

Applying Aggressive Strategies to Equip Iraq

By C. E. Taylor

Photos by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Anthony J. Koch

An Iraqi Army soldier directs an HMMWV to drive forward during a FMS delivery.

Thirty days after Iraq became eligible for security assistance in August 2004 the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) began developing aggressive strategies to improve Foreign Military Sales (FMS) to the country.

Today, with the help of Congress, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Global Security Affairs and the Multinational Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I), DSCA has proven that working under a Train and Equip program to transform the FMS process may be challenging, but it's not impossible.

"The Department of Defense standard processing time to go from Letter of Request (LOR) to Letter of Acceptance (LOA) is 120 days," said Vice Admiral Jeffrey Wieringa, DSCA director. "In June of 2007, we managed to reduce the

processing time of Iraq cases to 74 days; and as of January we are processing Iraq LOAs at about an average of 39 days."

DSCA's execution of the FMS process in support of the Train and Equip mission in Iraq is three times faster than that of other FMS programs.

Wieringa said DSCA has made serious strides in reducing the normal FMS time lines to support operations in Iraq. "We have forward-deployed liaison officers on the ground with MNSTC-I, and all of our congressional notifications for Iraq have been processed in advance of the formal, actionable Iraqi funded LORs. This saves us the time needed to concentrate on the acquisition process."

Lt. Col. Joseph Lontos, DSCA's Integrated Program Team country program director, is at the tip of the spear for the

Iraq security cooperation program. Nearly all Iraq security assistance, security cooperation, and FMS activities begin and end with Lontos.

He said the demands of the Train and Equip mission under MNSTC-I range from Iraqi and DoD-funded cases, to sales from stock and drawdown, and Excess Defense Article (EDA) transfers. The total value of defense articles and services provided to Iraq thus far through FMS is approaching \$3 billion.

Lontos said the greatest overall challenge is taking the FMS program, which is dependent upon a permissive security assistance or security cooperation environment, and synchronizing it with the Train and Equip initiative employed in Iraq.

From the beginning, Lontos' one-person shop was completing and executing transfers

in record time. “We executed the transfer of three C-130Es in 54 calendar days, which included the Congressional Notification and Exception to National Disclosure Policy process; and diverted countless small arms weapons and ammunition to MNSTC-I,” he said.

To meet the increasing demands of the MNSTC-I Train and Equip mission, DSCA brought on three additional contractor support personnel and Lt. Col. Scott Kripowicz, a deputy country program director.

Whether it’s updating the latest briefing, pushing forward a unique FMS requirement or dashing to one of the many meetings at the Pentagon, Lontos marshals the entire FMS effort to accelerate the execution of the program. “We hold a weekly Iraq Security Cooperation Teleconference where we communicate directly with the folks on the ground,” he added. “This allows us to have clear and concise communication with the folks in Iraq and resolve issues and concerns quickly.”

Lontos said in order to expedite many of the deliveries, more than 80 percent of all Iraq-funded FMS defense articles are air transported into the country. “Last August, we worked with Central Command to elevate the priority of FMS cargo for in-theater transport.”

He said, “In addition, we are beginning to work with the Gulf Regional Division of the Army Corps of Engineers to help move the equipment to MNSTC-I designated locations, as well as beefing up training.”

According to Wieringa, DSCA has been

Foreign Military Sales Equipment Flows into Iraq

The Ministry of Defence is continuing to receive logistical support vehicles it has procured through the Foreign Military Sales program and the Iraqi Security Forces Fund. The latest receipts of equipment took place at the Old al Muthana vehicle storage facility in Baghdad on Mar 26.

The Security Assistance Office within the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, manages the Foreign Military Sales



Photo by U.S. Army Capt. David F. Roy

An Iraqi Soldier works to off-load one of the many 5-ton cargo trucks that were delivered to the Old al Muthana vehicle warehouse in Baghdad.

training mid-level case managers and senior level civilian and military officials from the Iraqi Ministry of Defense on the FMS process since September 2006.

Training teams from the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM) at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, conducted five training sessions for U.S. and Iraqi personnel, one in Sep 2006, three in 2007 and one in Jan. 2008.

Recently Wieringa and members of his staff participated in a three-day Iraq FMS conference in the region involving an assortment of U.S. and Iraqi civilian and military personnel. The meeting was an opportunity to share

information and lay out the way ahead for further improvements with Iraq FMS. “The conference was an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, and underscore DSCA’s commitment to further improve the FMS process,” he said.

Wieringa believes the success with the Iraq FMS program is the result of a wide-variety of Congressional, DoD and DSCA initiatives. “I think everyone involved understands the importance of the Iraq FMS mission. We have certainly made tremendous progress so far, but we are constantly seeking ways to refine the process.”

program in Iraq. The function of the Security Assistance Office is to help the Iraqi Government build its defensive capability through the purchase of defensive equipment and services. The requesting government funds Foreign Military Sales cases, in this case the Government of Iraq. The major difference between a Foreign Military Sales case and an Iraqi Security Forces Fund case is the funding source. Iraqi Security Forces Fund cases

are funded with U.S. appropriated dollars specifically dedicated to procuring equipment and services in support of the Iraqi Security Forces.

This Foreign Military Sales delivery included logistical support equipment such as 4 BREM tracked recovery vehicles, 47 water trailers, 66 five-ton cargo trucks, and 175 one-ton cargo trailers. This equipment is valued in excess of \$11.4 million.

The delivery of the 19 Shop Equipment Contact Maintenance Humvees, procured through the Iraqi Security Forces Fund, are valued in excess of \$3.2 million. These vehicles will increase the capacity of the Iraqi army to repair vehicles and equipment.

This equipment and materiel will be issued to Iraqi Army units throughout the country as new units are generated and to replace any losses that have occurred in their efforts to secure the country. **(Story Courtesy MNSTC-I Public Affairs)**



Photo by U.S. Army Capt. David F. Roy

International 5-ton cargo trucks are staged after delivery and transfer to the Iraqi Army at the Old al Muthana vehicle storage facility.