

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: JUL 2002

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]
Military Situation 21 March

EO 12958 1.6(d)(1)>10<25Yrs
(C)

* The Govt continues to reorient forces to the north as Kurdish forces continue attempts to isolate the key strategic centers of Kirkuk and Mosul. Regime security in the Baghdad area and maintaining control of Kirkuk and Mosul appear to be the Govt's primary objectives at this point. Scattered fighting continues throughout the south, with significant fighting near Karbala, Ad Dawaniyah, and 50km west of Baghdad.

The military situation in the South...

* Govt pacification efforts continue in south, with military activity noted in several cities, but most activity seems to have displaced to rural areas around the Karbala-An Najaf areas and other rural areas. Despite Govt claims to successes and control of cities in the South, a better term to use might be that Govt forces occupy certain cities but do not control them.

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* Basra -- [redacted]

* Arm/Mech checkpoints remain throughout Basra [redacted]

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* [redacted] Tear gas and napalm have been used in Basrah area.

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* Ad Diwaniyah - Govt forces report gaining control of a town near there, possibly Ash Shamiyah. RGFC forces have taken losses in fighting (personnel and equipment). Helos are being used. Govt conducting sweep operations in area.

* Al Hillah - Govt forces conducted 3 sweeps in city and area 21 Mar. Confiscated some wpns, killed 2, arrested 26.

* Al Habbiniyah -- RGFC forces reportedly gained control of the city 50 km west of Baghdad on the 15th or 16th. This was not the first indication of unrest here. Analysts had suspected activity in this area [redacted]

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The military situation in the North... Kurdish forces continue to enjoy military success.

* Kirkuk--heavy fighting continues in area with Kurds claiming they occupy highlands outside the city and that they have cut the Kirkuk-Tikrit Hwy.

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* Tariq Azziz has claimed the aircraft shot down by the Coalition on the 20th had been moved to avoid capture or sabotage by Kurdish insurgents at Kirkuk.

* Tuz Khurmatu - the govt has tried to open the route to Kirkuk through this city. Govt forces have claimed successes in the past. Status remains uncertain, but Govt probably occupies the town.

[redacted]

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* Shaykhan - northwest of Kirkuk, Kurdish bns have taken another town on Mosul to Kirkuk road in further attempt to isolate city.

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