

PRESS RELEASE

COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

23 June 2003

PR No. 006

GOOD NEWS FOR IRAQI SOLDIERS

Walter Slocombe, Ambassador Bremer's Senior Advisor for Security and Defense in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), today announced that the New Iraqi Army (NIA) will be formed and that we will start recruiting for that force from next week. He also said that former Iraqi career soldiers will receive a monthly interim stipend.

He highlighted our plans for the NIA for the first time. They include:

- To have a full division equivalent of 12,000 soldiers, who would be trained and operational in 1 year. By two years to have three divisions of 40,000 soldiers.
- To deploy battalions as they are trained, under the command of Iraqi officers.
- The military missions of the units will include protecting the nation's borders, provide military level security for certain routes and installations, help clear mines and UXO.

The NIA will not be the whole of the future Iraqi armed forces, but it is an important start towards the national armed forces of the new Iraq. The final decisions on the shape of the Iraqi armed forces, the national defense policy, and the structure of a new MOD will be for the Iraqi people and not the CPA.

Mr Slocombe, said:

"I am pleased to announce this first step in creating an armed force that will be professional, non-political, militarily effective and truly representative of the country.

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“To underline the importance of this, I am delighted to tell you that the US is sending MG Paul Eaton, who will command the training of the NIA. He is one of our most experienced and respected officers. He was until last week Commanding General of the United States Infantry School.”

Ambassador Bremer, the Administrator for the Coalition Provisional Authority stated:

“The Iraq army had a long tradition of service to the nation, and many, perhaps most of its officers and soldiers regarded themselves as professionals serving the nation and not the Ba’athist regime. We have always said that former military personnel, except for those most deeply involved in the regime, would be part of the future of Iraq.”

In addition, the CPA has decided to pay stipends to former military officers and long-service enlisted personnel in the Regular Army and the Republican Guard. No payment will be made to senior Ba’ath Party members, those who worked for old regime’s internal security forces or those accused of war crimes or human rights abuses. The payment will be paid monthly. Recipients must renounce Ba’athism and violence.

This will be an interim program subject to a decision by the future Iraqi Government on whether to continue the payments and, if so, on what terms.

The payments will be at a level comparable to, though a slightly lower than their pay as active officers. Instructions telling people who are eligible how to register and receive initial payments will be issued shortly.

Once we have completed the first payments to officers and long service enlisted personnel, we make a one-time payment to the conscripts whose service obligations were released when the army was dissolved.

There will be many opportunities, in addition to the future military, for former military personnel to work in jobs that will make use of their experience and help the country.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The first payments to former soldiers will begin on July 15. The numbers and administrative complexities involved are such that it will likely take much of the month to finish paying all eligible personnel. Instructions for how people are to report and register for payment will be published shortly.
2. We will provide funds to the authorities in the Kurdish controlled areas to use to make equivalent payments to retired and disabled former members of their paramilitary organizations.

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