

# Eye on World & Local

## Many Troops Remain, though Combat Phase Ends in Iraq

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"Operation New Dawn," the latest coalition military operation of the Iraq War, officially began September 1st, as previously announced by President Barack Obama. Following the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq in August the 'New Dawn' drawdown phase is said to reduce U.S. involvement in Iraq and allow the country to begin to maintaining itself. The United States will be serving as an advisor to Iraqi security forces according to United States Army reports.

This reduction in troop numbers has led to some confusion throughout the public as news outlets worldwide are incorrectly reporting the official withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. Even though the United States will no longer be looking at its involvement in Iraq as a combat operation, 50,000 troops will stay behind to aid and assist the country in its transition to self-dependence. While the war may have formally ended, the fact remains that soldiers will still be in Iraq and officers will continue to be deployed to the country.

In early 2011, 80 Minnesota aircrew members will be traveling to Iraq as part of the support operations. According to Fox News they will be providing support with "aerial movement of troops, equipment and supplies for support of maneuver, combat and combat service support operations." These types of missions will be common in the near future as support programs are under way and

being continued.

A main concern with the removal of official combat troops from Iraq is that terrorist insurgents will continue their attacks on U.S. soldiers. This issue became prominent after August 22nd saw its first U.S. casualty since combat operations were halted.

Two more soldiers were killed and nine others wounded on September 7th when an Iraqi commando opened fire on them. In response to these concerns U.S. military commander Gen. Ray Odierno, as reported by CNN.com, stated that, "[U.S. Soldiers] certainly have the ability to protect themselves and, if necessary, to conduct combat operations if it was required." As details of these incidents are being reviewed, many Americans question whether combat operations have really stopped and if the soldiers left are too few to provide any substantial help.

While there is no time limit for Operation New Dawn and its goal to help Iraqi security forces

stabilize themselves, there is still a sense of closure for the many soldiers making their way home. President Obama had this to say about Operation New Dawn and the U.S. efforts in Iraq: "Through this remarkable chapter in the history of the United States and Iraq, we have met our responsibility. Now, it is time to turn the page."



Photo courtesy of www.armytimes.com

## Trapped Chilean Miners Await Rescue, Still

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On August 5th, thirty three Chilean miners were buried underneath 4.5 miles of rock. The Chilean government has released that it may take as long as 120 days to uncover the men from the San Jose Mine. Until then, food and supplies will be lowered to them daily. Rescue workers are able to send food to the miners through three 4 inch bore holes. The foods served to the miners are well balanced meals that will help sustain their health during the four month period.

Throughout the first month since their entrapment, officials have devised three plans to extract the miners safely from the underground cave. Plan A consists of using a Raise Borer, which is a traditional mining drill. Plan B is using a Schramm T-130 XD, a watering hole driller that will drill at an 82 degree angle. This drill is used to enlarge the already existent holes used to deliver supplies. Plan C will consist of using a Sonda Petrolera which is used to drill oil wells. This drill will take till mid September to assemble because it requires about one soccer field of space. However, Government officials and engineers are starting to believe Plan C is a more efficient strategy since the drill will work faster than the others.

Many of the miners' families have taken camp outside the mining site and others visit the site every day. Once officials informed the miners that their rescue will take as late as Christmas, entertainment and communication devices were delivered to them through the bore holes. Footage of the miners singing and sending messages to their families have been broadcasted on all major news stations in the past month. According to CNN news, the miners have also been delivered MP3 players filled with Mexican rancheras, Puerto Rican reggaeton and Dominican merengue. Further relief efforts will be put into action throughout the four month wait.

The general hope is that the men, with balanced meals, their new gadgets and the support of their families, will be able to endure, mentally and physically, the conditions until they can be rescued some time in the upcoming months.

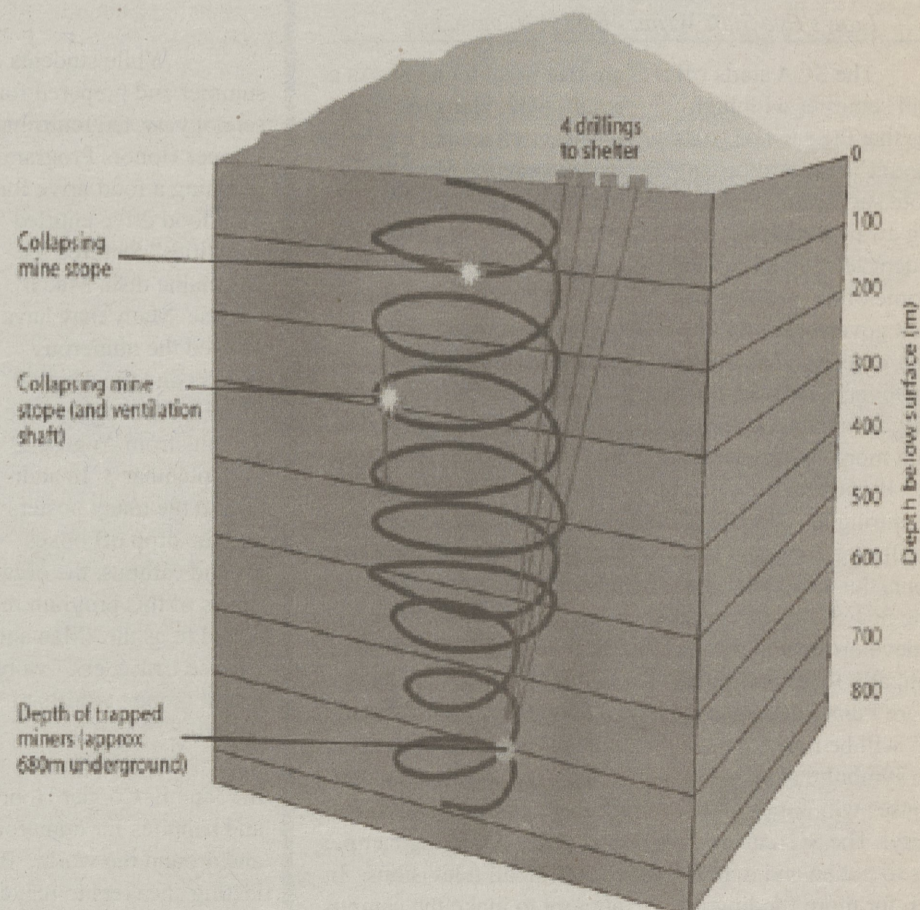


Diagram illustrating the depths at which the 33 Chilean miners are trapped. The victims remain approximately 680 meters beneath the earth. According to officials, the men may not be rescued until late December. Photo courtesy of www.mining-journal.com