such mission. The preparation of the Iraqi army to achieve this end state requires a long lead time and a number of

intermediate steps. In keeping with the philosophy of “partner, enable, and advise,” the MNF-I presented a chemical defense and response capabilities demonstration hosted by the Iraqi Army Engineer School. This demonstration brought CBRN and EOD Soldiers from A/22d Chemical Battalion and 2/25th Infantry Division together with soldiers from the Iraqi Chemical Defense Section.

On the first day, U.S. Soldiers trained their Iraqi hosts on the function and capability of CBRN defense equipment such as Level A personal protective equipment; the Improved Chemical Agent Monitor; and select commercial, off-the-shelf equipment such as the Lightweight Chemical Detector LCD3.2e. Soldiers from the 22d explained and demonstrated several pieces of equipment they use to assess suspect chemical munitions to determine if they contain chemical warfare material and if they are safe to transport or must be destroyed in place. United Nations Security Council resolutions and various sanctions had restricted technology transfers and research and development opportunities for the Iraqi Chemical Corps; however, this training revealed the technological advances in chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) detection equipment over the past two decades that allow real-time, on-site, presumptive analysis and characterization.

On the second day, Iraqi soldiers led an exhibition and demonstration of CBRN knowledge, equipment, and capabilities to officials of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. The exhibition confirmed that Iraqi soldiers were eager to train on and use the equipment that the Iraqi army requires for individuals, chemical units, and a specialized chemical unit currently being generated and tasked to destroy remnants of Iraqi chemical weapons.



This event was the first of many planned, combined training efforts between U.S. CBRN and EOD Soldiers and their Iraqi Chemical Defense Section counterparts. MNF-I and the U.S. Army CBRN School will continue to strengthen the established bond and develop the capabilities of the Iraqi Chemical Corps and associated school, reducing the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the region and furthering stability efforts throughout Iraq. 



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Lieutenant Colonel Hauer was the team chief for the CBRNE Fusion Cell, Combined Joint Operations, MNF-I. He holds a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in chemistry from the State University of New York at Brockport.

Lieutenant Colonel Thompson was the CBRNE planner for the CBRNE Fusion Cell, MNF-I. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the State University of New York at Albany.

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*("Order Out of Chaos: The Incident Command System" continued from page 52)*

Slowly but surely, nearly all U.S. Government agencies that participate in "incident" responses are coming onboard with the language and process of the ICS as the method of managing interagency responses, including cases of deliberate operations that are not "emergencies." Therefore, fluency in the ICS is required not only for its potential tactical use in combat, but also for full Army participation in future multiagency incident responses.

Online ICS training is available at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/>. For more information about the ICS, go to [http://www.fema.gov/txt/nims/nims\\_ics\\_position\\_paper.txt](http://www.fema.gov/txt/nims/nims_ics_position_paper.txt). 

**Endnote:**

<sup>1</sup>Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), *Management of Domestic Incidents*, 28 February 2003.

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Lieutenant Colonel Howe is a U.S. Army Reserve infantry officer assigned to Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. He is a 2005 graduate of the U.S. Army War College and a graduate of the Smoke Diver Course, Florida State Fire College, Ocala, Florida.