

Experts: Insurgency in Iraq could spread

Despite outlook, Iraqi, U.S. officials optimistic

Hamza Hendaw
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



The Associated Press

Iraqi firefighters try to extinguish burning vehicles at the site of a suicide attack in Baghdad, Iraq, on Sunday. A suicide car bomb in central Baghdad hit two police vehicles in Al-Tahrir Square, killing two officers and two civilians.

BAGHDAD, Iraq — With the 2,000th U.S. military death looming in Iraq, many wonder about the direction of the insurgency that killed most of them.

Experts think the country's increasingly regional-oriented politics will fuel the insurgency and even spread it further inside Iraq.

Others put forward a simple, disquieting scenario: So long as U.S. and other foreign troops remain in Iraq, the insurgency will continue.

"It will become more chaotic," predicted Magnus Ranstorp of the Swedish National Defense College in Stockholm, Sweden. "It is obvious that the United States is in Iraq to stay. If this is the case,

the Shiites will likely join the Sunnis in the fight."

The 2,000 mark in U.S. military deaths is approaching at a time when Iraqi and U.S. officials are congratulating themselves that the Oct. 15 constitutional referendum and the start of Saddam Hussein's trial four days later passed without major bloodshed and

destruction.

They also are upbeat about the growing efficiency and number — 200,000 at present — of Iraq's security forces, although some U.S. commanders say the Iraqis need 18 months to two years before they can fight the insurgency unaided.

Recent operations in western

Iraq, especially in towns along the Euphrates River close to the Syrian border, are said to have been effective in disrupting the insurgents' supply lines and reducing the number of car bombs.

Stepped-up security has forced insurgents in recent weeks to largely abandon using car bombs and resort to indirect fire, such as lobbing mortar shells from afar, Interior Minister Bayan Jabr said.

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, U.S. military spokesman in Iraq, said troops captured more than 300 foreign fighters and killed 100 members of al-Qaida in Iraq the past six months. Other successes include the detention of 600 insurgents in the two weeks before the referendum, said Maj. Gen. William G. Webster, commander of U.S. forces in Baghdad.

But no official predicts a quick victory.

"The insurgents are still there," Lynch cautioned. "They still want to discredit the Iraqi government, so operations continue."

COLLEGES • CONTINUED FROM 1

Louisiana State University.

In a recent report, FEMA suggested that universities form offices to oversee public safety, environmental health and risk management issues to help prevent possible disasters.

The University of Maryland has already taken important steps to making its campus and students safer from natural disasters. The university is one of 10 in the nation considered "storm-ready" by the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The federal "StormReady" program aims to encourage campuses to prepare for weather emergencies.

"Safety is a top priority for the campus," University of Maryland President C.D. Mote said in a statement. "We can't prevent storms, but we

can reduce the chances that people might be injured by them."

The university has established an early warning siren system, an emergency operations center and a 24-hour emergency communications center, and it has asked staff and campus police to take part in "storm-spotter" training.

Federal officials have asked residents in New England and the southeast to track Hurricane Wilma as it progresses up the Atlantic coast.

"Preparations should be made now ... we urge the public to take this storm seriously and to listen to state and local authorities for instructions," acting FEMA director R. David Paulison said in a news release.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocknews@gum.sc.edu

THE GAMECOCK
Online five days a week. Sick.



YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES... YOU CAN'T ESCAPE THE TERROR...

HIP-WAZZEE

ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR HALLOWEEN COSTUMES, VINTAGE APPAREL AND MORE

540 GARDEN ST. • 252-1350
Hours: Mon - Thu • 11am - 6pm
Fri - Sat • 11am - 7pm

Masks • Vintage Clothing • Military Uniforms

HALLOWEEN

1621 Main St. 252-1350
Tue-Sat 9am-6pm

ARMY=NAVY STORE

Handcuffs & Whips • Wigs

HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

Adult Costumes!

- Mac Daddy
- Sumo Wrestler
- French Maid Costume
- Great Costume Accessories & Hats

WAIT THERE'S MORE!

- Make-up
- Decorations
- Rubber Masks
- Candy and fun foods

CROMERS (803) 779-2290
1055 Berea Road
Next to Williams Brice Stadium

HAUNTED MUSEUM

South Carolina STATE MUSEUM

Oct. 25 and 27

301 Gervais St., Columbia, SC
(803) 898-4921 • www.museum.state.sc.us

Glide through ghostly galleries with ghoulish guides!

Meet the Gray Man of Pawley's Island the Lowcountry Boo Hag the Lost Pilot of Walhalla the Headless Ghost of the State Museum

Hear eerie tales from the Three Rivers Storytelling Guild

Refreshments following the tour
Tours leave on the half-hour 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Tickets, \$15 adults and \$8 children 12 and under; \$10 and \$5 for Friends of the State Museum.

Call (803) 898-4952 or (803) 898-4902.

The Turning Pointe

COSTUME RENTALS AND SALES

5143 Forest Drive
782.8188