

OPERATIONS

29 February 2004

Questions and Answers

1:30PM

Q1: What type of weaponry/ ordnance makes up the captured enemy ammunition?

A1: Conventional weapons and ordnance make up the CEA. Caches discovered to date include a wide array of items from small arms ammunition to missiles. Routine inventories are being conducted to determine what has been captured. Examples include everything from small arms ammunition, grenades, mines, missiles, projectiles, mortars, rocket and rifle propelled grenades, bombs and small items such as fuses, flares and others. The munitions were captured from enemy forces and include stockpiles, such as ammunition storage areas.

Q2: Where exactly are these munitions caches?

A2: The caches range from bunkers, hangers, buildings, ammunition supply points and tunnels, to name a few.

Q3. Once a cache is found, what is the procedure for securing the ammunition?

A3. The military captures the cache and turns it over to USACE. Some of the munitions will be destroyed on site. Some will be neutralized - made safe from emergency detonation or for transportation as determined by the Department of Defense. The transported munitions will be stored in ammunition supply points controlled by the CEA team and later detonated.

Q4: How much ammunition have you found/do you expect to find?

A4: Thousands of tons of munitions have been captured to date. No one knows what will be discovered as we continue our reconstruction efforts to make the country safe for the people of Iraq. We continue to find rocket-propelled grenades, missiles and other munitions.

Q5. Have you found weapons of mass destruction? What will you do if they are found in one of these caches?

A5. No. We are not looking for WMDs. If it is found by our personnel, it will be secured and guarded. DOD will be called immediately to take charge of the discovery.

Q6: How many people are involved in the project?

A6: Currently we have about 15 government people in country. That includes representatives from Zapata Engineering who are assisting with site administration. Each contractor employs between 70-100 people. Contractors also employ local workers as laborers or security forces.

Q7. How is the captured ordnance transported to the ammunition supply points?

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A7. Captured ammunition is transported by truck in convoys to the supply points. It is then transported to remote locations to be safely destroyed.

Q8: There has been a good deal of press regarding dangerous traveling conditions in Iraq, particularly in the Sunni Triangle. Who provides security for the sites and for the convoys?

A8. Site security is provided by private security firms hired by the contractors for that purpose. The number of personnel varies. Convoy security has been provided by the military. However, permission for crew-served weapons has been granted, and convoy security will be handled by contractor security forces in the near future.

Q9: What does it mean to “dispose” of munitions?

A9: Experts identify the types of ordnance and make them safe for emergency destruction or transportation to another area where they will not be a public danger.

Q10: Describe the disposal or demolition process.

A10: Materials are transported to a destruction site that has been determined to be safe for the public. Experts then set up and destroy the CEA.

Q11: Where does ordnance come from?

A11: There is ordnance from almost every country in the world represented in the old regime's arsenal. Captured munitions have come from Jordan, Russia, France, and the United States.

Q12: How is this ordnance going to be destroyed?

A12: The current destruction process is open detonation.

Q13: Why would some of this ammunition be stored?

A13: DOD provides the criteria for munitions to be considered usable for Iraq at a later date, or destroyed. DOD will determine the ultimate end use of any stored and secured ammunition.

Q14: What do you mean by “rendered safe”?

A14: “Rendered safe” means that the original person responding to the CEA ensures the items are safe for transportation, handling or other physical actions to the items.

Q15: Where is the ammunition destroyed?

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A15: CEA is destroyed at detonation sites selected by USACE or DOD. Sites are selected and operated under conditions that ensure safety to the workers and local population. As a security measure, we do not discuss actual site locations.

Q16: Why does it take so many people to conduct these operations?

A16: Safety requirements for ordnance and explosives operations like these require specific personnel requirements. Significant laborers are required to load, transport, prepare for destruction, communicate between crews, and provide government safety and quality oversight of the operations, especially considering the quantity of CEA being destroyed at one time.

Q17: How many sites are currently conducting captured enemy ammunition operations?

A17: All six sites have been fully operational since December 9. Three of the sites have been operational since the early fall.

Q18: Is the U.S. military involved in the mission. If so, to what degree?

A18: Yes. The military currently provides convoy security to our contractors to and from the sites. The military provides convoy security similar to the security they provide for their soldiers. One of the objectives of the first part of the CEA program was to transition all aspects of the operation from the military in order to free the soldiers for their military activities. The Corps has accomplished that goal with the exception of CEA convoys. The transition should be complete within 30 days.

Q19: How long will it take to destroy or secure all the CEA in Iraq?

A19: Operations will be conducted until the mission is complete. Original estimates were two years. The goal is to destroy or secure all the CEA captured by the military.