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Iraq Army generals, USACE leaders discuss reconstruction, security

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Iraqi Generals discuss reconstruction and security with USACE leaders and staff. From left, Air Force Col. Vince Saroni, incoming deputy commander of the USACE Gulf Region Division, and Col. Steve Hill, commander of USACE's Gulf Region South district; end of table, from left, Maj. Gen. Habib Talib Al Hussein, commander of Iraqi 10th Division, and Brig. Gen. Jabbar Naemah Karam Al-Tae, deputy division commander. (USACE photo by Mohammed Aliwi)

TALLIL, Iraq – The commander of the Iraqi Army's 10th Division and his deputy met with senior officers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and pledged closer coordination and cooperation to enhance security in connection with USACE efforts to rebuild the infrastructure of Iraq.

Maj. Gen. Habib Talib Al Hussein, the division commander, said he was "very pleased and very happy with this meeting" with Col. Steve Hill, commander of USACE's Gulf Region South district, and with Col. Vince Saroni, the incoming deputy commander of the USACE Gulf Region Division. Joining the Iraqi commander at

the meeting was his deputy, Brig. Gen. Jabbar Naeemah Karam Al-Taee, a graduate of the U.S. Army War College.

Pledging to protect USACE and other coalition personnel in his area, Habib said, "Your security is my security." He told the U.S. officers that "our goal is the same—stability and rebuilding the new Iraq."

In addition to his Army duties, Habib recently was given control of the Iraqi police in the three southern Iraq provinces of Dhi Qar, Muthanna and Maysan.

The Iraqi officers and their American hosts lunched at the base DFAC, or dining facility, reviewed tracking systems used by the Corps, and agreed to establish a coordination cell between the 10th Division headquarters and GRS.

Habib said he has confidence in himself and his troops to provide security for the USACE reconstruction personnel, saying he sees this as his personal responsibility. "I really appreciate you guys and your efforts," the Iraqi general said. "You are far away from your families just to support us."

Habib called the southern province of Maysan "the bottleneck to Iraqi secu-

rity and stability." He said that "if you control the neck, you control all the bottle." USACE and Provincial Reconstruction Team personnel currently do not go into Maysan due to security concerns. Maysan borders on Iran and lies to the north of Basrah province.

Hill, the GRS commander, briefed the Iraqi officers on his mission and vision of providing quality projects while helping to build local governance and help the local economy. "We are in your country," he told the Iraqi generals. "We are in your area. We would like to offer our services."

Habib said he had worked with USACE before in a different job and found it to be a good organization. He said the meeting was another great opportunity to discuss projects and meeting the infrastructure needs of the Iraqi Army and provinces. He said additional barracks are needed for the Iraqi army and police. "You can help on this issue," he told Col. Hill.

The general said he stresses to his troops, to sheiks, and to the people of Iraq the need to support Coalition forces and reconstruction efforts.

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