



Achieving Iraqi Police Primacy Through Partnership

By First Lieutenant Carl F. Yeaney

Kirkuk Province is the only province in the U.S. Division–North area of Iraq where police primacy has been achieved. The 3d Infantry Division (the U.S. Division–North headquarters division) defines police primacy as “Iraqi police forces having primary responsibility for internal security under civilian authority in accordance with the constitution and consistent with the rule of law (ROL) within a given area.” Although the Kirkuk police force is organized much like the police forces of other provinces, police primacy has been secured in Kirkuk through professional efforts and working relationships with other Iraqi Security Force units and organizations within the province.

Throughout their deployment, members of the 218th Military Police Company have supported Iraqi police in all areas of operation. They have provided continuous mentorship and offered specific suggestions for addressing particular issues. This enabled Iraqi police leaders to focus their attention on operational areas that could be refined. All actual efforts are carried out by the Iraqi police themselves so that they may build the foundation necessary for future unilateral self-sustainment.

One 218th priority is to improve Iraqi station training programs. The Soldiers of the 218th assist station training officers and provide them with the references necessary to prepare for their classes. They also focus on crime scene management and investigations, conducting biometric certification courses for fingerprinting and encouraging individual police station leaders to take advantage of the Investigative Officer Course—a two-week training program that is independently conducted by Iraqi police trainers at the Kirkuk Training Center.

In addition to the main areas of focus, company police transition teams (PTTs) also review and disseminate information about wanted persons or about vehicles to be used during checkpoint operations, review ongoing investigation packets and track the status of cases, conduct sensitive-item inventories and monitor outgoing logistical requests, and conduct combined operations such as community policing patrols and humanitarian-aid distribution.

The efforts of the 218th Military Police Company have resulted in the validation of eight Iraqi police stations in the Kirkuk Province—a recognition that is based on a mutual agreement between the military police unit and the station’s respective landowning company and battalion. Each validation was accompanied by a ceremony signaling that the station was ready to operate independently of U.S. forces oversight. And each validation marked the culmination of a lot of hard work from each individual station and partnered PTT.

All special policing units at the provincial level of police operations fall under the Provincial Director of Police, Major General Jamal Taher Bakr. The partnered U.S. organization for these units is the provincial PTT, which answers directly to the landowning brigade and acts as the higher element of tactical control. Information and training plans are communicated to the Iraqi and U.S. sides, allowing for a more refined training focus from the top level down. Individual platoons synchronize efforts with company and battalion landowners through weekly meetings, which reduces redundancy in training and information collection efforts. Through the mentorship and development of Iraqi police partners, landowning units are better able to conduct successful kinetic operations across the Kirkuk Province.

Through combined, concentrated efforts and the maintenance of good partnerships, the 218th Military Police Company has succeeded in its efforts regarding the Iraqi police in Kirkuk. The achievement of police primacy is a definitive stance toward a safe and secure nation for all Iraqis.

First Lieutenant Yeaney is a platoon leader for the 218th Military Police Company. He holds a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania.