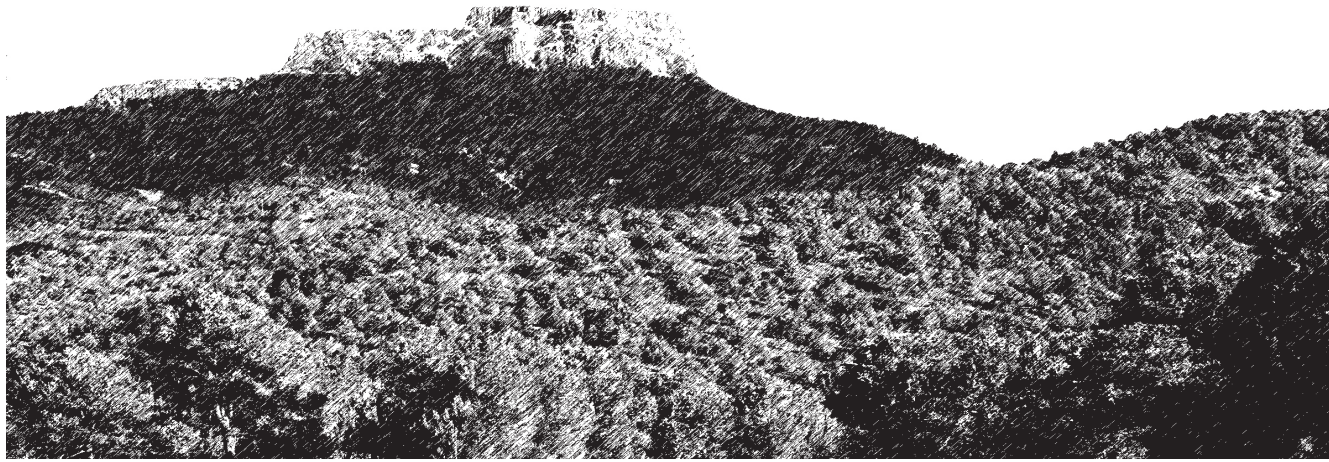


OVER THE PASS



"It's been a weird summer, very up and down. We're getting more locals, more consistently and we're getting tourists, but not the big influx we've had in the past. It seems like tourists just started arriving these past three weeks."

– Lorin Manuel, Café What'a Grind (Trinidad)



TRINIDAD-RATON CONNECTION

"How has this summer been for business?"

By **Tim Keller**
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

"We've had an exceptionally good summer. We're getting more tourist business than we've had in years and our cell phone business continues to grow steadily. A lot of people nowadays are setting up their own home networks so we're selling a lot of equipment for that. It's been really good."

– Alan Best, Two-Way Electronics/Radio Shack (Raton)



"Busy. Busy. Heat is hard on refrigerators. I've got more business than last year. This is my 50th year. My dad started the company in 1936."

– Mel Williamson, Mel's Refrigeration (Trinidad)

Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News



"I had anticipated being down, but I've been pleased. We're very close to last year. The last growth year was 2011. In summer and fall we benefit immensely from the NRA Whittington Center, Philmont Scout Ranch and visiting hunters."

– Martha Phelps, Santa Fe Trail Traders (Raton)



"It's been pretty good, probably better than last summer. It's on an upswing but still not as good as it used to be. There are a lot of tourists who have just discovered Trinidad this summer."

– Joy Gipson, The Corner Shop (Trinidad)



"It's been a fairly bad summer. Some of our small businesses have closed, so we're not printing for them. We get a lot of summer events printing, but each is just a single order rather than recurring business."

– Marsha Hyde, Mark-us Printing (Raton)

MIDEAST CONFLICT

US sending arms to Kurds in Iraq

By **LARA JAKES** and **KEN DILANIAN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration has begun directly providing weapons to Kurdish forces who have started to make gains against Islamic militants in northern Iraq, senior U.S. officials said Monday, but the aid has so far been limited to automatic rifles and ammunition.

Previously, the U.S. sold arms in Iraq only to the government in Baghdad, which has largely failed in recent years to transfer them to the Kurdish forces in the north, American officials have said. Baghdad made some transfers with American help in recent days, since U.S. airstrikes began to support Kurdish forces fighting off the Islamic State advance toward the northern city of Irbil.

But U.S. officials decided to begin their own deliveries. The Kurdish peshmerga fighters had been losing ground to Islamic State militants in recent weeks, in part because they were outgunned and at times ran out of ammunition, officials said.

The weapons appeared to be coming through intelligence agencies covertly and not through regular Defense Department channels.

The officials wouldn't say which U.S. agency is providing the arms, but one official said it isn't the Pentagon. A Kurdish official said the weapons were coming from "U.S. intelligence agencies," and a senior Pentagon official said the Defense Department may yet get involved. The CIA has historically done similar quiet arming operations.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the operation publicly.

The move to directly aid the Kurds underscores the level of U.S. concern about the Islamic State militants' gains in the north and reflects the persistent administration view that the Iraqis must take the necessary steps to solve their own security problems.

By providing military equipment directly to the Kurds, who want to be independent from Iraq, the Obama administration is ce-



Associated Press / Safin Hamed

Iraqi Kurds and Iraqi Christians hold up signs thanking the U.S. during a demonstration Monday in front of the U.S. General Consulate in Arbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq.

menting the Iraqi Kurdish claim as an independent U.S. partner. For now, however, U.S. officials say they still support a unified Iraq under a federal government in Baghdad.

In Washington, Lt. Gen. William Mayville, the director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters that the U.S. had conducted 15 targeted air strikes that have slowed the Islamic State's advance. But he said the limited operation has done little to degrade the militants' capacity as a fighting force.

"In the immediate areas where we've focused our strikes we've had a very temporary effect," Mayville said. "I in no way want to suggest that we have effectively contained—or that we are somehow breaking the momentum of the threat posed by—the Islamic state group.

Nonetheless, Mayville said, "There are no plans to expand the current air campaign," to target Islamic state leaders or logistical hubs, beyond the Kurdish plan.

"We are looking at plans and how we can expand that support," Mayville said, adding that the Kurds need ammunition and some heavy weapons that are effective against the Islamic state's "technical vehicles" and longer range guns.

The Kurdish government official said Monday the U.S. weapons already are being directly sent to Irbil where U.S. personnel are based and mostly consist of light arms like AK-47s and ammunition.

The State Department sought to downplay the significance of the apparent shift in U.S. policy.

The militants have "obtained some heavy weaponry, and the Kurds need additional arms and we're providing those — there's nothing new here," said department spokeswoman Jen Psaki.

But Mayville did not dispute the policy shift. He said the government in Baghdad had provided some weapons to the Kurds in recent days, but he said the need was so great that the U.S. government had to get involved and is looking to do more.

The needs of Kurdish forces are "pretty substantial," he said. "We want to help them with that effort."

The additional assistance comes as Kurdish forces on Sunday took back two towns from the Islamic insurgents, aided in part by U.S. airstrikes in the region. President Barack Obama authorized the airstrikes to protect U.S. interests and personnel in the region, including facilities in Irbil, as well as Yazidi refugees fleeing militants.

Mayville said U.S. and U.K. aircraft have flown 14 missions over the last four nights and dropped 310 bundles to Yazidis trapped on Mount Sinjar, including 16,000 gallons of water and 75,000 meals. But Mayville said the U.S. still does not have a handle on how many refugees are on the mountain or how dire their situation is.



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