
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Visit to Australian Defence Forces Deployed to Support the Rehabilitation of Iraq

Report of the Delegation 22 to 28 October
2005

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

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Cover Photos:

An infantry soldier from the Baghdad Security Detachment provides security from the hatch of his Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV) while the delegation tours the ceremonial district of the former Iraqi regime.

Mr Kim Wilkie MP (left) and the Hon Mr Bruce Baird MP (right) travel by Bushmaster Infantry Mobility Vehicle from Ali Air-base to Camp Smitty in southern Iraq.

A soldier from the Baghdad Security Detachment provides overwatch for the delegation visit to the Baghdad International Zone

The delegation meets with the Speaker of the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly



Foreword

In late October 2005, a delegation of eight members from the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade visited Australian Defence Force personnel deployed on active service in the Middle East.

Thanks to first class support by both the Diplomatic and Defence Staffs in the Middle East the Delegation was able to meet with the following organisations or agencies:

- Two members of the delegation conducted an operational mission with the Royal Australian Air Force Maritime Patrol Aircraft Detachment over the Northern Arabian Gulf and Southern Iraq;
- Royal Australian Navy personnel deployed aboard HMAS *Newcastle*;
- Royal Australian Air Force personnel conducting C130 Hercules air lift operations in support of coalition forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan;
- The Al Muthanna Task Group conducting security operations and training for the new Iraqi Army in southern Iraq;
- The Australian Embassy in Baghdad's International Zone hosted the delegation for a meeting with the Speaker of the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly, Mr Hajim al-Hassani and members of the Transitional Assembly;
- The US Commander of Multi-National Forces Iraq, General George Casey; and
- The Australian National Commander, Commodore Geoff Ledger and his staff at Camp Victory Baghdad.

The visit to ADF units in the Middle East area of operations formed part of the Committee's wider program of inspections to Defence Force units and Defence Industry sites. Where it is practical the Committee has also sought to visit ADF personnel while they conduct operations. In recent years the Committee has visited Australian Forces in Afghanistan, East Timor and Solomon Islands.

The delegation had three specific aims in undertaking the visit to the Middle East. Its primary purpose was to demonstrate the Parliament's strong bipartisan support, and the support of the Australian community, for Defence Force personnel deployed on this demanding operation.

Secondly the visit allowed the members of the delegation to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the situation in Iraq, the tasks being undertaken by Australian personnel and the suitability of the training and equipment they receive.

Finally the delegation, in meeting with the Speaker of the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly, became the first delegation from the Australian Parliament to the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq, supporting Australia's engagement with the newly democratic nation.

The comprehensive delegation itinerary allowed the members to achieve each of these aims. Exposure to this range of issues and experiences could only be achieved as a result of a very well orchestrated program. The delegation thanks the Australian Defence Force for developing and coordinating a visit program that ensured the safety of delegates while giving them exposure to a wide range of personnel and locations. In particular the delegation thanks the Australian National Commander in the Middle East, Commodore Geoff Ledger, for his hosting of the delegation throughout the visit. Commodore Ledger provided the delegation the benefit of his considerable experience throughout the visit, leaving the members confident in the leadership and organisation of Australian Joint Task Force in Iraq.

The Committee would also like to thank Australian Embassy staffs in the Middle East for supporting the program. In particular the delegation thanks Dr Ralph King in Kuwait and Mr Howard Brown in Iraq. Both of these experienced officials operate under some of the most demanding conditions experienced by Australian Government personnel anywhere in the world.

The Committee returned from the visit extremely impressed by the dedication and professionalism of the Australian Defence Force personnel conducting operations in this demanding, often hostile environment. Australian personnel are working closely with the emerging Iraqi institutions and personnel, showing compassion in their daily dealings with the local people and considerable restraint when called upon to apply force. They are performing with distinction and have earned the respect and admiration of both the coalition and Iraqi forces with whom they are working.

All Australians should be proud of the achievements of the ADF on operations in the Middle East and the contribution they are making to the reconstruction of Iraq.

Bruce Scott, MP
Delegation Leader.



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Membership of the Committee

| | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Chair | Senator A B Ferguson | |
| Deputy Chair | Hon G J Edwards, MP | |
| Members | Senator the Hon N Bolkus (to 30/6/05) Senator G. Campbell (from 23/6/05) Senator the Hon P Cook (to 30/6/05) Senator A Eggleston Senator B Harradine (to 30/6/05) Senator S Hutchins Senator D Johnston Senator L J Kirk Senator K Lundy (to 23/6/05) Senator J A L Macdonald (to 23/6/05) Senator C.M. Moore (from 23/6/05) Senator M A Payne Senator N. Scullion (from 17/8/05) Senator N J Stott Despoja Senator R.S. Weber (from 23/6/05) Hon B G Baird, MP Mr R C Baldwin, MP Mr P A Barresi, MP Mr M Danby, MP Mrs T Draper, MP Mrs J Gash, MP Mr S W Gibbons, MP Mr B W Haase, MP Mr M Hatton, MP | Hon D F Jull, MP Hon J E Moylan, MP Hon G D Prosser, MP Hon B C Scott, MP Mr R C G Sercombe, MP Hon W E Snowdon, MP Mr C.P. Thompson, MP Mr M B Turnbull, MP Ms M Vamvakinou, MP Mr B H Wakelin, MP Mr K W Wilkie, MP |
| Secretary | Dr Margot Kerley | |
| Defence Adviser | Lieutenant Colonel Fergus McLachlan | |



Membership of the Delegation

Leader Hon B C Scott, MP

Deputy Leader
(Deputy Chair) Hon G J Edwards, MP

Members Senator D Johnston

Hon B.G. Baird, MP

Mr B.W. Haase, MP

Hon W.E. Snowdon, MP

Mr C.P. Thompson, MP

Mr K.W. Wilkie, MP

Secretary and
Defence Adviser Lieutenant Colonel Fergus McLachlan



List of abbreviations

| | |
|------------|---|
| AATT-I | Australian Army Training Team - Iraq |
| ADF | Australian Defence Force |
| AOR | Areas of Responsibility |
| AMTG | Al Muthanna Task Group |
| ASLAV | Australian Light Armoured Vehicle |
| Bushmaster | Australian built armoured truck |
| C130 | Hercules Transport Aircraft |
| CIMIC | Civil Military Cooperation |
| CO | Commanding Officer |
| ECSS | Expeditionary Combat Service Support |
| FLIR | Forward Looking Infra Red |
| GWOT | Global War on Terror |
| HMAS | Her Majesty's Australian Ship |
| HQ | Headquarters |
| JOC | Joint Operations Command |
| JTF | Joint Task Force |
| MBTs | Main Battle Tanks |
| MIF | Maritime Interdiction Force |
| MNF-I | Multi-National Forces - Iraq |
| MNSTC-I | Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq |
| P3C | P3 Orion Aircraft - upgraded to C specification |
| PRO | Parliamentary Relations Office |
| RAAF | Royal Australian Air Force |

| | |
|-------|--|
| RAN | Royal Australian Navy |
| RHIB | Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat |
| ROE | Rules of Engagement |
| ROCL | Relief Out of Country Leave |
| SAS | Special Air Service |
| SFTG | Special Forces Task Group |
| TNA | Transitional National Assembly |
| UAV | Unmanned Aerial Vehicle |
| US | United States of America |
| USS | United States Ship |
| VCDF | Vice Chief of Defence Force |
| VBIED | Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (Car Bomb) |