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Three American military convoys attacked in Iraq

By Mariam Fam
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSUL, Iraq — Insurgents attacked three American military convoys in this northern city with rocket-propelled grenades and roadside bombs Wednesday, killing three Iraqi civilians and wounding five Americans, the U.S. military and hospital officials said.

The attacks occurred in a city long considered relatively safe for U.S. troops, compared to Baghdad and the cities and towns in the "Sunni Triangle" to the south.

Elsewhere, paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division captured two former Iraqi army generals in Fallujah, the military said. The generals were not identified, but the military said they were suspected of financing and organizing anti-coalition fighters in the volatile city west of Baghdad.

Guerrillas near Fallujah shot down a U.S. Army Chinook helicopter on Sunday, killing 15 soldiers in the bloodiest single strike against American forces since the war began March 20.

No American soldiers were reported killed Wednesday by hostile fire. But one 1st Armored Division soldier died of wounds from a "non-hostile gunshot" at a checkpoint in Baghdad, the military said.

In one of the Mosul attacks, an Iraqi teenager was killed in a grenade blast near city hall, hospital officials said. Two Iraqis and one U.S. soldier were wounded, the U.S. military reported. Hospitals reported 10 Iraqis were wounded; the discrepancy couldn't be reconciled immediately.

In another incident, two Iraqi civilians died in Mosul when a rocket-propelled round struck their car after apparently missing a military convoy, Sgt. Chris Ryder said. He said an Army explosives disposal specialist was wounded. Hospitals reported three Iraqis were wounded.

Later Wednesday, two American soldiers were injured in a rocket-propelled grenade attack, the military said. Another was wounded when an improvised explosive device exploded at his convoy.

In Baghdad, the new head of the Iraqi Governing Council, Jalal Talabani, announced he would visit Turkey on Nov. 19 to seek improved relations. He said he would also go to Iran and Syria.

Relations were strained last month when the Turkish parliament voted to allow the govern-

Center of American-led occupation

The "Green Zone" is an area on the west side of the Tigris River centered on Saddam Hussein's Republican Palace, which serves as the Coalition Provisional Authority headquarters.



SOURCES: DigitalGlobe, Associated Press

ment to send troops to join the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. The Governing Council strongly opposed a deployment because of hostility among the Kurdish minority and ill feelings after four centuries of domination by the Ottoman Turks.

Talabani, who assumed the rotating council presidency Saturday, is a Kurdish politician. Turkey fought a 15-year war against Kurdish rebels, who still have bases in northern Iraq.

On Tuesday, Turkey's ambassador to the United States, Osman Faruk Logoglu, said his country would not send peacekeeping troops into Iraq without an invitation from the Governing Council.

Responding to reported criticism of the Governing Council in an Arab newspaper, Talabani defended the U.S.-appointed body, saying: "The council's representation of the Iraqi people is better than the representation of any Arab country to its people."

And he blamed Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network and an allied group for car bombings and roadside blasts that have killed dozens of people in Iraq in recent weeks.

"We believe that the fighters in Iraq belong to the organization of al-Qaida and Ansar al-Islam," Talabani said. "We have a plan to fight those."

Washington says Ansar al-Islam is linked to al-Qaida, and some U.S. officials say it represents the main organized adversary to American forces in Iraq.

Associated Press writer Bassem Mroue contributed to this report from Baghdad.

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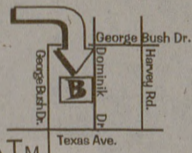
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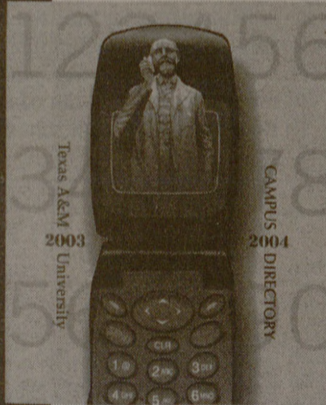
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