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# **Iraqi Force Development in 2006**

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## **Executive Summary**

Iraqi forces continued to make significant progress during the first half of 2006, but they did so in the face of major political obstacles. The Iraqi government never had effective leadership under Prime Minister Ibrahim al Jafari. The Jafari government became a “lame duck” by the time Iraqi politics focused on the constitutional referendum in the fall of 2005, and even more when serious campaigning began for the election of a new Iraqi government.

The period between the actual election on December 15, 2005, and the formation of an Iraqi government on May 20, 2006 left Iraq in political turmoil for nearly half a year. Even then, it was not until June 8<sup>th</sup> that the newly elected government could agree on a Minister of Defense, Minister of the Interior, and National Security Advisor.

Iraqi force development faced the challenge of an insurgency that continued to show it could strike at the sectarian and ethnic fault lines in Iraq, and could exploit the lack of an effective Iraqi government and leadership to push the country towards civil war. At the same time, sectarian and ethnic militias and security forces became a steadily more serious problem, rivaling the insurgency as a threat to Iraq security.

During these developments, the Iraqi regular military forces under the Ministry of Defense steadily expanded in size and capability, and expanded their military role. They remained largely unified and “national” in character. The lack of an Iraqi government did, however, allow a continuing drift in setting clear Iraqi force goals, and in creating plans that would create forces that could both sustain themselves in combat and eventually acquire enough major weapons and combat equipment to deter foreign threats and defend the country.

The situation was far more difficult in the case of the forces under the Ministry of Interior, including the special security units and police. Some elements of these forces became tied to Shi’ite militias, attacks on Sunnis, and other abuses. This forced the reorganization of all of the forces under the MOI, and it is still unclear how successful this reorganization will be.

The MNF-I and Iraqi government seem to be committed to giving Iraq effective internal and security police forces that will serve the nation, not given sects and ethnic groups. There has been no in depth reporting about progress in this effort, and it faces major challenges in the form of militias and police and other security forces that are effectively under the control of regional or local leaders, most with ties to given sects and factions.

The “year of the police” that the MNF-I and a number of Iraqi leaders called for in late 2005 has to some extent been delayed by political instability. The broader issue affecting Iraqi progress, however, is that Iraqi force development can only succeed if Iraqi political leaders can create effective and lasting political compromises that bring Arab Shi’ite, Arab Sunni, Kurd, and other Iraqi minorities together in a coalition government and create the political forces necessary to create political unity.

Equally important, Iraq must make progress in two other critical areas that are not directly related to Iraqi force development, but are critical to giving it meaning. One is to show that the Iraqi government can establish a lasting presence throughout Iraq, provide government services, and support its security efforts to deal with the insurgency -- with equal efforts to deal with militias, private and local security forces, and crime. One key to such success is to deploy both effective police forces and a working criminal justice system.

The second factor is that the government must be able to create a climate where economic progress does and can take place, where real jobs are created, where investment is made and new businesses actually start to operate, and where the government maintains effective services and infrastructure.

Without these steps, the new government will lose momentum and credibility, the country will drift back into increasing sectarian and ethnic violence, Iraqi forces will increasingly divide along sectarian and ethnic lines, and the nation may well devolve into civil conflict or sectarian and ethnic “federalism.”

Finally, the creation of a full Iraqi government raises two other issues. One is the future status of US and Coalition forces relative to Iraq forces in terms of command, status of forces arrangements, and operational planning. The second is the need for far more concrete plans to create Iraqi forces balanced and heavy enough to allow the departure of most MNF-I forces by some period in 2008, or as soon as feasible.

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## Introduction

Iraqi forces continued to make significant progress during the first half of 2006, but they did so in the face of major political obstacles. The Iraqi government never had effective leadership under Prime Minister Ibrahim al Jafari, who had proved over time to be an incompetent and divisive leader. The Jafari government became a “lame duck” by the time Iraqi politics focused on the constitutional referendum in the fall of 2005, and even more when serious campaigning began for the election of a new Iraqi government.

The period between the actual election on December 15, 2005, and the formation of an Iraqi government on May 20, 2006 left Iraq in political turmoil for nearly half a year. Even then, it was not until June 8<sup>th</sup> that the newly elected government could agree on a Minister of Defense, Minister of the Interior, and National Security Advisor.

The actual election on December 15, 2005 did have a high turnout of registered voters, and was broadly honest and fair. It took weeks to establish this, however, and it then took nearly half a year to agree on a new government. Throughout this period, insurgents attacked the sectarian and ethnic fault lines in Iraqi politics and society, successfully provoking steadily rising Shi’ite and Kurdish tension, and growing violence, including disappearances, kidnappings, and action by various death squads.

## A Half Year of Deteriorating Security

Civil fighting between Sunni and Shi’ite reached levels that threatened to replace terrorism and insurgency as the main threat to Iraqi stability and political progress. It also changed the mission for both Iraqi and Coalition forces. Militias, rogue elements in Iraqi forces, local security forces and police, Ministerial and private security guards and forces, criminals, and neighborhood forces all combined to create much broader threats in virtually every area of Iraq with mixed populations, and between hard-line Islamist Shi’ites in cities like Basra and more moderate Shi’ites and other Iraqi factions.

### *Civil Fight Rivals the Insurgency in Importance*

Low-level ethnic conflict became common. The victories against terrorist and insurgent elements in Baghdad in 2004 and 2005 were largely offset by the polarization of many neighborhoods along ethnic lines and local fighting. For all intensive purposes, the “red zones” in Baghdad became as bad as in the worst periods in 2004, with a new resurgence of the Sadr militia in Sadr City.

Mosul was less violent, but increasingly divided. Kirkuk became steadily more tense, as both Kurdish and Shi’ite militias strengthened their presence, deploying significant outside Arab militia forces into the city for the first time. The British “soft” approach to Basra had essentially lost the city to Shi’ite extremist elements with the local elections in 2004, and the British found it harder and harder to maintain a presence or bring any real control -- effectively facing large “no go” areas where they could not operate.

Nearly half the population of Iraq lived in the “greater” urban areas of Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, Mosul and other divided cities. The problem extended into other cities, however, as the hard-line Sunni Islamist extremists targeted Shi’ite shrines and targets in cities like Karbala, and Sunni moderates and supporters of the government in cities like Samarra and Tal Afar.



The regular armed forces, and most of the security forces under the Ministry of Interior, largely continued to serve the nation and the central government, not sectarian or ethnic factions -- although some elements committed prison and other human rights abuses and were found to have participated in attacks on Sunnis.

The good news was that Iraqi forces were able to score some significant victories against the hardline Sunni Islamist extremist insurgents, and some elements became less dependent on US advisors, partner units and other outside support. These Iraqi successes were reinforced by US attacks, and by improving human and other intelligence, much of it coming from Sunni civilians who increasingly saw the hardliners as a threat to progress, security, and national unity.

### ***Iraqi Forces Face a Different Mix of Missions with Uncertain Capability***

The bad news was that the lack of an effective government meant there was no cohesive Iraqi effort to take charge. The voting did not produce unity. Secular parties got only a small part of the vote, and most Iraqis voted for their sect or ethnicity. The insurgents exploited this division by stepping up attacks on Shi'ites and Kurds; Iraqi forces and officials; those Sunnis who supported the government; and businessmen and professionals. They sought to provoke more intense civil conflict, and they succeeded to the point where Shi'ite militias and members of the Iraqi forces increased their revenge killings.

Efforts to increase the Sunni percentage of the regular forces and internal security forces slowed. Iraqi forces were increasingly confronted with the fact they no longer could concentrate on attacking insurgents, but often had to try to create local security in the face of sectarian and ethnic divisions where there was no clear enemy and any action tended to make the armed forces seem the enemy to some local factions as well as put a strain on the regular military to avoid taking sides.

The situation steadily deteriorated more quickly than Iraqi forces could be brought on-line. Ethnic and sectarian fighting vastly broadened that area where security was a major problem. The fact that civil conflict became a dominant threat in many areas meant that most of the regular forces and MOI internal security forces had to deal with civil violence they were not really trained to deal with -- and which threatened (or did) to divide them along sectarian and ethnic lines. The fact that the development of the police, criminal justice system, effective central government presence, and meaningful facilities protection forces lagged behind the development of the regular Iraqi forces also became more important.

These issues were not addressed in Coalition and Iraqi reporting. Claims that Iraqi forces could take control of large areas of battlespace in Iraq had never been honest or realistic. The Iraqi forces involved were almost invariably far too small to control the amount of space shown on MNF-I and Iraqi maps. Performance was so mixed that US forces had to constantly intervene, embedded advisors were often critical to Iraqi success, and Iraqi forces remained heavily dependent on US combat aircraft, tactical lift, artillery, armor, support, logistics, and/or intelligence. Such claims became largely meaningless, however, once sectarian and ethnic fighting reached the level where local security was the dominant issue, and not defeating the core insurgency.

### ***MOI Forces and Militias Are Perceived as Part of the "Threat"***

The Ministry of Interior forces continued to lack strong leadership from Bayan Jabr, who was now an interim minister with less authority than before, and who became a symbol of government support for attacks on Sunnis -- and the use of MOI forces in such attacks -- to

many in Iraq's Sunni community. While important changes did take place in several key command positions in the MOI forces, and some of the units with the worst record of abuses and attacks on Sunnis were reorganized and given new unity identities, the Ministry of Interior was still seen by most Sunnis as at best suspect, and as a key source of Shi'ite and Kurdish attacks on Sunni civilians.

In spite of an influx of Coalition advisors, the police remained a major problem. Efforts to make 2006 the "year of the police" were limited by the lack of a government and any clear program for action as long as no new Prime Minister or Minister of Interior were in office. The US found it difficult to recruit and deploy the number of qualified advisors it needed to embed in the police command and local police forces to give them on-the-job training and ensure their effectiveness and discipline. In many cases, equipment and facilities remained a problem, desertions and inaction were common, and corruption was the rule rather than the exception. There was little effort to deal with the nearly 150,000 men in the various facilities protection forces, which were far more ineffective, corrupt, and divided than the police.

Iraqi force development was further complicated by the fact that the facilities protection forces, the various militias, and local self-protection forces came to play a steadily more negative role as the scale of sectarian and ethnic violence increased. The police became more divided, and such divisions were reinforced by the fact that many police were not part of the trained and equipped forces developed by the MNF-I.

Iraq's militias had lost the cohesion they had at the time of the invasion in 2003. They now often consisted of local elements with limited central party control and loyalty, operating on their own and often using force, threats, and extortion to achieve their goals. The relatively well-organized Shi'ite militias created during the time Saddam was in power, and trained and armed by Iran, were now splintered. Many were involved in Iraqi politics or already in the Iraqi security forces. The remainder were often the "losers" in their own organizational politics, Shi'ite Islamist hardliners, and new local recruits.

The Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia was poorly organized and disciplined, and often operated at the local level as religious "enforcers." The remaining Kurdish militias and forces that were not part of Iraq's forces increasingly consisted of Kurds with local agendas and goals to "take back Kurdish territory." Some 150,000 additional Iraqis in government and private security forces played a role in such violence, as did criminals -- who often built up sectarian alliances or ties to the police.

The constant flood of deserters, and the fact police and military uniforms, IDs, weapons, and some vehicles were available in the markets, made it easy to impersonate Iraqi forces in carrying out sectarian and ethnic attacks and killings. The use of masks, "silent" raids and seizures, and random killings compounded the problem, as did the fact Iraqi forces were sometimes guilty of such attacks. Identification of Friend and Foe became a major problem, and every uniform and official vehicle became suspect.

This forced many Iraqi neighborhoods to create neighborhood forces. Some were mixed and "nationalist" in character, but most divided sharply on sectarian and ethnic lines, and became a further force adding to sectarian and ethnic conflict. Things were made worse when they cooperated with criminal elements against minority factions, linked their operations to one of the militias, or sought to expand their territory at the expense of other factions.

## **Political Delay and a Leadership Vacuum**

The ultimate success of Iraqi force development was always dependent upon six key outside elements: The nature of Iraqi political leadership and the ability to create a new basis for Iraqi political unity, the ability to develop political consensus and stability at the local level, the quality of Iraqi government presence and governance at every level from the national to the local; the ability to establish civil order and an effective criminal justice system and method of screening and trying detainees, success in creating economic development and employment; and the quality and level of outside aid and support.

The weak interim government could make little progress in any of these areas after the December 15 election, and the problems were compounded by major failures in the US economic aid effort and problems in staffing some aspects of the MNF-I advisory effort for the police. The problems were also compounded by reports that some elements of US forces had committed unprovoked attacks and killings of Iraqi civilians -- casting the integrity of the US presence and advisory effort into doubt and giving credence to a host of charges and conspiracy theories that almost certain had no justification.

### ***Five Months of Delay and Weak Leadership***

Once it was clear that the election did not involve serious fraud, Iraqi politics devolved into months of awkward political bargaining that was further complicated when the Moqtada al-Sadr used the seats he had been granted in the new assembly, and the threat of withdrawing from the Shi'ite coalition, to help force the nomination of Ibrahim al Jafari as the Shi'ite candidate for Prime Minister.

The political struggles to keep Jafari in office presented critical problems both in achieving some degree of national unity and in giving Iraq's new government effective leadership. Jafari was widely felt to be an incompetent leader who could not work effectively with his ministers, negotiate with other factions, and administer his office. He tended to speak in clichés and homilies, and was rejected by both the Kurdish and Sunni parties in the newly elected assemblies as well as distrusted by many fellow Shi'ites. Sadr seemed to be motivated largely by his rivalry with SCIRI, which led him to support Jafari in order to block the selection of Adel Abdul Mahdi, who was almost universally regarded as a more competent candidate.

The political struggles over Jafari affected the US position as an advisor to Iraqi forces as well as Iraq's internal politics and ability to govern. US frustration with al-Jafari's reluctance to rein in Shi'ite militias became increasingly vocal and in return, so did Shi'ite accusations of political bullying on the part of the US. This tension was worsened by allegations that US and Iraqi military forces raided a mosque, killing worshippers loyal to al-Sadr. In late March, Ambassador Khalilzad stated that President Bush "doesn't want, doesn't support, doesn't accept" al-Jafari as the next prime minister. Although US officials in Baghdad did not elaborate on the statement, they did not dispute its authenticity.<sup>1</sup>

Representatives from al-Jafari's office immediately condemned the remark. "How can they do this?" Hadier al-Ubady, a spokesman for al-Jafari asked. "An ambassador telling a sovereign country what to do is unacceptable."<sup>2</sup>

The divisions within the United Iraqi Alliance over al-Jafari, and increasing US pressure to form a government, began to cause members of the Shi'ite coalition to withdraw their support from the prime minister. In April, a senior Shi'ite politician, Kassim Daoud, called for al-Jafari to step down.<sup>3</sup> One day later, Sheikh Jalaladeen al-Sagheir, a deputy to SCIRI's leader Abul-Aziz al-

Hakim, declared that he was officially suggesting another candidate to replace al-Jafari.<sup>4</sup> Even Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdul Mahdi, considered by some to be his primary inter-party rival for the position, publicly called for al-Jafari to quit.<sup>5</sup> Grand Ayatollah Sistani however urged the Shi'ite political parties to form a government quickly but also to support al-Jafari and maintain their unity.<sup>6</sup> During the same time, Kurdish leaders officially informed the UIA that they had decided to reject al-Jafari as their nomination for prime minister.<sup>7</sup>

A surprise visit by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw designed to impress upon Iraqi politicians the urgency of forming an inclusive government may have had the effect of further hardening al-Jafari's insistence that he remain in office. Their visit came at a time when the US had become increasingly vocal in its preference for another prime minister. This, and the fact that both Rice and Straw seemed to have a more amicable meeting with Adel Abdul Mehdi, likely caused al-Jafari to view their visit as an indirect attempt to influence Iraqi leaders and unseat him from his position.

In fact, al-Jafari's top advisor, Haider al-Abadi, reflected these exact sentiments saying, "pressure from outside is not helping to speed up any solution...all it's doing is hardening the position of people who are supporting Jafari." Specifically addressing the US-British diplomatic envoy he said, "They shouldn't have come to Baghdad."<sup>8</sup> Al-Jafari himself said, "There is a decision that was reached by a democratic mechanism, and I stand with it."<sup>9</sup>

Given increasing US displeasure with al-Jafari's role as Prime Minister and his inability to reign in Shi'ite militias, some postulated that the US might have a new ally in Iraq's Sunnis. During Rice's visit she dined with several Sunni political leaders in Baghdad, some who had boycotted the January 2005 elections and formerly supported the insurgency. Tariq al-Hashimi, the secretary general of the Sunni-dominated Iraqi Islamic Party recounted his time with Secretary Rice: "I looked Condi in the eye and told her, 'Your ambassador shows tremendous courage and is doing a hell of a good job in Iraq'." During her brief trip, Rice praised the maturation of the Sunni political body and their participation in Iraq's democratic process.<sup>10</sup>

It is unclear how enduring these trends in US-Sunni relations will be. In addition, the US likely still understands that as the majority sect, it will have to deal with the Shi'ites in any representative government.<sup>11</sup>

The UIA attempted to break the deadlock on April 10 by sending a three-member delegation to persuade Sunni and Kurdish political groups to support al-Jafari's nomination. These efforts failed and the groups continued to press for another candidate, saying they would not join a new government under al-Jafari's leadership.<sup>12</sup>

Two days later, Adnan Pachachi, the acting parliament speaker and a Sunni, announced that he would convene the legislature the following week to continue with the democratic process and force the parties to decide on a prime minister. Pachachi added that he was told by Shi'ite politicians that they hoped to resolve the issue before the parliament meets.<sup>13</sup>

Fearing that this meeting could create open divisions within the Shi'ite alliance, thereby dissolving its power as the most dominant bloc, the UIA countered that the names of those nominated for the top posts in government must be agreed upon beforehand. Shi'ite political leaders justified this move by asserting that convening a parliamentary session would be of little use if individuals were not already selected to hold positions within a government.

This tactic of insisting on approval of the nominations to important government posts before a legislative meeting could shift the burden of agreement back to Sunnis and Kurds. Shi'ite

politicians requested that representatives from each main political bloc meet that Sunday, the day prior to the parliamentary meeting, to discuss possible nominations.<sup>14</sup>

That weekend both secular leaders from Iyad Allawi's party as well as top Shi'ite clerics attempted to broker last minute agreements. Allawi announced on Iraqi television that politicians might have to create an "emergency government" in order to save Iraq from "its current deadly crises."<sup>15</sup>

Adnan Pachachi, the speaker of the parliament and a member of Allawi's party who had previously announced his intentions to convene the body on Monday regardless of whether disputes could be settled beforehand, proposed that this emergency government include parties that didn't win seats in the election and be based on a new arrangement rather than the constitution. Pachachi called this a "genuine, effective partnership" between political groups rather than election results "which we do not think reflected the voters' will, anyway."<sup>16</sup>

Whether this was a genuine attempt to form a coalition government or not, if implemented, it would have given a disproportionate voice to secular parties such as Allawi's who, although favored by the US, did not receive significant votes compared to secular and ethnic based parties in December.<sup>17</sup>

Worried that a resolution to the current impasse could divide the UIA, top Shi'ite clerics met in Najaf to discuss potential solutions that would allow the bloc to hold onto power and debated more forceful intervention by the clergy. The week prior, the son of Grand Ayatollah Sistani, Mohammed Ridha Sistani, received a guarantee from al-Sadr that he would not object if the UIA replaced al-Jafari with another candidate.<sup>18</sup>

Nonetheless, when Monday arrived the meeting of the parliament was postponed as Shi'ite politicians still worked to put together a list of nominations to the top positions including prime minister. An advisor to al-Jafari indicated that one of the leading candidates to replace the Prime Minister was Ali al-Adeeb, who was also from the al-Dawa party. The aide, Adnan Ali al-Kadhimi, also said that Talabani would likely remain as President and that Iyad Allawi, Adnan al-Dulaimi, and Saleh al-Mutlak were being considered for the two deputy president positions. Talabani is a Kurd, Allawi a secular Shi'ite, and al-Dulaimi and al-Mutlak both Sunnis. The Iraqi ambassador to the US, Samir Sumaidaie, also mentioned al-Adeeb's as a potential candidate on a CNN Sunday talk show.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the fact that these names were being considered by all parties, many leaders, seemingly disillusioned with the process, predicted the negotiations to form a government would go on for weeks or months. Al-Mutlak, who acknowledged he was running for deputy president, said that he believed negotiations would wear on for weeks. He called al-Adeeb, the possible candidate for Prime Minister "an Iranian," and said that regardless of what candidates the UIA puts forward, "all of them are the same."<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Zafir al-Ani, a spokesman for the Iraqi Accordance Front, predicted that a government would not be formed for another month because of the differences between the parties.<sup>21</sup>

As sectarian conflict continued and efforts were stalled over forming a unity government in spring 2006, it was reported in April that intelligence officials from Arab states including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey had met to discuss the strategic and regional implications of an Iraqi civil war and Iran's ongoing role in the country. The revelation of this meeting came on the heels of blunt remarks by Egyptian President Mubarak that "Most of the Shi'ites are loyal to Iran and not to the countries they are living in," and suggested that "Iraq is almost close to destruction." These suggestions were quickly

denounced by Shi'ite, Sunni and Kurdish leaders. Al-Jafari expressed astonishment "that Egypt identifies Iraq's security problems as a civil war."<sup>22</sup>

One day after Mubarak made these comments, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal said that since the definition of a civil war is people fighting each other within a country, then Iraq is in a civil war. In addition, he suggested that the Arab League undertake an effort to help address the ongoing civil conflict. He added, however, that only "Iraqis themselves can stop this fighting."<sup>23</sup>

At a British-Saudi conference, Prince Saud al-Faisal emphasized the danger posed to countries in the region by a civil war in Iraq. "The threat of break-up in Iraq is a huge problem for the countries of the region, especially if the fighting is on a sectarian basis. This type of fighting sucks in other countries," Prince Saud said.<sup>24</sup>

## **A New Government Begins to Emerge in May and June**

Al-Jafari gradually gave way to the growing pressure to keep him out of office, but resisted to the last. He sent mixed messages as to whether he would voluntarily step down or allow himself to be replaced by consensus.

On April 19, he announced in a nationally televised news conference that stepping down would be "out of the question."<sup>25</sup> In a complete reversal, the very next day he signaled that he would allow leaders of the UIA to withdraw his nomination. Shi'ite legislators planned to meet that Saturday to conclude whether al-Jafari would remain, or a new candidate would be nominated in his place. Bassem Sharif, a UIA lawmaker indicated that the party was leaning toward the latter, saying, "The majority opinion is in favor of this [changing the nomination]." Although the legislature would still convene on Thursday, parliament members indicated that it would be brief, and that a formal session would be put off until Sunday after Shi'ite leaders had settled the future of al-Jafari.<sup>26</sup>

### ***The Core of the New Government***

The election of Nuri Maliki as the next Prime Minister on April 21 broke the major, but hardly the only, impasse in forming a new government. The US and others hoped that because he was not as closely associated with al-Sadr as al-Jafari was, that he would have a freer hand in reigning in the militias, creating an ethnically and sectarian balanced military and police forces with a national spirit. His selection was also the key to the selection of several other top officials:<sup>27</sup>

- *President Jalal Talabani*: Talabani remained president of Iraq, while Barzani remained President of Kurdistan. Talabani had started as a lawyer, but founded the PUK after breaking with Barzani's KDP. He had created his own guerrilla force to resist Saddam, and his forces clashed with Barzani in 1990, but Talabani had played a nationalist and unifying role after becoming President in the earlier election, and the PUK and KDP agreed on an intergraed government in the Kurdish zone in May 2006.
- *Vice President Adel Abdul Mahdi*: Mahdi was senior leader in SCIRI and would have become prime minister if Sadr had not opposed him. He was widely seen as a competent leader and had been effective as the former finance minister. Mahdi was a French-trained economist who had originally been a Marxist before becoming active in SCIRI and a economic pragmatist.

- *Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi*: Hashemi was new to government, but had been a successful businessman. He was the head of Iraqi Islamist Party, which had emerged as the largest Sunni Arab party in the December 15, 2005 election. He was seen as a Sunni leader who could help bring former supporters of Saddam Hussein back into the political process and split the Sunni insurgency.
- *Speaker of Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadni*: A Sunni Islamic that Saddam's regime had sentenced to death for secretly joining illegal Sunni Islamist groups, and who was seen as a Sunni sectarian. Selected in part to broaden the inclusion of Sunnis and lay the ground work for compromise with moderate insurgents.

### ***The Fight to Create a Cabinet***

At the same time, Maliki faced a new set of political problems. He had 30 days to get agreement on a cabinet -- and the struggle for cabinet positions triggered a whole new round of sectarian and ethnic political infighting. The resulting negotiations between parties and sectarian and ethnic factions went down to the limit.

The new cabinet was only announced on May 20th -- some three days before Maliki's 30 day mandate expired. Even then, it was short key ministers, including the Minister of the Interior and Minister of Defense, and Maliki left the post of National Security Advisor open. Iraqi forces remained without the top leadership they badly needed, and the two ministries remained uncertain "lame duck" operations.

This did not, however, mean that Maliki failed to act in several areas with a major impact on Iraqi force development. In late April, Maliki pledged that his government would begin the process of funneling the militias into Iraq's security forces. This pledge was supported by a statement by the usually reticent Grand Ayatollah Sistani in which he declared, "Weapons must be in the hands of government security forces that should not be tied to political parties but to the nation."<sup>28</sup> He added further, that Iraqi Security Forces must be formed "on sound, patriotic bases so that their allegiance shall be to the homeland alone, not to any other political or other groups."<sup>29</sup>

In Maliki's first meeting with al-Sadr as Iraq's new Prime Minister, he broached the issue of disbanding the militias, gently saying, "Merging the militias into the military is not to disrespect them but to reward them for their role in the struggle against dictatorship." He also said it was a "solution to the problem of having weapons outside the government."<sup>30</sup> Yet during a news conference after the meeting, the young cleric did not address the issue of disbanding the Mahdi Army, but rather focused his comments on the Rice-Rumsfeld visit to the region and the presence of US troops.<sup>31</sup>

Early on in his tenure, Maliki also warned Iraq's neighbors that while he was appreciative of their efforts to shelter anti-Saddam factions throughout the duration of his regime, Iraq would not tolerate "security interference," or foreign involvement in "certain movements inside Iraq."<sup>32</sup>

During the ongoing political negotiations, sectarian violence did not relent and still pushed Iraqis towards a more intense form of civil war. Iraqi health and interior ministries statistics indicated that 686 civilians were killed in April in addition to 190 insurgents, 54 policemen, and 22 Iraqi soldiers.<sup>33</sup> For the same month, the Baghdad morgue reported that it had received 1,091 bodies.<sup>34</sup> In reality, the death toll was probably higher.

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani acknowledged this risk in an emotional call for peace: "If we add to that the number of bodies which are not found, or similar crimes in other provinces, then the

total number of calls for deep concern and rage.” He continued, “Behind every so-called unidentified body there is traumatized mother, an orphan child, a devastated father, and an unfortunate wife. Each drop of blood spilt is watering the fields of evil and is growing the seeds of division.”<sup>35</sup> He similarly called for unanimous and unequivocal condemnation of the acts by all of Iraq’s political parties and clerical leaders.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, Maliki made progress in forming a new Iraqi cabinet and government, and in forging more compromises between Iraq’s factions. In mid-May it was reported by Sheikh Khaled al-Attieh, the Shi’ite deputy speaker of the parliament, that the Defense Ministry would be given to a Sunni from Iyad Allawi’s secular list. He also stated that the Shi’ites would remain in control of the Interior Ministry, a contentious post as it controlled many of the internal security forces said to be infiltrated by Shi’ite militias and death squads. The Kurdish Alliance would head the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Housing and Construction, Water and Irrigation, Industry, and Human Rights. Al-Attieh also implied that the leader of the Oil Ministry was all but decided upon. Hussein Shahrstani, a well-respected and impartial Shi’ite nuclear scientist, would control the post.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of these efforts, delays continued, as did more assertions that an official announcement of the cabinet was at hand. As the constitutionally mandated deadline of Monday, May 22 approached, US and Iraqi officials claimed that the cabinet would be announced ahead of the deadline. One Sunni politician, Dhafir al-Ani, claimed on May 18 that the decision would be made within 48 hours. Spokesmen for Maliki similarly asserted that the process was almost complete and that of those who take up new positions in the cabinet, four would be women.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Iraq’s New Political Line-Up***

The government came close to succeeding. On May 20, 2006, it announced most of the cabinet, although two key minister had not been agreed upon. It had to make Maliki the acting Minister of the Interior and one of the new Deputy Prime Ministers, Salam al Zobaie, acting Minister of Defense. It had the following key members:<sup>39</sup>

- *Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki:* A graduate in Arabic letters and leading figure in Al Dawa. Maliki was a Shi’ite Islamist, and had been an exile for many years and had been sentenced to death by Saddam’s courts. He had been a strong advocate of hardline “debaathification,” but had been a key negotiator in dealing with the Kurds, where he had shown flexibility over issues like Kirkuk, and in offering compromises to the Sunnis and promises to abolish the militias and negotiate with the less extreme Sunni insurgents. He was not an experienced leader or administrator, but had acquired a reputation for frankness, honesty, and a willingness to carry out meaningful negotiations.
- *Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih:* A former prime minister of the autonomous Kurdish area, closely tied to President Jalal Talabani and the PUK, Salih was given special responsibility for the economy and its reconstruction.
- *Deputy Prime Minister Salam al Zobaie:* A new figure from the main Sunni party, the Accordance Front, the main Sunni Arab grouping. His background was more tribal than religious. He was given special responsibility for oversight of the security forces.
- *Finance Minister Bayan Jabr:* Jabr was a senior leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), the strongest component of the Shi’ite alliance. He had previously been Minister of the Interior, but had come to be seen as tolerating police



death squads and giving men from the Badr Organization, SCIRI's armed wing, positions in the police. As Minister of the Interior, he had overspent his budget.

- *Oil Minister Hussain al Shahrستاني*: Shahrستاني had a technical background, as a physicist he had been jailed and tortured when he would not work on Saddam Hussein's nuclear weapons program. He had no petroleum background, and no practical background in managing large-scale industrial systems. His political experience was as ex-deputy parliamentary speaker.
- *Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari*: Zebari had already been foreign minister since 2003. He was a Kurd and former spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) during the time of Saddam Hussein.

It was also clear that three other major figures continued to play the same major political role in shaping the conditions for developing Iraq politics without joining the government:

- *Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani*: Sistani remained the most senior and revered Shi'ite cleric. He retained vast political influence, and had played a major role in making the Shi'ite alliance compromise to choose Maliki, resist pressures for sectarian conflict, and seek compromises to keep Iraq unified, although he sometimes seemed to support federation.
- *Abdul Aziz al-Hakim*: The leader of SCIRI and a key leader in the Shi'ite Alliance. Hakim had replaced his brother, the Ayatollah Mohammed Baqer al-Hakim, as leader when the latter was killed in a bombing in August 2003. Hakim had been a spokesman for national unity and negotiations with the Shi'ites, but was also closely associated with the Badr Organization. Some felt he had ties to Iran and militia attacks on Sunnis.
- *Moqtada al-Sadr*: Sadr remained the most activist Shi'ite religious leader, although he was still a relatively low ranking cleric. A charismatic preacher, he continued to call for Coalition withdrawal, and advocate a strongly religious Iraqi state. His "Mahdi Army" had made a major recovery from its defeat in two failed revolts in 2004, and his supporter had been given some 30 votes in the new assembly to keep him in the Shi'ite alliance. Several Sadr supporters had been made ministers.

Even if the formation of a new cabinet adhered to the timeline laid out by the constitution, it was not clear that this would have any discernable affect on the level of sectarian violence that plagued Iraq. Even with ministerial posts agreed upon, numerous issues abounded -- such as federalism, Kurdish autonomy, and oil revenues -- that could prove equally contentious. One secular politician, Ayad Jamal al-Din, warned that a new inclusive government would not be a panacea to the many problems facing Iraq. "I think that things will not calm down easily, even after the formation of a government, but in general there is progress in the political situation," he said. Still, he feared that with the results of the elections, sectarianism had been enshrined in Iraq's political landscape, saying, "The democracy has become a democracy of sects."<sup>40</sup>

### ***Maliki's New Program***

Maliki announced a 30-point program for Iraq's future government on the day the new cabinet was announced. He repeated his call to end the role of the militias and announced the following program to unify the country:<sup>41</sup>

- Form a national unity government from all communities
- Abide by the constitution and any amendments

- Pursue national dialogue to build a free, pluralistic, united and democratic Iraq
- *Renounce violence and crack down on terrorism*
- *Preserve Iraqi sovereignty and deal with the foreign forces on its soil within U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546*
- *Establish state institutions and the rule of law*
- Prevent dictatorship, sectarianism and racism
- Encourage women to take an active role in society and state
- Give young people a healthy environment to develop in
- Protect and develop holy sites and encourage pilgrimage
- Observe the independence of science faculties
- Ensure the independence of the media
- Submit a comprehensive plan for construction and repairs
- *Encourage reconstruction, with priority for deprived areas*
- Accelerate renovation in the electricity industry
- *Regulate the oil and gas industry, giving a role to regions*
- Promote domestic investment and attract foreign capital
- Give priority attention to industry and agriculture
- *Organize links between central and local government to enhance the federal structure of the state*
- *Build friendly relations with neighboring countries*
- *Enhance the role of regions and hold provincial elections*
- *Apply constitutional Article 140 to settle disputes over the status of Kirkuk, including holding a census and referendum*
- *Commit to tackling security issues*
- Observe principles of balance and efficiency in governance
- *Establish budgetary audits and address corruption*
- Develop welfare systems against poverty and ignorance
- Develop higher education and scientific research
- Review the workings and promote independent panels like the Debaathification Commission and the anti-corruption board
- Review the electoral law and the Electoral Commission
- *Control international borders and crossing points*
- *Put an end to people being forced to flee their homes*
- Promote the acquisition of scientific qualifications

- Review detention cases and release the innocent immediately

Maliki paid special attention to a number of key security issues, and did so with far more directness and integrity than Jafari.

A key move in late spring 2006 came when Maliki declared a state of emergency in Basra on May 31, 2006 in response to the growing unrest in that region. To support the declaration, Maliki visited Basra on the same day, vowing to crack down on sectarian gangs operating in the region. The move came as an attempt to assert his authority in the southern Shi'ite area of the country - which had fallen subject to heavy influence by Shi'ite militias -- as well as to assert better central control from Baghdad over the restive province.

Maliki described the state of emergency as a "broad security mobilization," in a region where the growing influence of Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr had stirred up considerable violence after a period of relative calm following the US invasion in 2003.

The state of emergency was declared after some of the most violent months in Basra following the invasion. More than 140 civilians were killed in May, and the British army, which controlled Basra, saw its highest casualty rate since 2003. The Iraqi government said the Iraqi 10<sup>th</sup> Division would be deployed in the city of Basra around the clock and would set up checkpoints, impose curfews, and increase weapons searches.<sup>42</sup>

### ***The Appointment of New Ministers of Defense and Interior, and a New National Security Advisor in June***

In June 2006, al-Maliki announced the appointments to the ministries of Defense, Interior and National Security, approved by the Iraqi legislature. The new Defense Minister was Iraqi Army Gen. Abdul-Qader Mohammed Jassim al-Mifarji, a Sunni; the Interior Minister was Jawad al-Bolani, a Shi'ite; and the National Security Minister was Sherwan al-Waili, a Shi'ite.<sup>43</sup> Coming on the heels of the death of al-Zarqawi, the long delayed agreement by Iraq's political factions on these contentious posts created at least a short-term optimism in Washington and Baghdad.

Al-Mifarji was not a member of any political party and when speaking to the parliament after his confirmation told of how he was removed from Saddam's military and sentenced to seven years in prison after he opposed the invasion of Kuwait. "As a defense minister I will work for all Iraqis and will not work according to my tribal, religious and ethnic background," al-Mifarji said.<sup>44</sup>

Al-Bolani, the Minister of the Interior, was born in Baghdad and had a career as an engineer in the Iraqi Air Force. He became involved in politics as a member of the United Iraqi Alliance in Nasiriyah in 2003 and then worked for the national government as the undersecretary for public works.<sup>45</sup>

The National Security Minister, al-Waili survived Saddam's crackdown of the Shi'ite uprising in the south that followed the Gulf War. He was head of the Basra City Council and a member of the Iraqi Governing Council. He belonged to the Iraqi Dawa Party (different from the Islamic Dawa Party) and graduated with a law degree from Basra University. He said that his first orders of business under the new post would be to tackle border and regional security.<sup>46</sup>

The appointment of these ministers potentially offered the first opportunity in nearly half a year to provide real direction to ministries that had serious problems in terms of corruption, unqualified appointments, overstaffing in some areas and a lack of staffing in others -- and serious sectarian and ethnic tensions in their staffs.

It also marked a further potential advance in that Maliki seemed willing to work with his ministers, and able to exert authority. The previous Prime Minister, Jafarri, had proven to be incompetent in virtually every possible respect. From an Iraqi force development perspective, however, one key area of his incompetence was his inability to work with his ministers and give Iraq's national security council any meaning.

### ***A Step Towards What?***

The new Iraqi political structure and program that emerged in June thus had real promise, and this promise was reinforced by steadily more effective attacks on Al-Qa'ida. These were symbolized by the killing of Zarqawi on June 7, 2006, which was part of a wide range of successful earlier and follow up attacks on Al-Qa'ida. They were also reinforced by a meeting between President Bush and his senior officials at Camp David, which was convened June 9, 2006, and followed by a surprise visit by President Bush to Baghdad the next day to show America's continuing support and pledge that the US would maintain military support until Iraqi forces were ready to replace them.

Mid-2006 thus offered the prospect of ending more than half a year of drift and restructuring the creation of Iraqi forces to deal with the new, critical threat of civil violence. It was far too soon, however, to predict an end to the lack of political direction in Iraq. Iraq had begun to acquire a new group of leaders nearly half a year after the election that gave them a mandate, but the new government faced what was still a wartime environment, and one with a serious risk of civil war. Many leaders were still politically inexperienced and divided, and most had to take over weak ministries with their own tensions and divisions -- with little or no previous experience in administering anything on the scale they now had to deal with.

The Ministries Defense, Interior, Petroleum, and Finance all remained administrative nightmares requiring immediate leadership and organization. The Ministry of Interior, in particular, still had elements linked to Shi'ite militias. Reforms of the security forces and militias had begun, but basic steps like reforming Iraq's prisons and detainee centers had made only limited progress. The central government had yet to show it could exert control over the police and security forces in many areas outside Baghdad, create a workable criminal justice and court system to bring broader security and establish a rule of law, and establish the kind of local presence and government-provided services that would give it real credibility and legitimacy.

Iraqi forces clearly needed tighter control and more unity, and the new government faced major problems in terms of fiscal resources, cuts in the flow of foreign aid funding, and in securing and expanding oil exports. The government also faced the need to cope with appointing a new Constitutional advisory group, with a four month deadline to clarify virtually every controversial issue in Iraqi politics and governance -- including a provision calling for abolishing militias.

It faced debates on federalism and local autonomy that could have a major impact on central government powers, its control over national funds and Iraqi forces, and especially over police functions and the very nature of local legal systems and law enforcement. If this went well, and the new assembly approved the new revisions to the constitution, it faced a 60-day period in which to campaign for a popular referendum to vote on the result. While the new government had been elected for a four year term of office, it potentially faced major changes in its role and powers in late 2006 or early 2007, and the fourth major shake up in the Iraqi government in two years.

The same new government that now had responsibility for shaping Iraqi forces and winning a war had to wait until December-March before it could actually begin to govern with a full

constitutional mandate and legal base -- provided that it could hold the nation together, there was no division into federalism, and Iraqi society could rebuild some of the bridges across its recent sectarian and ethnic divisions. It also faced the certainty that the insurgency would continue to strike at every fault line in the interim. It had to restore civil order and deal with the militias, and make the "Year of the Police" a reality that could create a truly national police.

At a more immediate level, practical questions also arose as to how well the new members of the government could actually work together, how well they would bridge over their sectarian and ethnic backgrounds, and who would actually exert power. One example was that Mowaffak al-Rubaie, the former National Security Advisor, attempted to stay in his position, stating he had a five year term dating back to the time of the CPA transitional government at the time. Rubaie had previously been asked to step down by Alawi, and he declined.

## **Growing Regional Threats and Involvement**

Iraqi force development faced other problems, and ones that raised new questions about the need to create forces that could deter and defend against foreign threats as well as deal with the insurgency. By May 2006, Iran and Turkey had begun to play a more active role in putting pressure on Iraq's Kurdish population. Iran shelled the town of Razqa, Iraq in May as a part of its long-running struggle against Kurdish separatist groups operating in the mountainous region along Iraq's border with Iran.

Meanwhile, Turkey sent tens of thousands of fresh soldiers to beef up its force in its southern Kurdish-populated area near the Iraqi border. Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul stated that Turkey "would not hesitate to take every kind of measure when our security is at stake," hinting that the possibility of Turkish incursions into Iraqi territory remained at least tacitly on the table.<sup>47</sup>

Coalition officials also continued to charge that Iran was playing an active role in training and equipping various Shi'ite militias, shipping in new arms and devices for IEDs, and playing a role in encouraging anti-Sunni attacks by various elements of the Ministry of Interior security forces and police. In comments to the House Armed Services Committee on February 8, 2006, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said that Iraqis were aware of and sensitive to Iranian influence in Iraq. However, he went on to say that it would be the duty of the Iraqi security forces to see that Iranian influence in Iraqi affairs is "kept to a dull roar," and that it was his impression that the Shi'a in Iraq "are more Iraqi than they are oriented toward Iranian Shi'a. They see themselves as Iraqi."<sup>48</sup>

## **The "First Threat:" Insurgent Attacks on ISF**

The most serious direct threat to Iraqi force development, however, still came from the insurgents. The hardline Sunni Islamist groups not only struck at sectarian and ethnic fault lines, they focused on police recruits and Iraqi forces as "soft" targets. In late January 2006, for example, 31 Iraqi men were massacred by insurgents as they returned home after being turned down from the Baghdad police academy. The hired bus transporting the rejected recruits was forced off the road by six carloads of gunmen near Taji after being diverted from its intended route by a Coalition checkpoint. Upon finding applications for the police forces among the men's belongings, the insurgents drove them to an abandoned area and shot them. This incident occurred just two weeks after a suicide bombing in Ramadi killed over 70 police recruits.<sup>49</sup>

In early March, Maj. Gen. Mubdar Hatim Hayza al-Dulaimi, the top Iraqi commander in Baghdad was shot in the back of the head after his car was sprayed by bullets in a drive by

shooting. Al-Dulaimi, who led the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, was revered by both Iraqi and US soldiers and according to US officials embodied the type of Iraqi forces the Coalition was trying to construct. Col. Ahmed Saddam Khalifah said of al-Dulaimi, "He made it clear that our job is to make Baghdad safe from the terrorists, but it is just as important not to make new enemies." Other officers talked of how he took care of his soldiers, making sure they were fed well and took a personal interest in keeping their morale high. Lt. Col. Mohammed Ali said, "He told us it was important to make the people see us as people who understand them and want to protect them."<sup>50</sup>

On one day in late April, a string of car bombings killed over 40 Iraqi civilians and police recruits. The bodies of 15 MOI special police recruits were found shot dead in the back of pickup trucks in Abu Ghraib. Iraqi officials also reported that a similar case, in which 17 recruits were found killed in the same fashion, occurred west of Ramadi.<sup>51</sup>

On May 7, two separate car bombings targeted Iraqi forces. In Adhamiyah, a car bomb detonated near an Iraqi army checkpoint killing six soldiers and three civilians. Also in Northern Baghdad, a suicide bomber targeting a police patrol blew himself up outside of an Iraqi newspaper, al-Sabah, killing one civilian and wounding six. On the same day in Kirkuk, gunmen abducted Col. Sherzad Abdullah, an Iraqi army officer as he left for work.<sup>52</sup>

Although Iraqi recruits are "soft" targets, when attacked, armed and trained Iraqi units were able to fight back, often times with success. In late April in Baqubah, a police station and five checkpoints came under simultaneous attack with mortar rounds, rocket-propelled grenades, and small arms fire. Iraqi police forces responded killing 17 gunmen and capturing 28. In the process, one Iraqi soldier was killed, two were wounded, and four police were wounded.<sup>53</sup>

In Dali Abbas, an Iraqi Army headquarters was attacked by 100 gunmen with combined arms fire. The soldiers killed four insurgents and detained 15. Six Iraqi soldiers were killed and eight were wounded.<sup>54</sup>

In mid April, confusion and miscommunication between US and Iraqi soldiers caused an Iraqi convoy to attempt to travel from Taji to Najaf at night -- a dangerous journey. Although a US escort preceded the Iraqi convoy, the distance was great enough for the insurgents to allow the US group to pass, and then ambush the Iraqis. At least nine Iraqis were killed, 18 wounded and several vehicles destroyed.<sup>55</sup>

Stories differed as to why the Iraqi units had attempted to make the trip at night. Both US and Iraqi officials maintained that the original plan was for the Iraqi units to stay overnight at the American base in Taji, and then continue to Najaf the following day. Yet agreements broke down over what transpired that night. Gen. Abbas Maadal, the chief of police in Najaf, said that the police had gone to Taji to pick up 10 vehicles and that their request to stay overnight had been denied by US officers there. US spokesman for the base however seemed to imply that the Iraqis left suddenly or without warning. Major Stover said, "They were supposed to stay overnight. Why they left, I don't know."<sup>56</sup>

In any case, upon hearing the gunfire from the ambush, the US convoy ahead of the Iraqis contacted the base at Taji which then dispatched a force of Humvees and Apache helicopters to aide and back up the Iraqi forces. US forces killed one insurgent and captured five more. By the evening of the following day, only 57 of the 109 Iraqi policemen had returned to the base.<sup>57</sup>

Violence toward the police also remained a serious issue in late spring, with at least 547 slain in 2006 by May -- a figure roughly equal to the combined number of American and Iraqi soldiers slain in 2006.<sup>58</sup>

## **Sectarian Cleansing and Internal Displacement**

There is no easy way to quantify the extent to which the mission of Iraqi forces changed during the first half of 2006 to focus on the prevention of full-scale civil war. The data on sectarian and ethnic conflict are uncertain, and much of the evidence is based on anecdotal reporting. It is clear the situation generally grew worse, but even Iraqis differed sharply on how much worse things were than in the last half of 2005.

There was some evidence that the sheer extremism of Sunni Islamists pushed more moderate Iraqi Sunnis away from supporting the insurgency and made them more willing to compromise or participate in the political process. Some Iraqis also reacted on national rather than sectarian and ethnic lines.

### ***The Uncertain Scale of Ethnic Cleansing, Violence, and Displacement***

In some mixed Shi'ite-Sunni communities the February 22 bombing of the Askariya shrine had a unifying effect. In these instances, Shi'ites and Sunnis organized armed patrols to protect their neighborhoods from sectarian violence.<sup>59</sup> For example, in Baghdad's Al-Amal district, every night at 9 pm, Sunni and Shi'ite residents placed old palm tree trunks and barrels as barriers on city streets and communicated events from their positions by hand-held radio.<sup>60</sup> US forces meddled little in the affairs of such watch groups, as they were not a direct threat to them, but merely a defensive outgrowth of the lack of security in the capital.

Increased sectarian and ethnic tension and violence was far more common, however, and often involved intrafactional struggles as well as intensifying clashes between sectarian and ethnic factions. Tensions between Arab and Kurd steadily increased in the Kirkuk and other mixed areas, and both Kurdish and Shi'ite militias were deployed into the Kirkuk area as tensions rose.

In some largely Shi'ite cities like Basra, hardline Shi'ite Islamists not only drove out Sunnis and Christians, but more secular and moderate Shi'ites, while Britain effectively abandoned missions in much of the city in the face of Islamist hostility. In some Sunni cities like Ramadi, as well as in rural and tribal areas, hardline Sunni Islamists clashed with more moderate Sunnis, effectively creating "no go" areas for moderate Sunnis -- as well as Iraqi and US forces -- in some supposedly "liberated" areas.

### ***Estimates of Cleansing and Displacement***

Sectarian and ethnic cleansing and displacement became a steadily more serious problem as Sunni and Shi'ite families left mixed neighborhoods for areas where their sect was the majority. The UN-affiliated International Organization for Migration estimated that by the end of March as many as 25,000 Iraqi's had been displaced since the Askariya bombing. The Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration put the number even higher at 32,000.<sup>61</sup>

Although numbers differed, it was estimated that of these families, between 220 and 761 were Shi'ites that had fled from the Sunni dominated al-Anbar province to Baghdad. In turn, 50 Sunni families had reportedly relocated from Baghdad to Fallujah. It is also believed that 1,250 Shi'ite families fled Baghdad and central Iraq and settled in Najaf.<sup>62</sup> In Fallujah, another city that is predominately Sunni, only 37 Shi'ite families remained according to the organization.<sup>63</sup> By mid-April, the Ministry of Displacement Migration put the number at 60,000 people.<sup>64</sup> A spokesman for the for the ministry estimated that every day 1,000 Iraqi's were being forced to flee their homes.<sup>65</sup> Much of the displacement occurred in and around the capital, traditionally a mixed city.

Between March 22 and April 15 the number of displaced Iraqis tripled from 23,000 to almost 70,000 people. By April 19, the total number of Iraqis displaced from sectarian violence was estimated to be 80,000 by the President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, Said Hakki. This included over 7,000 Shi'ite families and about 2,800 Sunni families.<sup>66</sup> This total steadily climbed and by mid-May, Iraqi immigration officials said that between 90,000 and 100,000 individuals had been displaced, or 15,000 families.<sup>67</sup>

In the Shi'ite city of Najaf, an abandoned hotel was turned into a shelter for incoming families, and in Nasiriyah, arriving families began setting up tents on the outskirts of the city.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, an amusement park in the predominately Shi'ite town of al-Kut was converted into a makeshift refugee camp.<sup>69</sup> Iraqi officials worried that this massive relocation would cause food and water shortages.<sup>70</sup> In April, there were reports that dysentery was spreading and conditions were expected to worsen with the coming summer.<sup>71</sup>

Mr. Hakki said that camps had been established in 14 provinces, with the majority of refugees flooding to those in Samarra, Fallujah, Basra, Najaf and neighborhoods within Baghdad. The Red Crescent, the prime minister's office, and the ministries of Health, Migration and Displacement, Interior, and Defense were working to alleviate health concerns associated with the displacement and provide clean water, latrines, food and bedding.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to the fear of disease, Mr. Hakki also worried that these secularly segregated refugee camps would become easy targets for terrorists seeking mass casualty attacks.<sup>73</sup>

Spokesman for MNF-I, Lt. Col. Barry Johnson said that US officials were aware of the problem and were working to address it with the Iraqi government. "The key issue," Lt. Col. Johnson continued, "is to continue to develop the Iraqi security forces and peoples' confidence in their ability."<sup>74</sup>

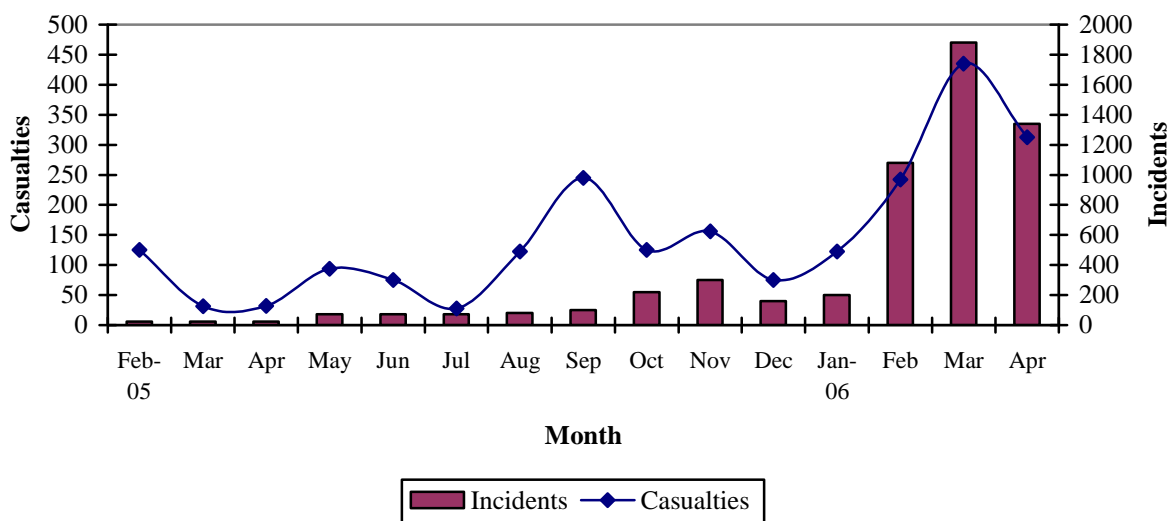
This internal displacement, while often the result of direct threats by either Sunni insurgents or Shi'ite militias, was also due to the general deterioration of security and increase in sectarian tensions following the attack on the shrine. Families, who often felt secure among their long-time neighbors of the opposite sect, were now facing abductions and killings perpetrated in broad daylight by masked gunmen. For example, when carloads of gunmen grabbed Mohannad al-Azawi, a Sunni, from his pet store in Baghdad and a Shi'ite friend attempted to intervene, witnesses said the men pointed a pistol to his head and asked, "You want us to blow your brains out too?"<sup>75</sup>

### ***Uncertain Levels of Sectarian Violence***

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq detailed these occurrences in a report issued in April noting that "a number of Sunni and Shi'a families living in mixed neighborhoods were forcibly evicted from their homes or left voluntarily because of threats of violence from militias, insurgents and other armed groups."<sup>76</sup> Figure 1 provides a graphic depiction of the rise of what the DOD termed as "sectarian incidents" from February 2005 to April 2006. These figures may seriously understate the actual increase in violence since the DOD did not define how it calculated incidents and casualties, and many low-level incidents, woundings, kidnappings, and attacks on property seem to be excluded, along with incidents where the cause was unclear (e.g. possible crimes).



**Figure 1**  
**Sectarian Incidents**



Note: Plotted data fall within  $\pm 4$  standard deviations of their value. Source: Adapted from "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Report to Congress, May 2006, p. 40.

It was far from clear how methodical these targeted secular evictions were. Because they were perpetrated by a combination of gangs, insurgents and militias, and targeted both Sunnis and Shi'ites, it seemed unlikely that a concerted effort by a single or even a few organizations was at work. However, Mr. Hakki noted that in most cases, the threats were coming from groups based outside of the neighborhoods. "They are highly organized," he said, "It is not happening in a haphazard way."<sup>77</sup> However, the story told by one auto-parts store owner in Baghdad was perhaps more illustrative of the way Iraqis viewed the violence. Once a month gunmen came to his business to collect \$300 in "protection money." "They say they're with the insurgency and that they're protecting me from worse things. Who knows the truth...I just pay. We all pay."<sup>78</sup>

### *Creating a "New Afghanistan"?*

Experts differ sharply over the extent to which Zarqawi, Al Qa'ida in Mesopotamia, and other Islamist insurgent movements saw creating sectarian and ethnic disorder and chaos in Iraq as a means of both driving the Coalition out of Iraq and giving Islamists the same kind of opportunity that had allowed the Taliban to come to power in Afghanistan. There was no doubt, however, that the insurgency not only made Iraqi forces a prime target, but continued to make civil war a strategic goal.

According to a memo attributed to al-Qa'ida in May 2006, it appeared that the displacement of Shi'ites was a new element of the terrorist organization's strategy in Iraq. The memo, found in an al-Qa'ida "hide out" in Yousifiya by US forces, calls on followers to "displace the Shi'ites and displace their shops and businesses from our areas."<sup>79</sup>

The stories told by individual Iraqis were often similar. One individual, Bassam Fariq Daash, a 34-year old Shi'ite fled from his predominately Sunni village of Awad to nearby Shoula after numerous death threats from insurgents. Reportedly, he was one of 147 Shi'ite families that had

come to that town since the February 22 attack on the Askariya shrine.<sup>80</sup> In a similar instance, a Sunni man who lived in Samarra was beaten by black-clad militia men, his mother was shot and he was told by the gunmen that they would kill him and “everybody [he knows]” if he did not leave the city immediately.<sup>81</sup> Hussein Alawan, a Shi’ite, was driven out of the mixed city of Latifiyah: “They told me that I should leave within 24 hours or we will all get killed. So we left everything there and took only the bare things we need to live.”<sup>82</sup>

A Sunni family, the Ubaidis, had just finished lunch in their mixed neighborhood of Shaab, in Baghdad, when masked gunmen knocked at their door and demanded to speak with Ziad, 21 and his father, Tariq. Both were shoved into the trunk of a car, their bodies discovered four days later dumped in a town near Baghdad. Muazzaz, Tariq’s wife, who had lived in the neighborhood for 19 years said, “In a while, this area will be 100% Shi’ite...It’s definitely sectarian cleansing.”<sup>83</sup>

Mahadiya Mushin, a Shi’ite residing in the suburb of Abu Ghraib, found her name on a death list together with the names of 31 other Shi’ite families that was distributed by Sunni Mujahideen. As she was preparing to leave, she watched gunmen drag her neighbor from his house, torture and shoot him, and then light his house on fire as a warning to those who refused to comply.<sup>84</sup>

According to one Sunni man, Abu Omar, members of the Mahdi Army burst into his home one night searching for his son. When they could not find him, they left but not before telling the man that they would kill his son when they found him. Although the man and his son had committed no offense, the Mahdi members said that they were killing all young men named Omar and Bakar, popular Sunni names. When Abu Omar called the police the next day for protection they told him that because of his proximity to Sadr City, “there’s nothing they could do for a Sunni” in that area. He and other Sunni families subsequently fled the neighborhood to the Sunni-dominated area west of the Tigris.<sup>85</sup>

In the mixed al-Amel district, some Sunni families received envelopes containing a single bullet and a letter telling them to leave the neighborhood immediately.<sup>86</sup> A Sunni shop owner, Dhafir Sadoun, left his long time residence in Sadr City saying “We did not fear the Mahdi Army because we’ve lived in Sadr City for 20 years, and everyone knows us and knows how we love the Shi’ites. But the Interior Ministry commandos arrest any Sunni. They don’t just arrest them; they kill them.”<sup>87</sup> The displacement caused by this sectarian violence was also being exploited for financial gain in some instances. There were reports that an estate agent in Adamiyah, a Sunni suburb in Baghdad, had paid teenagers to distribute fliers to Shi’ite households warning them to leave with the intention of buying up the property at low prices.<sup>88</sup>

Similar tactics were often employed. Leaflets were frequently distributed by gunmen or even by children. In some instances, those who had fled did so after hearing their names on a list of “enemies” read out at a Sunni mosque. It was also reported that “religious vigilantes” would paint black crosses, referred to as “the mark of death,” on the doors of those it sought to drive out. Young children were sometimes abducted for several hours and then returned to their families with a warning that if they did not leave, next time their children would be killed.<sup>89</sup>

This displacement already began to affect local governance in the spring of 2006. In Musayyib, a traditionally mixed district, the city council was run by 17 Shi’ites, most of whom were al-Sadr supporters, and included two non-voting Sunni members. There were also reports that members of the Mahdi Army had slowly began policing the neighborhoods, implementing strict punishments for the violation of Islamic law in the area. In one instance a women was doused in acid for having her ankles exposed.<sup>90</sup>

Cross-border displacement also became a growing issue. In 2004, 258 Iraqis registered as refugees with the UNHCR in Egypt. Between 2005 and March 2006, that number increased to 828. Although Iraqi embassies in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan confirmed that there had been an increase in Iraqi refugees to those countries, they did not have exact numbers. In addition, although the UNHCR numbers are not in and of themselves alarming, they nearly doubled in a little over a year. It is also safe to say as well that most Iraqi refugees did not bother registering with the UN.<sup>91</sup>

Many began to worry that the constant level of violence, and its damaging effects on reconstruction and the rehabilitation of the economy, were forcing many of Iraq's "best and brightest" to leave Iraq, making recovery from this cycle all the more difficult. For example, Ban Istafan, a women biologist and teacher, fled with her Christian family to Amman after receiving a threatening letter.

### **Insurgent Infiltration and the Intelligence Problem: Growing Instability in Each Governorate**

The end result was that it became almost meaningless to talk about secure and insecure provinces and governorates. Iraqi forces did still face a major insurgent threat in only four of eighteen provinces, but the threat of civil disorder and conflict permeated the country. Baghdad and Mosul alone included more than 30% of the population and Kirkuk and Basra had become flashpoints for reasons that had little to do with the insurgency.

A combination of insurgent action, and sectarian and ethnic violence came to threaten virtually every governorate. This broadened both the mission of Iraqi forces and changed other aspects of their mission, such as intelligence. In April 2006, for example, Lt. Col. Chris Lauchner, who trained Iraqi special forces as part of a joint US-Iraqi special operations headquarters, said that the greatest need for the Iraqi security forces was an intelligence-coordinating body that could collect information on the insurgency and distribute it on the ground.

Virtually all such intelligence functions in Iraq were still being carried out by American intelligence agencies. Due to evidence of insurgent infiltration of Iraqi MOD and MOI forces, not all intelligence information was being shared with the two ministries, creating a sometimes tenuous working relationship between them and the Americans.<sup>92</sup>

Like patrol and security activity, intelligence had increasingly become a problem affecting virtually every part of Iraq, and one where intelligence on sectarian and ethnic divisions, and forces like the militias, became as important as intelligence on the insurgents. Figure 2 shows just how weak the rule of law and security had become, by province, as of January 31, 2006. This situation deteriorated in every province during the following months, as well as in key cities like Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, and Kirkuk:

**Figure 2**  
**Provincial Stability Assessment: January 31, 2006**  
**Part 1**

Region/Province	Governance	Security
<b>Muthana Province</b>	Rule of law weak due to inadequate prison facilities. Understanding of roles within govt. structure needs emphasis. Very dominant governor, but provincial council (PC) able to function effectively.	ISF operates in a relatively permissive environment.
<b>Maysan Province</b>	Governance capacity is improving with DFID assistance; however, rule of law hindered due to a lack of adequate prison facilities.	Large number of experienced local militia present. Camp Abu Naji experiences frequent IDF attacks and British patrols are frequently subject to harassing fire.
<b>Kurdish Region</b>	Stable government with close coordination between government and security forces. Rule of law established and functioning.	No significant AIF activity. Local security forces restraining crime and terrorism within the established legal system.
<b>Ninawa Province</b>	Governor is overshadowed by strong Kurdish vice-governor. Outdated laws hinder performance of PC, and members are unsure of their responsibility to their constituents.	Inter-ethnic violence and AIF activity remain high.
<b>Tamim Province</b>	Governor unofficially accountable to Kurdish political parties. PC members have not fully grasped duties and responsibilities.	Inter-ethnic violence and suspicions and post-election tensions remain high.
<b>Salah ad Din Province</b>	Provincial govt. functioning but weak in providing essential services.	Ongoing tribal conflict adds to relatively high level of tension within the province. AIF attacks against ISF remain a concern.
<b>Diyala Province</b>	Top provincial offices divided up among Sunnis, Shi'ites, and Kurds, leading to consistent in-fighting. Governor makes decisions without consulting PC, but is accountable to them for the decisions he makes. Rule of law requires continued emphasis.	Attacks of intimidation and assassinations continue nearly unabated, targeting ISF, PC and civilians.
<b>Baghdad Province</b>	Strong and growing influence of SCIRI party on the PC.	Assassinations and intimidation of public officials, ISF and civilians occur frequently. Criminal activity is a major contributor to the overall level of violence.

Source: Adapted from "Provincial Stability Assessment" briefing, US Department of State, January 31, 2006.

**Figure 2**  
**Provincial Stability Assessment: January 31, 2006**  
**Part 2**

Region/Province	Governance	Security
<b>Anbar Province</b>	Governor is the dominant figure in all decision making and governance functions. PC has minimal control over governor's actions. IPS and courts system incapable of adequately supporting the rule of law. Significant intimidation of provincial council members.	Insurgent activity against ISF increasing; security situation is negatively impacting redevelopment efforts.
<b>Babil Province</b>	Little transparency and accountability of provincial government. Governor very dominant in dealings with other members of PC. Strong Iranian influence apparent w/in PC. PC attempting to place party loyalist in police chief position.	Ethnic conflicts in North Babil. The PC no longer claims responsibility for this area, claiming to have ceded it to Baghdad Province. Crime is a major factor within the province.
<b>Najaf Province</b>	Iranian influence on provincial government a concern. However, government is capable of maintaining stability within the province and providing for the needs of its populace.	AIF activity reduced to a level that ISF can control without CF assistance. There is growing tension between Madia [sic] Militia and Badr Corps that could escalate. Recent targeting of CF resulted in 5 US deaths.
<b>Karbala Province</b>	Governance is functioning and improving. However, it appears to be increasing association with the Iranian government. Local population is cognizant of the large presence of Iranians in Karbala and are concerned about their growing influence.	AIF activity reduced to a level that ISF can control without CF assistance. Suicide attacks are infrequent, but have occurred within past 30 days, killing over 70 people in one event.
<b>Qadisiyah Province</b>	PC ineffective at providing essential services; dominant governor meddles in all areas of government; rule of law corrupted and bureaucratic.	Security situation is manageable by local ISF with some support from CF.
<b>Wasit Province</b>	Governor is weak and appears more interested in furthering his own and the DAVA party's interest than improving local government's responsiveness to the people.	Manageable, but with high level of smuggling activity and tensions between Badr Corps and JAM could lead to a worsening situation.
<b>Basra Province</b>	Slowly getting started, the PC often attempts to assert its influence beyond its authority.	High level of militia activity including infiltration of local security forces. Smuggling and criminal activity continues unabated. Intimidation attacks and assassinations are common.
<b>Dhi Qar Province</b>	Sound governance processes and interaction among political parties. Require strengthening of lines of communication among various entities of provincial government.	Strong JAM and OMS presence, but few significant attacks. CF experienced occasional harassing attacks.

Source: Adapted from "Provincial Stability Assessment" briefing, US Department of State, January 31, 2006.

## Operational Developments

Yet, severe as these problems were, they scarcely paralyzed Iraqi force development. Iraqi forces continued to expand their operations against the hard-line Sunni insurgents, and increase their

presence in troubled areas. They also began to make a fundamental shift in their mission from a counterinsurgency role to one that included a counter-civil war mission, which included controlling activity from various Shi'ite and Kurdish militias and armed groups, as well as sectarian and ethnic activity by the police -- including locally appointed police -- and various security forces.

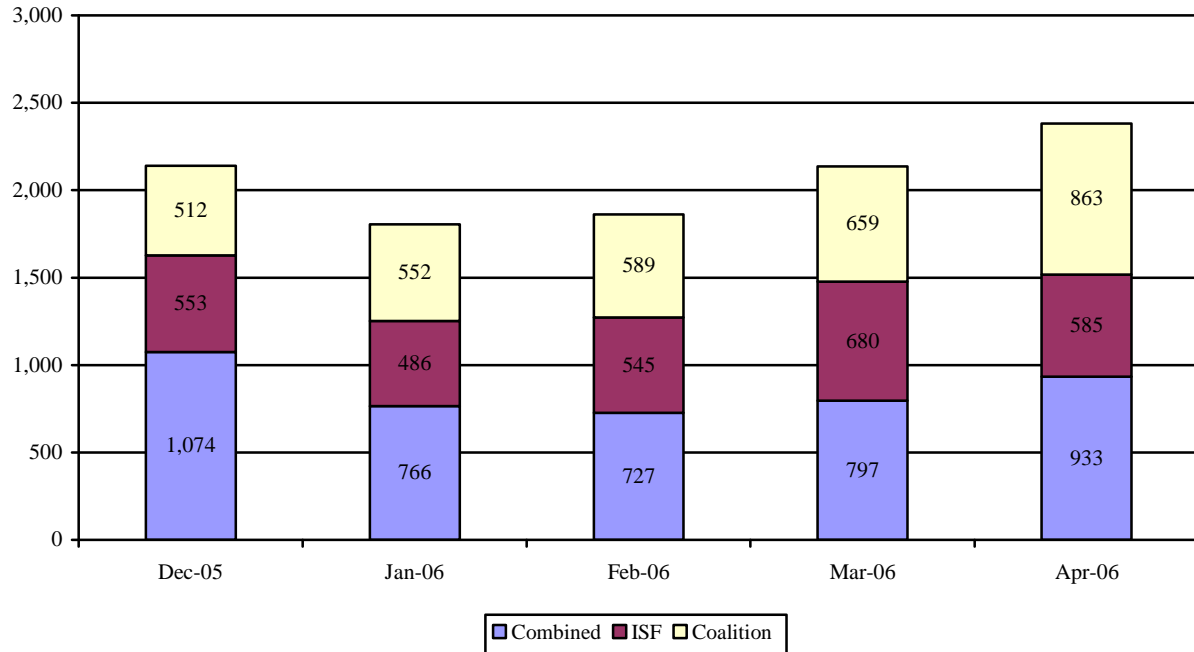
Figure 3 depicts the number of combat operations carried out between December 2006 and April 2006. Details are provided and compared for ISF, Coalition, and Combined operations. These data do have serious problems in terms of definition and categorization, because the level of the Iraqi role is hard to define. The graph is probably broadly correct, however, in showing a cumulative increase of ISF operations from December 2005 to March 2006, with a sharper increase from March 2006 to April 2006.

These operations were not really independent, since even the best Iraqi forces remained dependent on Coalition advisors, partner units, intelligence, and support. In many cases, they also needed Coalition armor, artillery, airpower, tactical mobility, and reserves. This raised long-term questions about the lack of any clear plan for Iraqi force development that would really eliminate Iraqi dependence on Coalition forces for counter insurgency, and give Iraqi forces enough heavy weapons, tactical lift, and other equipment to deter and defend against foreign threats.

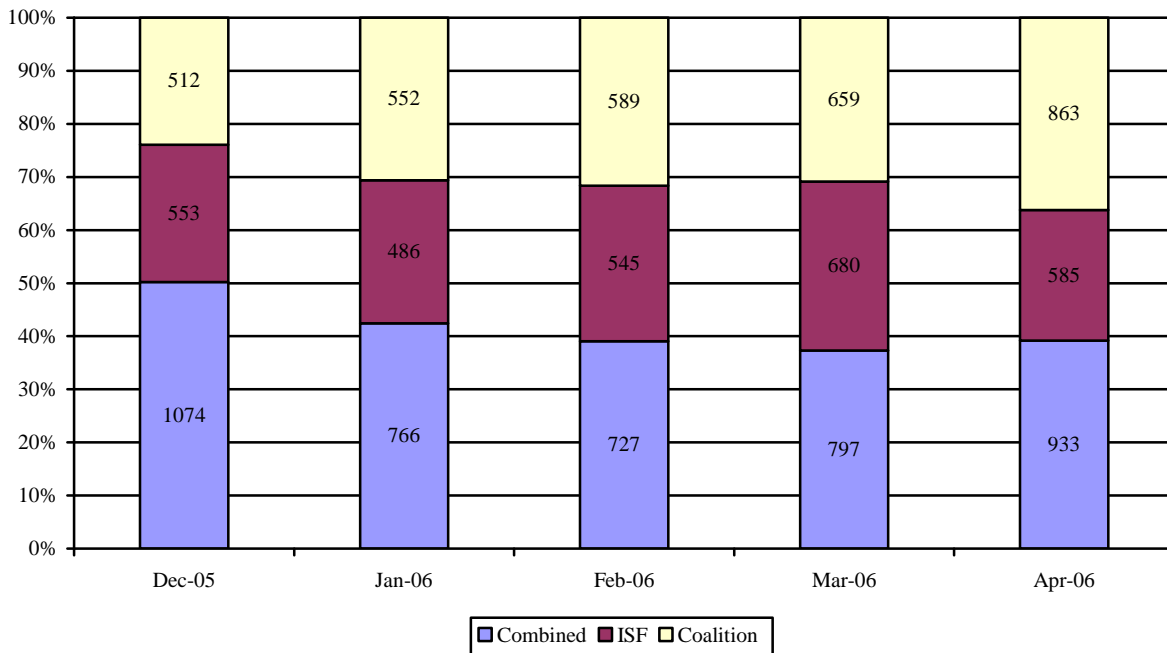
At the same time, the immediate test of Iraqi effectiveness had little to do with whether Iraqi forces could operate entirely on their own -- a development which events had made clear could generally only come in 2007 at the earliest. It was whether they were steadily becoming more effective, and served the nation rather than a sect or ethnic group. Judged by these real-world goals, Iraqi combat forces had made real-world progress, and were obviously continuing to do so.

**Figure 3**  
**Combat Operations (Company level and above\*)**

**Number of Operations**



**Iraqi Role by Percentage of Total Operations**



\* Includes MOD and National Police units; data includes only those ISF independent operations that were reported to the Coalition. Source: Adapted from "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Report to Congress, May 2006, p. 48.

### ***Adding a New Mission: Counter-Civil War***

Despite the widespread sectarian violence that followed the February 22 bombing of the Shi'ite Aksariya shrine, the Iraqi forces were also able to take on some aspects of the mission of preventing civil war. Their performance was far more mixed than the Iraqi government and MNF-I liked to admit. There were problems with MOI security forces and police that acted as Shi'ite or Kurdish forces, rather than as national forces. There also were incidents in which local Sunni and other security forces had serious clashes with the police and security services.

In many cases, however, Iraqi police and security units, not US soldiers, were able to restore order -- at least on a local and temporary basis. Iraqi Security Forces were put on alert after the attack, and manned checkpoints, guarded mosques, increased patrols, and protected peaceful demonstrators. Public Order Brigades were deployed to areas where violence was reported and in the first two weeks of March, ISF conducted more than 200 independent operations.<sup>93</sup>

In one instance, Iraqi police responded to an armed Shi'ite crowd outside a Sunni mosque. The brigade, predominately Shi'ite, was able to disperse the crowd without incident after a two hour standoff and remained overnight to protect the mosque.<sup>94</sup>

In all, the Iraqi army deployed over 100,000 soldiers to prevent the spread of violence, or 47 battalions drawn from 10 divisions. US forces largely acted as embedded advisors or as a backup. In addition, the conduct of Iraqi units in the face of sectarian violence remained calm and restrained and reportedly not one civilian was killed by an Iraqi officer.

The commander of Iraq's ground forces, Lt. Gen. Abdul Qadir, praised the success and the cohesiveness of the regular army forces saying, "Not one unit had sectarian difficulties...And when we canceled all leaves after the mosque bombing -- we expected trouble of course -- our soldiers returned promptly to their units. Now it is as you see for yourself: Iraqis are proud of their own soldiers."<sup>95</sup>

Observers differed sharply over just how serious a step the attack was in pushing the country towards civil war. US State Department Spokesman Adam Ereli asserted that the violence, and Iraqi's reaction to it, was an "affirmation" of a successful US policy in Iraq. "You've got political leadership acting together on behalf of the common good, and you've got security forces demonstrating that capability and a responsibility as a national entity that we've been working to develop and that has now been put to the test and, I think, is proving successful."<sup>96</sup>

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch echoed these sentiments saying, "We're not seeing civil war ignited in Iraq...We're seeing a competent, capable Iraqi government using their security forces to calm the storm."<sup>97</sup> On the Sunday morning talk show "Face the Nation," National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley said that Iraqi's had "stared into the abyss a bit, and I think they've all concluded that further violence...is not in their interest."<sup>98</sup>

These views contrasted sharply with views like those of Tariq al-Hashimi, the leader of the Sunni dominated Iraqi Accordance Front who called the reaction of the governments security forces "miserable and ashamed" and said that "as usual [they were] either audience or participant."<sup>99</sup> Other reports similarly noted that ISF were either unable, or unwilling to stop attacks by militias.<sup>100</sup>

### ***Major Operations in the Fight Against the Insurgents***

One thing was clear: insurgent efforts to increase sectarian divisions and provoke civil war did not stop Iraqi and Coalition forces from improving their operations against the insurgents, and Al



Qa'ida in particular. At a press briefing from Baghdad March 23, 2006, Army Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch said that to counter terrorist efforts in Iraq, the Coalition had launched a series of three ongoing counterinsurgency operations, in coordination with Iraqi authorities and security forces.<sup>101</sup>

- Operation Scales of Justice -- Iraqi and coalition forces brought in 26,000 Iraqi army and police and 10,000 Coalition forces to increase security on the streets of Baghdad with 300 patrols per day and more than 100 checkpoints to reduce insurgent sectarian attacks. The operation was to continue until the new government was formed.
- Operation Northern Lights -- Iraqi and Coalition forces conducted a series of offensive operations to capture or kill insurgents, seize weapons and explosives, and stop sectarian violence. At the briefing, Lynch reported the capture of 18 insurgents and the seizure of eight caches of weapons and explosives since the operation began.
- Operation Swarmer -- An Iraqi-led operation conducted the week on March 12 that captured 95 insurgents and seized 24 weapons caches, containing hundreds of mortar rounds, rockets, surface-to-air missiles, bomb-making equipment and terrorist training manuals.

Many of these operations were conducted with Iraqi units taking the lead in local raids and strikes, providing human intelligence, and providing area security.

### *US-Iraqi Campaigns in Early 2006*

In "Operation Scales of Justice," a force of 26,000 Iraqi army and police -- together with 10,000 Coalition forces -- conducted 150 patrols on the streets of Baghdad per day in an effort to increase general security. This operation included more than 100 checkpoints established throughout the city and was scheduled to continue until a new Iraqi government was formed.<sup>102</sup> According to Maj. Gen. James Thurman, this operation resulted in increased local trust in Iraqi forces and over 3,000 anonymous tips regarding insurgent activity. He also indicated that these ongoing operations had caused a 58% reduction in attacks in the city in the past 90 days.<sup>103</sup>

"Operation Northern Lights" was an Iraqi-led operation that consisted of a series of offensive raids to capture or kill insurgents, seize weapons and explosive material and halt sectarian attacks. In the initial stages of the operation, 18 insurgents were captured and 8 weapons caches were discovered.<sup>104</sup>

On March 17, the US launched "Operation Swarmer" near Samarra.<sup>105</sup> This joint US-Iraqi operation, led by the 101<sup>st</sup> airborne division, was described as the largest air assault since the 2003 invasion. According to US military officials, 1,500 Coalition and Iraqi troops participated and more than 50 aircraft and 200 tactical vehicles were used.<sup>106</sup> Four battalions were used from the 101<sup>st</sup> airborne were used and about 60% of the troops involved were Iraqi according to Lt. Col. Edward Loomis.<sup>107</sup>

The operation focused on a 10 square mile area northeast of the city that had been a concentration of sectarian attacks in the weeks prior and also reportedly harbored Al-Qa'ida insurgents.<sup>108</sup> At least 40 suspected insurgents were apprehended on the first day and several weapons caches were discovered that contained artillery shells, explosives, roadside bomb making materials and military uniforms.<sup>109</sup> There were no reports of casualties or resistance by insurgents.<sup>110</sup>

The second day of the assault only netted 10 more detainees and 17 from the day prior were released. In addition, no new weapons caches were found. American command even began to send some troops back to their bases.<sup>111</sup>

By the third day of the operation, Lt. Col. Loomis stated that about 80 suspected insurgents had been detained since Thursday, the first day of the assault. Six of those individuals were allegedly involved in the killing of an Iraqi television station director and his driver several days earlier.<sup>112</sup> The operation concluded March 22 with no casualties and resulted in the detention of 104 suspected insurgents and the discovery of 24 weapons caches.<sup>113</sup>

Less overtly, the US also used special task forces, working with Iraqi forces, to conduct a series of well targeted raids against key insurgent leaders, particularly Al-Qa'ida. These eventually hunted down Al-Qa'ida's leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in early June. Before that time, more than 10 senior Al-Qa'ida leaders had been killed or captured in a whole series of raids in the first six months of 2006, at least some with significant help from Iraqi human intelligence sources. The raids in April and May were particularly successful, and Zarqawi's death was followed up with 17 immediate raids in Baghdad, and more than 120 in all of Iraq.<sup>114</sup>

### *The Al-Moustafa Husayniyah "Mosque" Controversy*

The step up in Iraqi operations almost inevitably made some operations a source of political controversy. On the evening of March 26, US and Iraqi forces conducted a joint operation to disrupt a terrorist cell in northeast Baghdad. The events that followed however were sharply disputed by US and Iraqi officials.<sup>115</sup>

According to military spokesman for the US, the raid resulted in 16 insurgents killed, 15 captured, one hostage freed and the discovery of weapons and bomb-making equipment. While some reports indicated that the operation was aimed at Shi'ite militiamen loyal to al-Sadr who were using the center for interrogation and torture, others claimed that it was against a Sunni-led element.<sup>116</sup>

Iraqi officials however told a different account. According to them, US and Iraqi forces descended on the mosque surrounding it with armed vehicles and sealed off all exits. When soldiers attempted to enter the mosque, they took fire resulting in an hour-long gun battle. The Interior Ministry said that 17 people were killed, including the mosque's 80-year-old imam. Those that were killed supposedly worked for al-Sadr and were engaged in evening prayer at the mosque when the raid began.<sup>117</sup> Muhammad Ridha, who worked at the complex, said, "There was no resistance at all from the mosque. There were no weapons during prayers...The purpose of the raid was to kill Shi'ites."<sup>118</sup>

Aides to al-Sadr alleged that 25 people were killed and that US troops shot the guards outside the mosques before storming the facility and killing all those inside.<sup>119</sup> One witness, a policeman, said that the mosque appeared to have been hit by a rocket.<sup>120</sup>

US officials continued to deny that they had entered a mosque.<sup>121</sup> In fact, Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli said that it was an Iraqi led operation backed up by 25 US advisors. He added that the Iraqi units "told us point blank that this was not a mosque" and that "there's been huge misinformation" on the part of those who had suggested otherwise.<sup>122</sup> Mission debriefs and photos largely confirmed these accounts with hard evidence that the charges Iraqi and US forces had attacked legitimate religious activity were totally false, as did the supporting intelligence that led to the mission in the first place.

Yet footage aired on Iraqi news channels showed at least a dozen unarmed corpses, including one elderly man, in what appeared to be a prayer room.<sup>123</sup> In a Pentagon briefing, Gen. Peter Pace stated that there was a minaret and prayer room inside the compound but could not verify whether people were killed in the prayer room.<sup>124</sup>

US Army photos showed dead men with weapons in a room that lacked prayer rugs.<sup>125</sup> It was possible that militia members staged the scene after US and Iraqi forces departed. In the past, insurgents have demonstrated a capability to manipulate public opinion by forcing Coalition forces to attack holy sites, or make it appear that they did, as part of informational warfare.

The controversy was further complicated by the fact that the “mosque” was marked on the outside by a sign that read “Al-Moustafa Husayniyah.” “Husayniyah” is a Shi’ite term for a religious center or a community center that may also house offices for political purposes. Thus, although the complex did not have many of the traditional characteristics of a “mosque,” it was considered to be one by the Shi’ites nonetheless.<sup>126</sup>

Regardless of whether the facility was a mosque, a prayer room, or neither, the operation had damaging political effects. Prime Minister al-Jafari secured a promise from Gen. George Casey that he would conduct an investigation into the allegations.<sup>127</sup> Shi’ite political leaders condemned the raid and al-Sadr used the event as another opportunity to condemn the American presence in Iraq and call for Shi’ite solidarity. Said one Mahdi member guarding a roadblock to Sadr City, “We are ready to resist the Americans and strike their bases...The Sunnis have nothing to do with this, and we shouldn’t accuse them of everything that’s going on.”<sup>128</sup>

From a tactical and operational perspective, however, the operation was a success and demonstrated the increasing ability of Iraqi forces to plan and execute missions. The events, detailed by Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch in a Coalition press briefing, began with intelligence obtained by Iraqi Special Operations Forces that a group of kidnappers were holding up in a compound in Baghdad. Fifty members of this special operations team and 25 US advisors then surveyed the area, in the process identifying the nearest mosque as six blocks away. While approaching the compound, the Iraqi forces exchanged gunfire with those inside, killing 16 and capturing 18 more.<sup>129</sup>

### ***Operation Cobra Strike and Other ISF Activity***

During this same time, Iraqi forces scored another success when they arrested Abu Ayman, Saddam’s former aide to the Chief of Staff of Intelligence. He had been the leader of the Secret Islamic Army insurgent group in the Babil province. Tracking Ayman was a joint effort by both US and Iraqi intelligence agencies.<sup>130</sup>

“Operation Cobra Strike” was another joint US-Iraqi operation launched in April. Its goal was to locate the suspected leader and financier of a terrorist cell working in the area. The cell was suspected of several murders, kidnappings and roadside bombings in Haswah and Iskandariyah. Although this same Iraqi-US team had been conducting joint operations since December 2005, this was the first mission orchestrated solely by Iraqi soldiers.<sup>131</sup>

A series of raids conducted by US and Iraqi forces during the same month in and around Youssifiyah killed 20 foreign insurgents, many of whom were wearing suicide vests at the time. Officials claimed that insurgents were using the city as a refuge to plan and coordinate attacks to be carried out in Baghdad.<sup>132</sup>

In May, Iraqi soldiers operating independently of US forces in Adhamiyah captured an al-Qa’ida cell leader and two other suspects during a raid that seized 17 full AK-47 magazines, 20 rolls of TNT, three pistols, two belts of 7.62mm ammunition and eight boxes of pistol ammunition. After interrogating the al-Qa’ida operative, US and Iraqi forces conducted a second raid where five suspects were detained and an assortment of time switches, detonators, rockets and other IED equipment was found.<sup>133</sup>

The results of these military operations against insurgent “strongholds” were mixed at best. Even as Iraqi forces came on line and began taking the lead in joint operations, many of the same limits remained. While there have been success stories, insurgents were consistently able to disperse and re-emerge at another location. Lack of a permanent security presence in many areas permitted the insurgents and criminals to return. Perhaps most importantly, despite the fact that these operations and raids were often operational successes -- they were able to net insurgent groups and weapons caches -- the number of attacks had not abated and it was increasingly the case that Iraqis are the target.

In any case, it was clear by the early months of 2006 that the Sunni insurgency was now only one of several threats to Iraqi force development and Iraqi unity and security. US and Iraqi officials both cited sectarian violence and the risk of civil war as increasing areas of concern. US military officials in particular noted the danger that Shi’ite militias posed to Iraqi security.<sup>134</sup>

Nonetheless, there were talks within the Department of Defense in April 2006 to orchestrate a “second liberation of Baghdad,” once a new Iraqi government was formed. Operationally, it was designed to have Iraqi forces in the lead supported by US air power, special operations, intelligence, and back-up troops. The ground assault would supposedly be complemented by attack helicopters such as the AH-6 “Little Birds” armed with rocket launchers and machine guns, ideal for urban combat.<sup>135</sup>

As Iraqi and US forces went through each neighborhood, they would leave behind “Sweat” teams (Sewage, Water, Electricity and Trash) to improve local conditions and facilities. This new battle was to offer the citizens of the capital protection from sectarian violence in exchange for their assistance in identifying and capturing or killing insurgent and terrorist groups.<sup>136</sup>

Symbolically, it was to be an effort to show that the Iraqi government was capable of “taking back the streets.”<sup>137</sup> The goal was to conduct the operation during the summer, once the government had settled in and then begin withdrawing US troops toward the end of the year.<sup>138</sup>

### *Seeking to Exploit the Divisions within the Insurgency*

US and Iraqi officials made other attempts to ease the strain on Iraqi forces. One way was to try to take advantage of divisions in the insurgency. The actions of the hardline insurgents were too extreme and divisive for many, if not most Sunnis. The insurgents often alienated Sunnis in the areas where they had most influence and control by seeking to impose their own version of Islam or attacking local leaders. Sheer exhaustion played a role after three years of war, and some Sunnis saw the insurgency as simply isolating them as a minority from the nation’s wealth and power.

In spite of the lack of clear political leadership in the central government, Iraqi officials continued efforts to barter the release of prisoners, aid, and positions in the army and police for the allegiance of Sunni insurgents. The move was an attempt to lure Sunni Iraqis away from Al-Qa’ida and into the Iraqi military apparatus. The move was an attempt to capitalize on recent clashes between Iraqi Sunnis and Sunni foreign fighters in the restive Anbar province.<sup>139</sup>

On April 30, 2006, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani announced an initiative seeking an agreement with seven armed groups to lay down their arms and join the political process. While Talabani refused to identify the groups, he did say that they were not Saddam Hussein loyalists, nor Al-Qa’ida.<sup>140</sup>

What was more threatening was that some Sunni Arabs sought to form their own militia at the national level to counter Shi’ite and Kurdish forces. While some of these were informal

“neighborhood watch” groups, others had full-time members and names for their organizations. In early February, a force called the “Anbar Revolutionaries” emerged which opposed the more extreme elements of the insurgency like Al-Qa’ida, but also was created to help secure Arab Sunnis against Arab Shi’ite and Kurdish pressure and attacks. According to press reports, this force was composed largely of former Ba’ath loyalists, Saddam supporters, Moderate Iraqi Sunni Islamists and other Arab Sunni nationalists. It was organized partly to resist pressure from Arab Sunni Islamist extremists, but its main purpose was to deal with the threat from the Shi’ite Badr Brigades.

One Sunni Arab official involved said that, “The Anbar Revolutionaries are here to stay, we need them to protect the people...Sunnis do not have the Shi’ite Badr (Brigades) or the Kurdish Peshmerga. In these times when sectarian tension is high, such a force is needed.” Another was quoted as saying, “It is our right to defend ourselves.”

Hazem Naimi, a political science professor, said, “Tribal leaders and political figures found that al Qa’ida’s program is harming the political efforts and progress the Sunni political leaders are making, because Al-Qa’ida rejects all politics...Sunnis feel that the Shi’ites have taken over the government and now it is their state...The Badr Brigades are in the Interior Ministry and under the Interior Ministry’s name they go to towns, kill and arrest.”

During the spring of 2006, popular sentiment towards the army was changing in the Anbar region and local leaders increasingly sought to “reform” the army by adding more Sunni members, rather than violently opposing it. Some of this change was due to an increase in attacks such as suicide bombings on Iraqi recruits. This occurred as Sunnis on balance began to participate in the political process, and in some cases even turn against Islamist groups such as al-Qa’ida that were perceived as foreign-led.

For example, in the Syrian border town of Husaybah located in the al-Qaem region, US forces had convinced local sheikhs to denounce Islamist insurgents and in turn generate cooperation between the Coalition and the local population. By mid-2005, the flood of foreign fighters in the area caused localized Sunni insurgents to form the Hamza brigades in an attempt to drive them out.

Acting on the dictum, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” more than 2,500 marines and 1,000 Iraqis using intelligence provided by the Hamza brigades conducted offensives in Husaybah and Karabila to route out Islamist insurgents. Afterwards, US troop presence was increased in the area to ensure stability, and softer tactics used by Coalition forces among the local population combined with the cooperation engendered by an operational success against insurgents created conditions which caused Lt. Col. Nick Morano to remark, “I’ve heard several local sheikhs speak of the insurgency in the past tense [as though] it was defeated.”<sup>141</sup>

In some cases, the Coalition and new Iraqi government benefited from creating or supporting local militias who opposed the insurgents without creating added sectarian and ethnic tension. In the border area and part of Western Iraq, for example, MNF-I and the Iraqi government found it was cheaper and more effective to buy the loyalty of local tribal militias than fight the insurgents -- particularly in those areas where outside insurgents had alienated the local residents. These developments led US Army Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch to go so far as to say that “The local insurgents have become part of the solution and not part of the problem.”<sup>142</sup>

The Iraqi Minister of Defense, Saadoun Dulaymi, encouraged these developments, and MNF-I provided funds, weapons, and some training. US officers and Ambassador Khalilzad met with key leaders. In some Sunni urban areas and towns, police forces were created that came close to

being local militias, at least in terms of their recruiting base. In other areas, Sunnis were organized at the tribal or local level in an effort to protect key facilities and projects, like oil pipelines. These efforts were given further incentive when a bombing by Zarqawi forces killed some 70 Arab Sunnis at a recruiting station in Ramadi in January 2006.<sup>143</sup>

In February, Iraqi and US officials issued new offers and discussed deals for prisoner release, additional aid, and senior positions in the army and police for the support of Sunni “nationalist insurgents.”<sup>144</sup> These efforts included a meeting between General George W. Casey, Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari, and high-ranking members of Iraq’s security and intelligence agencies with some Iraq’s largest Sunni Muslim Arab tribes.

Mowaffak Rubaie, the Iraqi government’s national security advisor, said that al-Jafari promised to recruit more Sunni Arabs into the army and police forces and to send more economic aid to Anbar. Rubaie and Sunni tribal leaders at the meeting also said that al-Jafari pledged to release at least 140 prisoners in coming weeks, and that more releases would be forthcoming.

In Ramadi, local sheiks, some regretful over allowing these extremists organizations to operate out of their city, encouraged Sunni men to join the Iraqi army. Sheik Anwar abd al-Razak al-Kharbit, a Sunni leader of the provincial security council in Ramadi said it had been a mistake to allow “terrorists into our areas.” In January of 2006, 761 men were recruited from the city.<sup>145</sup>

The meeting also showed, however, that some tribal leaders wanted to create their own militias to police their cities -- a move opposed by the central government.

For example, Sheik Osama Jadan said his Al Anbar community had already formed an armed group, similar to the Shi’ite militias, to fight insurgents. “We started our operations three weeks ago, and they have been fruitful,” he said. “We caught one of [guerrilla leader Abu Musab] Zarqawi’s assistants, and after an investigation of him ... we handed him over to the Iraqi army and joint intelligence.”

Sheikh Anwar also demanded, by way of a local petition, that all US troops leave Anbar and be replaced with 12,000 “sons of Anbar.” This all-Sunni division, Sheikh Anwar said, would be composed of local recruits as well as resistance fighters that, after training and arming by the Iraqi Army, would return to route out the Islamist insurgents. Although Gen. Casey did not flatly reject the offer, he stated that an all-Sunni division would be out of the question.<sup>146</sup>

In Jubba, an area in the Sunni-dominated western Iraq near the Syrian border, Col. Shaaban Barzan al-Ubaidi, who led the local police force, claimed to have the support of 41 local sheiks to “wage jihad” against the “criminal, terrorist, Saddamist, [and] Zarqawist.” He said that that he took up his job after more than 42 of his relatives were killed after trying to join the Iraqi army and police. Unlike others in his position who disliked both the insurgents and the Coalition, al-Ubaidi praised US efforts.<sup>147</sup>

The same trend emerged in major cities like Baghdad. As soft sectarian cleansing and abductions increased in mixed neighborhoods, some Sunnis began forming their own militias. As Ismael Zayer, editor for the Iraqi newspaper Al Sabah Al Jadid said, “At the end of the day, if nobody will protect them and the government won’t intervene, then they have to protect themselves.” Adnan Abbas Allawi, a middle-aged manager echoed these feelings, “This decision was forced on us. We don’t want to do this, but it’s not possible to see our mosques burned and insulted. Patience has its limits.”

Sunni mosques sometimes served as places for such organizations, as well as a source of inspiration, for such groups. Preachers issued fatwas instructing their members to purchase guns

and form a collective defense against further acts of violence by Shi'ites. Fares Mahmoud, deputy preacher of the El Koudiri Mosque said, "We've made an agreement with the neighbors that if we have another attack, they'll pick up their weapons and fight the invaders."<sup>148</sup> He continued, "We are depending on the soul of the people to protect us."

Things did not always go as well. It is far from clear what official agreement, if any, was reached between local and tribal leaders in Anbar Province and Iraqi and US officials regarding the recruitment of Sunni members into the army and police in return for their cooperation against Islamists. Yet in May a small protest broke out during a graduation ceremony of nearly 1,000 new Iraqi Army soldiers, most of them Sunnis from Anbar. After learning that day that they would be assigned outside of their home towns such as Ramadi, dozens of the newly sworn in soldiers tore off their uniforms throwing them on the ground and yelling and shaking their fists toward the camera.<sup>149</sup>

While this was hardly more than a small disturbance, the decision by Iraqi military leaders to deploy the troops outside their province demonstrated that the US and Iraqi military officials were still hesitant to station an almost all Sunni battalion in their native province for fear they would join forces with local insurgents. Still, Iraqi Brig. Salah Khalil al-Ani, a mediator, indicated that the soldiers were under the impression they would be assigned to the Anbar region because of an alleged agreement between tribal and religious leaders in the Sunni province and Defense Ministry officers.<sup>150</sup>

In any case, one recruit clearly relayed the reasons behind why it was important for the soldiers to serve in their home towns and provinces: "We had volunteered to serve our cities and communities, particularly our families in Ramadi and Fallujah, who have been mistreated by the present soldiers of the Iraqi army, who come in large part from Shi'ite areas." Another recruit had a less altruistic but no less rational logic behind his decision: "We are afraid of the Shi'ite death squads which are found inside the Iraqi army, and who might kill us if we serve outside our province."<sup>151</sup>

### ***The Insurgent Response: Attacks on Iraqi Forces versus Counterinsurgency and Counter-Civil War Operations***

The following chronology provides a timeline of additional operational developments from January through spring that illustrates both the growing capabilities of Iraqi forces, and the level of insurgent activity against them. For all the problems in Iraqi politics, it is clear that Iraqi forces were anything but passive, and that they persevered in the face of almost constant attack:

- **January 1, 2006:** One Iraqi soldier was killed and three were wounded when their patrol hit a roadside bomb in Ishaki district near Balad, 90 km (55 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. In Fallujah, a roadside bomb struck an Iraqi army patrol killing four soldiers, witnesses and medical sources said. A suicide bomber rushed his explosive-packed minibus into an Iraqi army base on the main road between Samarra, 120 km north of Baghdad, and Balad, 80 km north of the capital, killing a soldier and wounding two others, said a source from the Iraqi-US liaison office.
- **January 2, 2006:** A bus filled with new police recruits was struck by a suicide car bomber on a road near Baquba, 65 km northeast of Baghdad, killing 7 recruits and wounding 13 others. Two Iraqi soldiers died when their patrol was hit by a roadside bomb near Dujail, north of Baghdad. Another soldier was killed and an officer wounded in a drive-by shooting on the road between Baiji and Tikrit. A policeman was killed by a car bomb blast in Tikrit. In the western Ghazaliyah district of Baghdad, two policemen were killed in an exchange of gunfire with. The body of a policeman shot in the head was also found in western Baghdad.

- **January 3, 2006:** Three Iraqi policemen were killed and 14 others were wounded when a suicide bomber detonated his vehicle-borne IED alongside a bus in Baquba, 65 km northeast of Baghdad. Five Iraqi policemen were wounded when a makeshift bomb went off near their patrol in Samarra, 100 km (62 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **January 4, 2006:** A car bomb in northern Baghdad killed a policeman and 4 civilians and wounded 15 others, said Maj. Mosa Abdelkareem. In western Baghdad, two police commandos were killed and nine others were wounded when mortar rounds landed on their checkpoint, a hospital source said. In Aziziyah, 35 miles southeast of Baghdad, gunmen fired on a police patrol, killing one policeman, Hadi al-Itabi of the Kut morgue said. An Iraqi soldier was killed and two wounded when a bomb went off near their patrol in Latifiya, in an area dubbed the "Triangle of Death" south of Baghdad, an army source said.
- **January 5, 2006:** Four policemen were killed and four wounded when rebels attacked two patrols with small arms fire just outside Baquba, 60 kilometres (35 miles) northeast of Baghdad. A suicide bomber detonated a car near a bridge in central Baghdad, killing an Iraqi soldier and a civilian and wounding three other people. Suicide bombers hit a police recruiting station in Ramadi, an insurgent stronghold 70 miles west of Baghdad, killing 80 people and wounding dozens, according to a US Marine news release.
- **January 6, 2006:** A suicide car bomber struck a police patrol in Baghdad, killing one officer, Col. Noori Ashur said. Demonstrations in the Iraqi town of Nasiriyah turned violent Friday leaving two dead and two dozen injured.
- **January 7, 2006:** Nine Iraqis were injured, including five policemen, in a car bomb explosion targeting an Iraqi police patrol in the New Baghdad district of the capital.
- **January 8, 2006:** One Iraqi policeman was killed and 13 wounded during clashes with gunmen in the Adil district of Baghdad, police said.
- **January 9, 2006:** Two suicide bombers disguised as police infiltrated the heavily fortified Interior Ministry compound in Baghdad and blew themselves up during celebrations of National Police Day, killing 29 and wounding 25, mostly policemen. Gunmen also killed an Iraqi intelligence officer in western Baghdad, said police Capt. Qassim Hussein.
- **January 10, 2006:** Iraqis around the country celebrated the opening of the four-day festival of Eid, during which sheep are slaughtered in the memory of deceased relatives and children are given money for sweets.
- **January 11, 2006:** A roadside bomb exploded next to a police patrol outside Samarra, about 60 miles north of Baghdad, killing two policemen, police Capt. Laith Mohammed said.
- **January 12, 2006:** Iraqi police conducted a controlled detonation of a car bomb at the park of the Interior Ministry in Baghdad, a ministry source said.
- **January 13, 2006:** Two policemen were killed and five wounded when a car bomb struck their patrol in Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. In Iskandariya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, a police patrol found the body of a policeman blindfolded and with his hands tied behind his back; he had been shot in the head, police said.
- **January 14, 2006:** In Baghdad's Al-Masjht neighborhood, a roadside bomb exploded near an Iraqi police patrol killing two officers and wounding four other policemen and six civilians. In Kirkuk, an insurgent sniper shot a policeman at 10:00 AM while he was standing at the gate of his house killing him immediately, police said. An Iraqi soldier was killed and another wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in the city of Balad, 90 km (55 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. In the oil refinery city of Baiji, gunmen shot dead a police colonel, the local authorities said. Nine Iraqi coastguardmen were captured by an Iranian Naval vessel during a skirmish in the Gulf near the southern Iraqi city of Basra, Basra Gov. Bohammed al-Waeli told AP. The clash happened after an Iraqi Navy ship spotted a suspicious merchant vessel flying an Iraqi flag. Gov. Al-Waeli claimed the merchant ship radioed Iranian forces for help and an Iranian Navy ship attacked the Iraqi patrol, detaining nine, including three officers.



- **January 15, 2006:** Gunmen shot dead a police lieutenant in Baquba, 60 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. In the village of Ulwiya near Hawija, 70 km (43 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, gunmen shot and killed a police brigadier and major after abducting them on January 14th, police said. Gunmen in Baghdad killed five civilians, two police and a former Iraqi army officer in separate incidents. Col Hussein Shiaa, commander of the 2nd Battalion of the Iraqi Army's 4th Brigade, and his brother were abducted when leaving their base in Mahmoudiya, 20 miles (32 km) south of Baghdad, said army intelligence officer Capt Ibrahim Abdullah. They were later found dead in western Baghdad's dangerous al-Baiyaa district riddled with bullet wounds.
- **January 16, 2006:** Gunmen opened fire a police convoy in Muqdadiya, 60 miles (96 km) north of Baghdad, killing 5 policemen and a 6-year-old child and wounding 16 civilians and 3 policemen. A roadside bomb detonated and killed 20 Iraqi national guards in the Al Wihda area, 19 miles (30 km) south of Baghdad. In Baghdad, two policemen were shot dead by unknown insurgents separately in the northern district of Aadhamiyah and in the northwestern district of Shula, Captain Ahmed Abdullah said.
- **January 17, 2006:** The Iraqi government said that nine Iraqi coastguards were taken prisoner by Iran after an incident involving a suspected oil smuggling ship in the Gulf on January 14th. "Eight men from the Coast Guard and an officer were taken prisoner by Iranian coastguards," said a spokeswoman in the prime minister's office.
- **January 18, 2006:** Fifteen people were killed and, at least, 46 were wounded when a suicide bomber targeted a police patrol near the Baghdad home of Shi'ite politician Abdul Aziz al-Hakim. Three policemen were among the dead. A roadside bomb struck a patrol in Saadiya, 80 miles north of Baghdad, killing three Iraqi police and an Iraqi civilian and wounding four other police officers, according to a spokesman for the Diyala provincial police. In Iskandariyah, about 30 miles south of Baghdad, a group of gunmen attacked a police station killing two officers and wounding four others in the ensuing firefight, said Capt. Muthanna Ahmed, a spokesman for the Babil provincial police force. Police found the bodies of 11 men shot to death and wearing civilian clothes with Iraqi army and police commando ID cards on a farm in Dujail, 50 miles north of Baghdad, said police Capt. Ali al Hashmawi.
- **January 19, 2006:** In Baghdad, a car bomb hit a police patrol and, simultaneously, a suicide bomber walked into a coffee shop next to the patrol and blew himself up. Three policemen and five civilians were killed and 15 wounded, police said.
- **January 20, 2006:** Four bombs hit security patrols in Baghdad as the city was all but sealed off ahead of the announcement of final election results and forces hunted kidnappers who are threatening to kill an American journalist, Jill Carol. In Karbala, 68 miles (110 km) southwest of Baghdad, a police commandos lieutenant was gunned down in front of his house. In Miqdadia, north of Baghdad, one policeman was killed and four wounded when their patrol was struck by a roadside bomb.
- **January 21, 2006:** In Qadisiyah, 30 miles (48 km) south of Tikrit, Iraqi army Maj. Maamoun Younis Abdullah and Staff Sgt. Salim Athab were killed in a brazen drive-by shooting as they headed to work, police Capt. Hakim al-Azawi said. Two of Abdullah's sons were also wounded in the attack. In Baquba, 40 miles (60 km) north of Baghdad, a car bomb killed two police officers and wounded eight police officers and civilians, an official with Diyala province's Joint Coordination Center said. Police found the bullet-riddled body of Iraqi commando officer Ali Hussein in an open field and former Baath Party member Abdun Hamid in a playground near Karbala, said police Capt. Qais al-Azawi. During the night, US troops opened fire at civilian cars on the main road between Tikrit and Baiji, killing three people and wounding four others, all of whom turned out to be US-trained Iraqi army soldiers, a source from the Iraqi-US liaison office in Tikrit said.
- **January 22, 2006:** Four Iraqi policemen were killed and another nine injured when a bomb exploded near their vehicle in Baquba, 40 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, an Iraqi police source said.
- **January 23, 2006:** Iraqi police said a suicide car bomber in Baghdad targeted police near the Iranian Embassy, in the Green Zone, killing two policemen and wounding five others. In the southern Dura district of the capital, two policemen were killed and three wounded when a car bomb exploded. In eastern Mosul,

an Iraqi army soldier was killed and another wounded when their patrol was struck by a roadside bomb. Two bombs in Kirkuk killed one policeman and injured eight people including two civilian bystanders.

- **January 24, 2006:** In Baghdad, gunmen killed two policemen and wounded four in separate ambushes. In the Iraqi industrial town of Baiji, unidentified gunmen killed a policeman, police said.
- **January 25, 2006:** In Baghdad's Sadr City, gunmen shot dead a police sergeant as he drove to work, said police Lt. Laith Abdul-Aal. In the Ishaki area on the Baghdad-Mosul highway, about 62 miles (100 km) north of Baghdad, five Iraqi soldiers were killed and two wounded by a roadside bomb, police Lt. Amir al-Ahbabi said.
- **January 26, 2006:** Gunmen killed a policeman and wounded three civilians in southern Baghdad, police said.
- **January 27, 2006:** Two Iraqi Army Soldiers died and four were wounded when an IED exploded in Tal Afar, 32 miles (50 km) west of Mosul.
- **January 28, 2006:** US Marines and Iraqi Army soldiers ended an almost two-week military operation after destroying 45 weapons caches and detaining 20 suspected insurgents in western Iraq. Operation Wadi Aljundi started Jan. 15 north of the town of Hit, 85 miles (140 km) west of Baghdad, and ended Jan. 27. No US or Iraqi casualties were sustained, said a statement released by the Marines. In Baghdad's southern Dora neighborhood, a soldier from the Iraqi Army's Lion Brigade was also killed and another wounded in a gun fight with, said police Lt. Maitham Abdul-Razzaq. Two policemen were killed and three wounded when a roadside bomb struck their patrol in Falluja, 32 miles (50 km) west of Baghdad, police said. In Oweija, 6 miles (10 km) south of Tikrit, four Iraqi National Guards were killed and five wounded when a car bomb exploded next to their patrol, police said.
- **January 29, 2006:** Iraq's top Sunni Arab political leader accused Shi'ite-dominated security forces of pursuing a strategy of sectarian "cleansing" in Baghdad and said he opposed giving key Cabinet posts to Shi'ites -- a stance likely to further inflame sectarian tensions. Violence continued as a roadside bomb in Baghdad's volatile southern Dora neighborhood killed one policeman and wounded another, police said. A car bomb blast killed a policeman in Baghdad's western Amariyah district, while two policemen were gunned down while leaving work following the end of their shift in the same area. Drive-by gunmen killed two more policemen as they left the Khadra police station, also in western Baghdad, after finishing work, police said. An Iraqi medic also was killed after leaving work at western Baghdad's Yarmouk Hospital, said Dr. Muhannad Jawad from the hospital. In Beiji, 155 miles (249 km) north of Baghdad, gunmen shot dead a police captain, while an ambush at a checkpoint in Baqouba, 40 miles (65 km) north of Baghdad, killed one policeman and wounded four others, police said. A massive car bombing killed four Iraqi soldiers and wounded six more in Saddam's birthplace of Uja, about 75 miles (121 km) north of Baghdad, army Capt. Ahmed al-Azawi said. In the restive town of Fallujah, a policeman was killed and another wounded in a roadside bomb attack, police said.
- **January 30, 2006:** Two policemen were killed and 20 people were wounded when a suicide bomber in a car attacked a barracks in the southern city of Nassiriya, 233 miles (375 km) south of Baghdad, police said. In Kirkuk, three Iraqi soldiers tasked with securign oil facilities were killed by unknown gunmen, police said.
- **January 31, 2006:** Four Iraqi soldiers were killed and one injured in exchange of fire between the army and insurgents in Buhriz, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad.
- **February 1, 2006:** A mortar barrage killed two Iraqi soldiers in the northwestern city of Tal Afar, officials said. American commanders said an entire Iraqi brigade, about 2,500 troops, had taken over parts of the nearby city of Khaldiyah and an adjacent agrarian area from US troops. But US military advisers who mentor the Iraqi unit said just over half those assigned Iraqi soldiers were actually present. The Iraqi brigade already was short several hundred soldiers before they deployed to Anbar province from the northern city of Mosul, the advisers said, and about 500 more deserted when they arrived in late August and faced their first insurgent attacks.

- **February 2, 2006:** A roadside bomb blast killed three Iraqi army soldiers in eastern Baghdad's Ghazaliyah neighborhood, said army Maj. Moussa Abdul Karim. In the northern city of Mosul, a policeman was killed and five wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol, police said.
- **February 3, 2006:** Iraqi police and soldiers rounded up nearly 60 people yesterday in security crackdowns in Baghdad and the southern city of Basra. At least 22 people were detained and weapons were seized in raids launched before dawn yesterday in Basra, Iraq's second-largest city, the Iraqi army said. An additional 37 people -- including five Palestinians and a Syrian -- were arrested in pre-dawn raids in Baghdad's Dora district, the Interior Ministry said. Thousands of Iraqis protested publication of caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad. The caricatures, first published in Denmark and printed elsewhere in a demonstration of press freedom, have enraged many Muslims and prompted calls to boycott products from Denmark and other countries whose media reprint the pictures.
- **February 4, 2006:** US commanders have identified the lack of an effective supply chain as a major weakness of Iraq's military, and until one is in place, the United States and its coalition partners cannot fully hand over security responsibilities. The US command has periodically alluded to such concerns. Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, formerly the second-highest ranking general in Iraq, said progress would hinge on whether government ministries could supply the military and cut out corruption. Overall, the US military has deemed only one Iraqi battalion, about 700 men, of being capable of resupplying itself and carrying out independent operations without any US assistance.
- **February 5, 2006:** Iraqi authorities set up new checkpoints and warned innkeepers to watch for suspicious people, all part of security measures to protect Shi'ites marking the holiest day of their calendar this week. The measures were put in place ahead of the feast of Ashoura to prevent a repeat of suicide bombings by al-Qaida in Iraq that killed at least 230 people during the past two years' ceremonies. An Iraqi soldier was killed and two others wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near their patrol in the city of Falluja, 25 miles (50 km) west of Baghdad, police said. Two policemen were killed and seven people wounded, including two other policemen, when a car bomb exploded near a police checkpoint in Salman Pak, about 40 miles (65 km) southeast of Baghdad, police said. Gunmen killed an Iraqi policeman near the oil refinery city of Baiji, 112 miles (180 km) north of Baghdad, police said. In the northern city of Kirkuk, three gunmen shot dead two policemen.
- **February 6, 2006:** One Iraqi policeman was killed and his brother, also a policeman, was wounded in an attack by armed men firing from a speeding car in the northern city of Kirkuk, said police Capt. Firhad Talabani. At Latifiya, 25 miles (40 km) south of Baghdad, two Iraqi soldiers were killed and another four wounded when insurgents lobbed a mortar on their guard checkpoint, an Iraqi army source said. An Iraqi policeman, Hussein Ali Lazem, was killed when an armed group opened fire on his house in the Sayf Saad neighborhood of Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, police said. The US military said that Iraqi forces launched an air assault on insurgent hideouts in the vicinity Bit Shaitin village, near Salman Pak south of Baghdad. Approximately 100 Iraqi soldiers, supported by Coalition Forces, participated in the combined operation designed to disrupt and capture wanted terrorists who were reportedly operating a terrorist training camp and planning to launch attacks against Ashura Pilgrims traveling toward Karbala, the statement added.
- **February 7, 2006:** Two successive bomb blasts near Tahrir Square in the bosom of Baghdad killed one policeman and one civilian and injured 5 other policemen and 15 civilians. In Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, a policeman was killed and four by-standing civilians wounded in an exchange of fire with insurgents.
- **February 8, 2006:** Gen. George Casey Jr., said the US command has declared 2006 as the "year of the police," a tacit acknowledgment that the more than 80,000-strong Iraqi force has been hobbled by incompetence, corruption, sectarianism and low morale. The US military wants more than 130,000 police operating by 2007 as part of the strategy to shift security responsibility to the Iraqis so that American and other international troops can begin to head home. To improve police skills, up to 3,000 US and international personnel are being assigned to Iraqi police units throughout the country. In some of the more peaceful parts of Iraq, plans call for police rather than the Iraqi army to assume the lead role in ensuring security later this year. In other news, a suicide car bomb blew up at a checkpoint in New Obeidi, about 12 miles (20 km) from the Syrian border, killing two Iraqi soldiers and three civilians and wounding three

others, including a two Iraqi soldiers and a US marine, the US military said. Iraqi Minister of Higher Education Sami al-Mudhafar survived an assassination when a car bomb blew up near his convoy in central Baghdad killing one policeman and wounding three civilians, an Interior Ministry source said.

- **February 9, 2006:** Three members of the National Guards were killed and two others were wounded in a bomb blast that targeted a military patrol in the Al-Mshahedah district of the capital, a security source said.
- **February 10, 2006:** A policewoman, Nidthal Mohammad, was killed by gunmen wearing Iraqi army uniforms who broke into her house in Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, police said. Also in Baquba, gunmen ambushed two policemen, killing one and wounding another as they headed to work, police said. In a separate incident, also in Baquba, one Iraqi soldier was killed and another was wounded when gunmen in a car opened fire on them, police said. In the southeastern Jisr Diyala area of Baghdad, armed men killed police Sgt. Bassem al-Rikabi while he was on patrol, police said.
- **February 11, 2006:** In Baghdad's southern Dora neighborhood, gunmen killed traffic policeman Ahmed Majeed Obaid as he left his home at midday, Lt. Maitham Abdul-Razzaq said. In Fallujah 40 miles (64 km) west of Baghdad, gunmen in a red sedan shot dead a policeman as he was heading to work, police said. Iraqi army spokesman Capt. Makram al-Abbasi was killed in a hail of gunfire from a civilian car accompanied by a police vehicle in Basra, army Capt. Firas al-Tamimi said. Gunmen killed two policemen in Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, police said. The attackers approached their car and shot them in the head. An army officer was killed by a roadside bomb in Dujail, north of Baghdad, police said.
- **February 12, 2006:** Ibrahim Jafari, the soft-spoken Shi'ite Muslim doctor, won his coalition's nomination for the post of prime minister by a single vote, putting him on course to head the country's first full term government since the fall of Saddam Hussein. Three police commandos and a civilian were killed and four commandos wounded when a suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt blew himself up near a check point in southern Baghdad, police said. Gunmen killed four policemen while they were driving in a civilian car in the main road between Kirkuk and Tikrit, 110 miles (175 km) north of Baghdad, police said. A police colonel and a brigadier were killed by gunmen in separate incidents in the volatile city of Ramadi, 68 miles (110 km) west of Baghdad, police said. Two policemen were killed and one was wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in Iskandariya, 25 miles (40 km) south of Baghdad, police said. Two policemen were killed and another wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in Hilla, 62 miles (100 km) south of Baghdad, police said. A policeman was killed and two others wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in Tuz Khurmatu, police said.
- **February 13, 2006:** Gunmen shot dead an Iraqi policeman protecting electricity generating facilities near a hospital in eastern Baghdad's Sadr City, police said. Four policemen were gunned down on their way home from work outside the northern oil refinery town of Baiji.
- **February 14, 2006:** According to Col. James Greer, chief of staff for the US military command responsible for training Iraqi troops, 40 of Iraq's 102 battalions have taken over security in the areas where they operate. Armed militants in a red pick-up, opened fire on another car on Al-Abasiya road, which led to the death of a policeman and the injury of two civilians, a Kirkuk police source said. An Iraqi army major and his son were killed when they were fired on by gunmen in the Taji area north of Baghdad, US military said.
- **February 15, 2006:** A parked car bomb exploded as a police patrol passed by, killing four policemen and wounding two civilians in northern Baghdad, Lt. Nadhim Nasser said. Gunmen firing from two cars shot and killed a police captain and his driver, also a policeman, in Baghdad's southern Sadiyah neighborhood, said police Lt. Aqil Fadil. In the area of Shatt Al-Arab, east of Basra, three Iraqis were killed and two others were wounded by the explosion of an old mortar shell left behind from the dissolved army.
- **February 16, 2006:** The 4th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division held its official relocation ceremony at Forward Operating Base Summerall in Baiji. Iraq's Interior Ministry opened an investigation into claims that its officers are operating death squads targeting Sunni Arab men, a senior Iraqi official said. The investigation came after months of reports that Sunni Arabs had been abducted by men in police uniforms only to be found dead days or weeks later, handcuffed and shot in the head. A car bomb exploded as an Iraqi patrol passed in Baghdad's Karradah neighborhood, killing one policeman and wounding three

bystanders, police said. Gunmen killed two more policemen and two civilians -- one Iraqi and the other Egyptian -- in an attack on a vehicle in west Baghdad's Amariyah district, and another policeman was shot dead in the Amil area, police said. In the northern city of Kirkuk, gunmen killed an Iraqi Army captain and his driver as they were heading to work, said police Capt. Firhad Talabani.

- **February 17, 2006:** A policeman was killed and two were wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near their car in Al-Yousifiya, 9 miles (15 km) south of Baghdad, police said.
- **February 18, 2006:** The new Iraqi army forces completed preparations to receive over the next few weeks the security responsibilities from the Multi-National Forces (MNF-I) in the provinces of Missan and Al-Mathna in southern Iraq, a security official said. An Iraqi police major was assassinated by drive-by gunmen in the insurgent stronghold of Ramadi, west of Baghdad. A roadside bomb exploded on an eastern Baghdad highway and killed two Iraqi policemen guarding an oil tanker, Lt. Bilal Ali Majid said. Three other police were wounded and the tanker was not damaged.
- **February 19, 2006:** A police general, Hatim Khalaf al-Obaidi, and two of his guards were killed in a roadside bombing outside Iraq's northern city of Kirkuk.
- **February 20, 2006:** In the northern city of Mosul, a bomb planted inside a restaurant killed four civilians and one policeman, police said.
- **February 21, 2006:** Two police commandos were killed and four people were wounded, including a civilian, when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in southern Baghdad, police said. A policeman was killed when a roadside bomb went off near his patrol in western Baghdad, police said. In Kirkuk, an Iraqi Army officer and soldier were killed and two soldiers were wounded when they came under attack by unknown gunmen, said Chief of Aqdheya Police Brigadier Sarhad Qader.
- **February 22, 2006:** In Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, two police officers were killed in a drive-by shooting. A Shi'ite police officer guarding a Sunni mosque in Diwaniya, 110 miles (180 km) south of Baghdad, was shot down when gunmen opened fire, police said.
- **February 23, 2006:** The Interior Ministry canceled all leave for the police and army and placed them on the highest alert as the death toll mounted on in sectarian violence that swept the country after bombs wrecked a major Shi'ite shrine. In Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, a powerful roadside bomb killed 8 Iraqi army soldiers and 4 civilians and wounded 20 other people. One policeman was killed and four wounded by a road side bomb in Iskandariya, 25 miles (40 km) south of Baghdad, police said.
- **February 24, 2006:** The Pentagon downgraded the only Iraqi battalion capable of fighting without US support (level one status) to a level requiring them to fight with US troops backing them up (level two status). According to the congressionally mandated Iraqi security report, there are 53 Iraqi battalions at level two status, up from 36 in October. There are 45 battalions at level three -- where troops must fight alongside US forces -- according to the report. Underscoring fears of an all-out religious civil war, Iraq's government ordered a daytime curfew in Baghdad and nearby provinces. In Samarra, a roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed two officers 10 minutes after the daytime curfew expired.
- **February 25, 2006:** The bodies of 14 police commandos were found near the Qubaisy mosque in Baghdad following a series of clashes with gunmen overnight, police said. In Samarra, a car bomb ripped through an Iraqi military patrol that was escorting mourners returning from the funeral of an Al Arabiya journalist. Two soldiers and one police commando were killed in the mayhem, police and army officials said. Six people, including civilians, were injured. Unidentified gunmen opened fire that immediately killed a policeman at Al-Khadra suburb, Mosul, an Iraqi police source said. The body of a police officer with gunshot wounds was found near his home east of Tikrit, police said. In a bizarre incident, two police constables posted at the Iraq embassy in south Delhi were found dead after one of them allegedly shot the other and then killed himself, police said.
- **February 26, 2006:** Brig. Gen. Hatim Khalaf, head of the operations room of the Kirkuk police, died along with his driver in the blast about 20 miles (35 km) southwest of Kirkuk, according to Capt. Farhad Talabani. A roadside blast killed a police officer and injured two others in Madain, about 14 miles (23 km) southeast of Baghdad, police Lt. Bilal Ali Majid said.

- **February 27, 2006:** Police commandos said they killed five suspected Sunni insurgents and captured 25 in an evening battle southeast of the city that also left eight police dead and six wounded
- **February 28, 2006:** Gunmen in Mosul, 224 miles (360 km) northwest of Baghdad, killed four police and a doctor, Dr. Bahaa al-Bakri of the city general hospital said. In northeast Baghdad, a roadside bomb targeting the convoy of a defense ministry adviser killed five soldiers and wounded seven others, ministry spokesman Mohammed al-Askari said. The adviser, Lt. Gen. Daham Radhi al-Assal, was not injured. In Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, gunmen killed two police officers and wounded two civilians in separate attacks, authorities said. Four policemen were killed when their patrol was ambushed by gunmen near Khalis, 40 miles (60 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **March 1, 2006:** At least four police officers were killed and eight wounded when gunmen attacked a police convoy of 50 officers on its way to Tikrit from the Kurdish city of Sulaimaniya. Some 22 officers were seized by the gunmen but later released, and another 16 officers fled at the time of the incident and made their own way to safety, police said. Six Iraqi soldiers and three policemen were killed when gunmen attacked their checkpoint in Dawr, near Tikrit, 110 miles (175 km) north of Baghdad, the U.S military and Iraqi officials said. In Riyadh, 40 miles (60 km) southwest of the northern oil city of Kirkuk, three policemen were killed and five wounded when their patrol was ambushed by gunmen, police Colonel Sarhat Khadir said.
- **March 2, 2006:** The 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division assumed battle space responsibility of an area covering western Baghdad and eastern Abu Ghraib from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Soldiers from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Divisions, supported by Coalition Soldiers, conducted one of the largest operations of the past six months and took control of the terrorist stronghold town of Sadr-Yusufiyah, south of Baghdad. During the one-week of Operation Glory Light, Iraqi and Coalition soldiers uncovered 15 weapons caches, 26 roadside bombs, and two vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. In the al-Jihad neighborhood of southwestern Baghdad, an Iraqi police commando was killed and two other commandos wounded in a roadside bomb attack on their patrol. Gunmen attacked a checkpoint in al Dour, about 90 miles (145 km) north of Baghdad, killing 10 Iraqi security forces -- six Iraqi soldiers and four police, an official with the Salaheddin Joint Coordination Center said. In Mosul, 225 miles (360 km) north of Baghdad, gunmen attacked an Iraqi police patrol around midday, killing four officers in the city's al-Suker neighborhood. Local police said a roadside bomb killed one police commando and seriously wounded another in the town of Salman Pak, southeast of Baghdad. In western Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, insurgents gunned down police Lieutenant Abbas Jaleel while he was traveling in his car, a police source said.
- **March 3, 2006:** One Iraqi soldier was killed in the northern city of Kirkuk, while two policemen from the same city were found shot to death after being kidnapped yesterday evening while traveling 30 miles (50 km) further south, security officials said.
- **March 4, 2006:** Iraqi Interior Minister Bayan JabrSolagh said that the Iraqi government is implementing a plan to dissolve militias. Militias have been banned in Iraq except in the northern Kurdish enclave since June 2003 by Paul Bremer, the then head of US authorities in Iraq. But violence and insecurity led the militias to stay put.
- **March 5, 2006:** At least four people -- a policeman, a taxi driver and two electricity workers -- were killed in scattered gunfire in Baghdad and south of the capital, police said. Two Iraqi soldiers were killed when gunmen fired on their vehicle in Tikrit.
- **March 6, 2006:** Snipers assassinated Maj. Gen. Mibder Hatim al-Dulaimi, the Sunni Arab in charge of Iraqi forces protecting the capital. In eastern Baghdad, a suicide car bomber struck a police patrol near al-Mustansiriyah University, killing two policemen and wounding three, said police Capt. Ahmed Qassim. Another bomb exploded as a police patrol drove through Baghdad's northern Azamiyah neighborhood, killing a policeman and a civilian bystander and wounding three others including another policeman, said Interior Ministry official Maj. Falah al-Mohammedawi. A car bomb exploded in the Jadriya neighborhood of central Baghdad, killing one policeman and injuring three others, police said.

- **March 7, 2006:** The new Iraqi air force opened the gates of its first air base and announced the “stand-up” of its first operational C-130 transport squadron at the New Al Muthana Air Base at Baghdad International Airport. The entire Iraqi air force comprises between 700 and 800 personnel, including pilots, flight crews, maintenance crews and other personnel, according to Air Force Lt. Col. Frank Smolinsky, a spokesman for US Central Command Air Force -- Forward. Three policemen were killed and four were wounded when gunmen attacked their patrol in the oil refinery city of Baiji, 110 miles (180 km) north of Baghdad, police said. A policeman was killed and another wounded in a drive-by shooting on the Kirkuk-Hawija highway, 40 miles (60 km) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.
- **March 8, 2006:** A bomb hidden under a parked car near the University of Technology exploded as police from the interior minister’s protection force were driving through central Baghdad, killing two officers and injuring another, police Major Abbas Mohammed Salman said. Another bomb hit a police patrol in the northern Bab al-Muadam area, killing two officers and injuring four others, said police captain Muhanand al-Bahadili.
- **March 9, 2006:** Iraq hanged 13 insurgents, marking the first time militants have been executed in the country since the US-led invasion ousted Saddam Hussein nearly three years ago, the government said.
- **March 10, 2006:** A car bomb went off in the Radhwaniyah area of southwestern Baghdad near an Iraqi army patrol, killing a soldier and wounding three others, an Interior Ministry source said. Two policemen were killed and three wounded when a roadside bomb exploded in the town of Tikrit, 110 miles (175 km) north of Baghdad, a police source said. A suicide truck bomb struck a checkpoint manned by US soldiers and Iraqi security forces in the former Sunni stronghold of Falluja, killing at least 11, including five police, police said.
- **March 11, 2006:** When pressed to explain how the US intended to respond should Iraq descend wholesale into internecine strife, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told the Senate Appropriations Committee that “The plan is to prevent a civil war, and to the extent one were to occur, to have the . . . Iraqi security forces deal with it to the extent they’re able to.” Three civilians, one Iraqi soldier and a US soldier were killed when a suicide car bomb detonated near the western city of Falluja, the US military said.
- **March 12, 2006:** Gunmen killed two police officers in separate incidents in Baghdad, police said. A roadside bomb exploded in a busy west Baghdad street of in the mostly Sunni Qadissiyah neighborhood, killing at least six people, including 3 policeman, and inuring 12, said police Lt Thayer Mahmoud. Two soldiers were killed and four wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in central Baghdad, police said. Gunmen killed two army officers who worked in the Joint Coordination Centre in Dhuluiya, 25 miles (40 km) north of Baghdad, the Joint Coordination Centre of Dhuluiya said. In Mahmoudiya, about 20 miles (32 km) south of Baghdad, gunmen ambushed and killed a police major as he headed to work, police said. A roadside bomb hit a police convoy in Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, killing one patrolman and wounding four others, police said.
- **March 13, 2006:** Four policemen and six civilians were wounded when a roadside bomb hit a police patrol in central Baghdad, police said. A roadside bomb exploded as police responded to a false report of bodies inside a store in Tikrit, Saddam’s ancestral hometown. Five policemen were killed and 18 injured in the blast, police Capt. Hakim al-Azawi said. A civilian bystander was also killed. Two police officers were killed and four wounded in two separate car bomb attacks targeting police patrols in Kurdish areas of Kirkuk, the oil capital of northern Iraq, police said. Police officer Major Abdulrahman Bader was killed when gunmen shot him at Al-Zaafaraniya south Baghdad wounding him seriously. He later died in hospital.
- **March 14, 2006:** Unkown gunmen killed intelligence police Captain Mohammed Fadhil in Al-Amirya west Baghdad, the source said.
- **March 15, 2006:** A police lieutenant was killed when a roadside bomb exploded near his patrol in Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, police said.
- **March 16, 2006:** Iraqi Security Forces and their Coalition partners launched Operation Swarmer in southern Salah Ad Din province to clear a suspected insurgent operating area northeast of Samarra. In the largest air assault operation since Operation Iraqi Freedom I, soldiers from the Iraqi Army’s 1st Brigade, 4th Division, the 101st Airborne Division’s 3rd Brigade Combat Team and the 101st Combat Aviation

Brigade conducted a combined air and ground assault to isolate the objective area. More than 1,500 Iraqi and Coalition troops, over 200 tactical vehicles, and more than 50 aircraft participated in the operation. Initial reports from the objective area indicated that a number of enemy weapons caches were captured, containing artillery shells, explosives, IED-making materials, and military uniforms.

- **March 17, 2006:** One policeman was killed and two wounded when a roadside bomb struck a police patrol near Latifiya 32 miles (50 km) south of Baghdad, police said.
- **March 18, 2006:** One policeman was killed and a civilian was wounded when gunmen in a speeding car with an unidentified license plate opened fire at the old military recruitment office in the middle of center of Kirkuk in Northern Iraq. A police officer and his brother were killed by gunmen in Baiji, 112 miles (180 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **March 19, 2006:** The bodies of two Iraqi soldiers were found beheaded near a school in al Huwaija town, 43 miles (65 km) west of the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, Iraqi police announced. Gunmen shot dead four people, including two policemen in civilian clothes, and wounded another policeman in the northern city of Mosul, 240 (390 km) north of Baghdad, police and hospital sources said. A policeman was killed and 12 people were wounded when two roadside bombs exploded in quick succession targeting a police patrol in the city of Baquba, 40 miles (65 km) north of Baghdad, police said. One of the wounded was a police colonel, police added. Gunmen killed a policeman and wounded four civilians when they were driving a civilian car in Latifiya, in an area dubbed the ‘Triangle of death’ south of Baghdad, police said. The policeman was wearing civilian clothes.
- **March 20, 2006:** A roadside bomb exploded in central Baghdad near an Interior Ministry lockup, killing at least three Iraqi police commandos and a prisoner, police Lt. Col. Falah al-Mohammedawi said. Four policeman and two prisoners were also wounded in the attack. A policeman in a joint American-Iraqi patrol was killed in Baghdad during fighting with insurgents, police said. A roadside bomb in a farming area in the so-called Triangle of Death, south of Baghdad, killed four policemen, police Capt. Muthana Khalid Ali reported. Gunmen killed two security force members protecting oil facilities in Jarf al-Sakhar, 50 miles (80 km) south of Baghdad. A car bomb targeting a police checkpoint exploded in Baqouba, 40 miles (65 km) northeast of Baghdad, killing one policeman and wounding two others, authorities said. In the northern city of Mosul, gunmen killed a policeman and an oil ministry official, police said. A car bomb wounded two policemen in Gayara, near Mosul, police said.
- **March 21, 2006:** As many as 100 insurgents stormed a jail about dawn in the Sunni Muslim city of Muqdadiyah, 62 miles (100 km) northeast of Baghdad, killing at least 18 policemen and a courthouse guard. Authorities said all 33 prisoners in the lockup were freed and 10 attackers were killed in the battle.
- **March 22, 2006:** A combined operation involving Iraqi soldiers, Iraqi Police Commandos and Coalition forces concluded with the capture of 104 suspected insurgents and the discovery and seizure of 24 caches northeast of Samarra. The mission began March 16 as Operation Swarmer with the helicopter transport of approximately 1,500 Iraqi and Coalition Soldiers and Iraqi Police Commandos into a 10 square-mile area. Iraqi Army and Coalition forces numbering approximately 1,400 personnel, kicked off Operation Northern Lights to disrupt anti-Iraqi forces and to find and destroy terrorist caches in the Abu Ghraib area west of Baghdad. Rebels blasted an Iraqi police station with grenade and mortar fire before dawn, killing a police commander and three policemen and wounding six in Madaen, 25 miles (40 km) southwest of Baghdad, police said. The body of a man wearing an Iraqi military uniform was delivered to a morgue in the southern city of Kut, a morgue official said. The man had been killed outside Madain, he said. Two policemen were killed and one wounded when gunmen ambushed their patrol in western Baghdad, police said.
- **March 23, 2006:** The Iraqi 1st Motorized Truck Regiment completed its first supply delivery mission to the 6<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division independent of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade, its de facto American higher headquarters. A suicide bomber rammed the entrance of the Iraqi Interior Ministry’s major crimes unit in the central Baghdad district of Karradah killing 25 people including 10 policemen and wounding 35 others, mostly policemen, the Interior Ministry said. On al-Maghrib street, in the north of the capital, at least three policemen were killed and six people wounded in a remote-detonated car bomb explosion. A suicide car bomber attacked an Iraqi army patrol near the US Al Asad air base and killed nine soldiers in Baghdady near the town of Haditha, 125 miles (200 km) west of Baghdad. A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol



exploded in western Baquba, 40 miles (65 km) northeast of Baghdad, killing four policemen, a police source said. One policeman was killed and another three injured when their patrol was struck by a roadside bomb in Iskandariya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, police said. Police said that one Iraqi army soldier was killed and another wounded when a roadside bomb was detonated near their patrol on a road between Latifiya and Iskandariya, south of Baghdad.

- **March 24, 2006:** Soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division, with assistance from soldiers from 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade combat Team, Bastogne, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, detained 52 suspected insurgents during Operation Scorpion, a sequential cordon and search of eight villages in and around Hawijah. Suspected insurgents killed three policemen and wounded another in a drive-by shooting in west Baghdad, police said. A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol in south Baghdad's Saydiyah neighborhood killed one policeman, police 1st Lt. Akeel Fadhil said. The bodies of two Iraqi soldiers who were killed by gunmen were found in Baiji, 110 miles (180 km) north of Baghdad, said a source at a US-Iraqi military coordination center.
- **March 25, 2006:** Gunmen killed a traffic policeman in central Baghdad then placed a bomb inside his booth which killed four civilians in a minibus and wounded four, police said.
- **March 26, 2006:** American and Iraqi government forces clashed with Shi'ite militiamen in Baghdad in the most serious confrontation in months, and Iraqi security officials said 17 people were killed in a mosque, including its 80-year-old imam. Gunmen killed two policemen in Wajihya, a small town east of Baquba, 40 miles (65 km) northeast of Baghdad, police said. Three guards of the mayor of Wajihya were wounded by a roadside bomb as they headed to the scene of the attack, police added.
- **March 27, 2006:** The first Iraqi army recruiting drive in Sunni-dominated Ramadi yielded only 31 recruits. At least 40 people were killed and 20 others wounded when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the midst of candidates waiting at an army recruitment centre in northwest Iraq, an interior ministry official said.
- **March 29, 2006:** Gunmen attacked a highway police patrol in west Baghdad, killing one policeman and wounding four others, including a civilian, police said. In south Baghdad, a sniper killed a policeman on patrol in the Dora neighborhood, police Lt. Maitham Abdul-Razzaq said. One Iraqi army soldier was killed and another two wounded when their patrol was struck by a roadside bomb near Abu Ghraib prison, west of Baghdad, a police source said. Three soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in Hawija, 40 miles (70 km) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.
- **March 30, 2006:** A group of 278 policemen graduated from the six-month Officer Candidate Program at Baghdad Police College. A suicide car bomber rammed a police convoy in west Baghdad's Yarmouk neighborhood, killing one police commando and wounding three others. Two civilians also were hurt. A policeman was killed and three others wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol in the northern oil city of Kirkuk, 150 miles (250 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **March 31, 2006:** Soldiers from 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 6<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 502 Infantry Regiment discovered a large weapons cache consisting of in southwestern Baghdad. A policeman was killed when gunmen fired on his patrol in Falluja 30 miles (50 km) west of Baghdad, police said.
- **April 1, 2006:** An Iraqi army sergeant major and four militants were killed in fighting when an army patrol stopped several men trying to steal a truck south of Baquba 40 miles (65 km) northeast of Baghdad, the US military said.
- **April 2, 2006:** In Baghdad's Sunni neighborhood of Khadra, a policeman was shot dead by unknown gunmen. Three soldiers were killed and another was wounded in the explosion of a roadside bomb planted on the Huweijah-Riyadh road, west of Kirkuk. A second explosion targeted an Iraqi army convoy escorting a group of Iraqi contractors on the Kirkuk-Biji road southwest of Kirkuk. One soldier was killed and five others were wounded in this explosion.
- **April 3, 2006:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division began the first phase of assuming responsibility for security operations in Salah ad Din Province. The Iraqi 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade now has the authority to delegate missions to their battalions independent of Coalition forces. Two soldiers were killed and three wounded

when gunmen attacked their patrol near Baiji, 112 miles (180 km) north of Baghdad, police said. A policeman was killed and two others wounded when gunmen attacked their patrol in Baiji, police said.

- **April 4, 2006:** A policeman who works at a morgue was gunned down as he headed to his Dora home in southern Baghdad. In southern Iraq, gunmen killed a policeman and wounded another as the two were driving in the city of Basra, police said.
- **April 5, 2006:** A policeman was killed by gunmen while he was heading to work in Hawija, 45 miles (70 km) southwest of Kirkuk, police said. One traffic policeman was shot dead on in Kirkuk, 155 miles (250 km) north of Baghdad, a police source said.
- **April 6, 2006:** A roadside bomb struck an Iraqi army patrol in the AbuKhazeer area in Baquba, killing an army captain and wounding five soldiers, a local police source said. A suicide car bomb exploded near a joint patrol of Iraqi army and US troops in the Amiriyat al-Falluja area southwest of Falluja., killing seven, one of them an Iraqi policeman, the Iraqi army said. Gunmen seriously wounded a Kurdish captain in the Iraqi army in the eastern part of Kirkuk, 155 miles (250 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **April 7, 2006:** In the town of al-Suwaira, south of Baghdad, police discovered the bodies of three members of the security forces, including an Iraqi soldier and a lieutenant-colonel. The bodies were found with their hands cut off. The decapitated body of man wearing a military uniform was found in the town of al-Shahaimiya, 75 miles (120 km) south of Baghdad.
- **April 8, 2006:** The number of Iraqi soldiers in the joint forces of the Iraqi army and the Multi-National-Forces exceeded 115,000 ground, airforce and navy troops, who are stationed across Iraq, the Iraqi Interior Ministry said. Police found the bodies of four Iraqi soldiers shot in the head with signs of torture dumped at the side of a road near the Himreen mountains 175 miles (120 km) south of the northern oil city of Kirkuk, police said. Six policemen were wounded when a roadside bomb detonated near their patrol in Riyadh, 40 miles (60 km) southwest of Kirkuk, police said. Gunmen ambushed and killed Iraqi army Lieutenant-Colonel Mohammed Abdullah Jasim with his bodyguard in Baquba, 40 miles (65 km) northeast of Baghdad, police said. Four policemen and four civilians were wounded when gunmen ambushed a police patrol in Baquba, police said. Two Iraqi soldiers were killed and three others wounded in a fierce battle between insurgents and Iraqi security forces in the Nazzal neighborhood in southern Falluja, witnesses said.
- **April 9, 2006:** Despite a long-standing commitment to disarm and disband sectarian militias, the Iraqi government quietly dropped plans to take action -- at least until a new Cabinet is appointed. Gunmen killed a soldier in the town of Dhuluiya, 25 miles (40 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **April 10, 2006:** Two policemen were killed and several wounded in clashes with gunmen at a checkpoint in Amariyah. Armed insurgents and government forces engaged in fighting in the town of Falluja, west of Baghdad, killing at least 10 people, including six Iraqi soldiers, an Interior Ministry source said.
- **April 11, 2006:** A car bomb exploded near a Baghdad restaurant frequented by police killing at least five people, including three policemen, Interior Ministry sources said. The blast also wounded 13 people, including one policeman, the sources said. On the outskirts of Karbala, 50 miles (80 km) south of Baghdad, gunmen killed a policeman on his way to work. The bodies of four Iraqi soldiers who were beheaded were found in Jurf al-Sahkar, 50 miles (80 km) south of Baghdad, police said. Three Iraqi army recruits were killed after coming under fire in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Two policemen were killed and four others wounded by a roadside bomb in Tuz Khurmatu, 45 miles (70 km) south of Kirkuk, the Joint Co-ordination Centre said. Three Iraqi soldiers were killed during a firefight with insurgents in Ramadi that ended when US troops stepped in and imposed a curfew on the western Iraqi city.
- **April 12, 2006:** Four people, including a policeman, were killed and three policemen wounded in Baghdad's northern Al Waziriya neighborhood when a roadside bomb struck a passing police patrol, a security official said. In a separate incident in the capital, 11 people were wounded, including six policemen, when roadside bombs struck two police patrols in the Al Dura neighborhood. A policeman was also shot dead in Baghdad. Gunmen shot dead two Iraqi army soldiers and wounded another while they were traveling in a civilian car in central Baiji, 112 miles (180 km) north of Baghdad, US and Iraqi military officials said.

- **April 13, 2006:** Sixty-three Iraqi recruits graduated from the Lulymania Training Center and earned the right to be called police officers following a morning ceremony. In the northern city of Mosul, gunmen killed a policeman who was driving his sons to school. One of the sons was also killed, and the other seriously wounded, police said. Gunmen ambushed an Iraqi convoy of around 10 police vehicles on the road from Taji to Najaf. At least 9 officers were killed, and at least 30 were missing.
- **April 14, 2006:** Unknown gunmen opened fire on Lieutenant Marwan Yousef on a road between Kirkuk and Tikrit killing him instantly, Chief of Aqdhiya Police, Brigadier Sahrad Qader said.
- **April 15, 2006:** Three Iraqi army soldiers were killed and eight wounded when the convoy in which they were travelling was hit by a roadside bomb in Baghdad's dangerous Dora neighborhood. In Basra, four gunmen killed the director of traffic police as he was driving to work, police said.
- **April 16, 2006:** One policeman was killed and three others wounded, including two policemen, when gunmen opened fire on two police stations in Baghdad's Sadr City. Another policeman was killed in similar shoot-out in Al-Sulekh neighborhood in northern Baghdad. In Mosul, an Iraqi soldier was gunned down in his car with his two sons. Police found the body of an Iraqi soldier in Hillah, 60 miles (97 km) south of the capital in Babil province.
- **April 17, 2006:** Gunmen killed a soldier while he was heading to work in Hawija, 43 miles (70 km) southwest of Kirkuk. Gunmen killed a policeman and wounded two others in Tikrit, 110 miles (175 km) north of Baghdad, local officials said. The body of a Basra policeman kidnapped three days earlier was found near the Iranian border, Basra police Capt. Mushtaq Khazim said.
- **April 18, 2006:** A bomb exploded at a Baghdad cafe frequented by policemen, killing at least seven people, including three policemen, and wounding more than 20, said police Capt. Ali al-Obeidi. In Basra, a policeman was gunned down in a drive-by shooting. In Irbil, an Iraqi policeman was gunned down and six civilians were wounded in a drive-by shooting.
- **April 19, 2006:** A police officer was shot dead in Baquba.
- **April 20, 2006:** Two policemen were killed in a roadside bombing against a passing patrol in Al-Khalis, 60 miles (80 km) northeast of Baghdad. One policeman was killed and two others wounded in a similar roadside bombing also against a police patrol in the restive city of Baquba, 36 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad. Two policemen were killed and four others wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol in Tal Afar, about 260 miles (420 km) northwest of Baghdad, a medical source said.
- **April 21, 2006:** Shi'ite politicians agreed to nominate Nuri al-Maliki as prime minister, replacing the incumbent Ibrahim al-Jafari, in a bid to clear the way for a long-delayed new government, two Shi'ite officials said. In Khalis, 50 miles (80 km) north of Baghdad, a drive-by shooting killed a policeman walking on a street of the city, police said. In Baquba, 35 miles (60 km) northeast of the capital, a policeman was shot dead as he was on his way home. In Mosul, 225 miles (360 km) northwest of the capital, four policemen were killed and three others were wounded including a civilian when a patrol hit a roadside bomb, police said. In Tikrit, five police commandos, dressed in civilian clothes, were ambushed and shot dead by gunmen who opened fire on their car, police said. Six off-duty Iraqi soldiers were captured and shot execution-style outside a restaurant in Beiji in northern Iraq, said police Capt. Arkan Ali.
- **April 22, 2006:** Iraq's parliament elected incumbent President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, for a second term as politicians began putting together a national unity government after four months of deadlock. In Baghdad's northern district of Azamiyah, unidentified gunmen shot up a police patrol, killing one officer.
- **April 23, 2006:** The Iraqi National Police graduated 1,143 recruits from the Public Order Division Numaniyah Police Academy. An Iraqi soldier was killed and two others wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol on the main road between Latifiya and Iskandariya, 25 miles (40 km) south of Baghdad, police said. A roadside bomb targeting a convoy carrying a provincial police commander missed him but killed two policemen and wounded another near Beiji, prompting local officials to impose a curfew.
- **April 24, 2006:** Five police officers and 10 other Iraqis died in a car bombing outside a restaurant in the Bab al-Muadham neighborhood of central Baghdad, according to police Col. Salam Muhsin. Thirty-two

bodies of Iraqi police and security forces recruits from Ramadi were discovered in two areas of Baghdad, Interior Ministry sources said. Gunmen killed two Iraqi soldiers near Balad, 50 miles (80 km) north of Baghdad, the military said. Four policemen and two insurgents were killed in clashes at a checkpoint between in Tal Qasir, 125 miles (200 km) north of Baghdad on the road between Tikrit and Tuz, an officer said. Gunmen killed a soldier working in the Oil Facility Protection Service on the main road between Tikrit and Kirkuk, police said.

- **April 25, 2006:** Gunmen shot dead two soldiers and a policeman who were off duty near Kirkuk, 155 miles (250 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **April 26, 2006:** For only the second time at the Iraqi Military Academy Al Rustamiyah, a class of 158 newly commissioned lieutenants graduated the 12-month Officer Basic Course. Gunmen stormed the house of and killed an Iraqi Army officer in Baghdad. US forces killed four Iraqi police commandos by mistake in Samarra, 62 miles (100 km) north of Baghdad, a joint US and Iraqi military center said.
- **April 27, 2006:** A roadside bomb in Baghdad hit an Iraqi Army patrol killing one soldier, police said. At least seven Iraqi policemen and a civilian were killed and at least six police and two civilians were wounded in a series of attacks on police checkpoints in Baquba, 35 miles (56 km) northeast of Baghdad, police said. In Ramadi, 70 miles (113 km) west of Baghdad, an Iraqi soldier was killed in a firefight with insurgents.
- **April 28, 2006:** A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi police patrol exploded in southwestern Baghdad killing one policeman and wounding two others, said police Capt. Jamil Hussein. In Fallujah, two policemen were killed by a roadside bomb targeting their patrol.
- **April 29, 2006:** Attackers grabbed a Sunni Arab policeman and his brother and shot both of them dead outside their home to the south of Baghdad. One police commando was killed and three others wounded by a roadside bomb targeting their patrol in northwestern Baghdad's Al-Ghazalia neighborhood. Two Iraqi army soldiers were killed and six others wounded when insurgents opened fire on their convoy in Suwera, southeast of Baghdad, an interior ministry official said. Two Iraqi police officers were killed, when a roadside bomb hit a convoy carrying the police chief of the northern oil town of Baiji, police said.
- **April 30, 2006:** A policeman was shot on his way to work in the northern town of Samarra. In Ramadi, 70 miles (113 km) west of Baghdad, gunmen attacked three policemen traveling in a car carrying the salaries of police in Fallujah, killing one, wounding another, and kidnapping the third with the bag of money, police said.
- **May 2, 2006:** Bastogne Soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 327<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division turned over responsibility for much of Kirkuk's battlespace to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division, Nisser Battalion. The bodies of four Iraqi soldiers from Fallujah who graduated from basic training as part of the first all-Sunni class on April 30 were found in Ramadi, officials said.
- **May 3, 2006:** Iraqi lawmakers convened the first working session of parliament since it was elected in December. The Iraqi Ground Forces Command -- the operational fighting headquarters for the Iraqi Army -- opened a new, state-of-the-art Joint Operations Center at Camp Victory. Nearly 1,500 Iraqi soldiers and police officers team together to conduct Operation Lion's Hunt. The goal of the operation was to introduce a strong Iraqi Security Force presence in Tikrit and to clean out pockets of terrorists hiding among the residents. Soldiers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Iraqi Army Division assumed the lead in security operations in and around Sinjar in Western Ninevah Province. In Baquba, 40 miles (65 km) northeast of Baghdad, a police officer was killed and three wounded as they were disarming a bomb when a second bomb exploded nearby in an apparent ambush, police said. Also in Baquba, gunmen attacked a police checkpoint killing a police officer, police said. Police found the bodies of three soldiers from Fallujah who had been shot and dumped in Khaldiyyah, a city west of their hometown, said Dr. Rafie Mahmoud. A suicide bomber blew himself up while standing in a line of recruits outside Fallujah's police headquarters, killing 15 people and wounding 30, said police 1st Lt. Omar Ahmed. Thirteen of the dead were recruits and two were policemen, Ahmed said. In Yusufiya, 9 miles (15 km) south of Baghdad, a policeman was killed and two others wounded, including a civilian, when a roadside bomb hit their patrol, police said. Gunmen

killed an Iraqi soldier near Tikrit, 175 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, said the Joint Coordination Centre run by the US and Iraqi militaries.

- **May 4, 2006:** Soldiers from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 6<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division along with 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 320<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, 506<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment's Military Transition Team, detained an al-Qa'ida in Iraq cell leader and sever other anti-Iraqi forces in two different raids in the Adhamiyah area. In Baghdad, Brigadier General Mohammed Raza Abdellatiff, who was in charge of logistics for the Iraqi army in Baghdad, was shot dead as he was driving to work. Gunmen killed Muhammed Ridha, a brigadier in the Defence Ministry, in the capital's Yarmouk district, police said. A police major was killed by gunmen near his house in Diwaniya, 110 miles (180 km) south of Baghdad, police said. Two Iraqi soldiers were killed by gunmen near Balad, 50 miles (80 km) north of Baghdad, police said. A policeman and a civilian were killed when they tried to rescue a leading businessman in Tikrit, 110 miles (175 km) north of Baghdad, from unidentified gunmen kidnapers.
- **May 5, 2006:** In Kadimiyah, a Shi'ite neighborhood of north Baghdad, gunmen killed an Iraqi army major, an Interior Ministry official said. North of the capital, two policemen were killed when their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb in the town of Mugdadiyah, police said.
- **May 6, 2006:** Iraqi National Police from 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> National Police Division and US soldiers conducted Operation United Front in an effort to capture anti-Iraqi forces and seize weapons caches in the neighborhood of Ameriya, in western Baghdad. A suicide bomber wearing an Iraqi army uniform blew himself up on an Iraqi military base in Tikrit, killing at least three Iraqi officers, said Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Abdul-Aziz Mohammed Jassim. Roadside bombs hit two Iraqi police patrol in Baghdad, killing one officer and wounding two policemen six civilians, police said. Two policemen were killed when a roadside bomb struck their vehicle in Samarra, 78 miles (125 km) north of Baghdad. Fighting between an Iraqi military patrol and insurgents killed two soldiers and three militants in Youssifiyah, 12 miles (19 km) south of Baghdad. A bomb in a parked car exploded, killing two policemen and an Iraqi soldier and wounding four civilians about 30 miles (48 km) north of Baquba, police said.
- **May 7, 2006:** Nearly 250 Kurdish guards graduated from a Kurdish Correctional Officers Course, completing their first step toward assuming day-to-day operations at the Fort Suse Theater Internment Facility. Authorities in Baghdad said the bodies of at least 28 people, including six policemen, were found in and around the capital as victims of sectarian strife. Many were found tied up, shot and dumped in various neighborhoods. A police sergeant was shot dead as he left home in Baghdad's mainly Shi'ite neighborhood of Kamaliya. A roadside bomb hit a police patrol in eastern Mosul, killing three policemen and wounding another, said police Maj. Gen. Wathiq Mohammed Abdul-Qadir.
- **May 8, 2006:** Two policemen died when a car bomb exploded near a police patrol in the northern part of Baghdad. Three Iraqi police commandos kidnapped as they drove to work on May 5th were found shot to death south of Baghdad, Iraqi police said.
- **May 9, 2006:** A roadside bomb hit a police car in Baghdad, killing one officer and wounding two. Gunmen killed four police officers while they were driving out of police headquarters in the city of Ramadi, 68 miles (110 km) west of Baghdad, police said. Gunmen killed an Iraqi soldier and wounded two others on the main road between Tikrit and Kirkuk, 155 miles (250 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **May 10, 2006:** Soldiers from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 67<sup>th</sup> Armor Regiment, along with elements of 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> National Police Division, found a large weapons cache in eastern Baghdad. Gunmen killed Lieutenant Colonel Kanan Hasan, an aide to the head of Baquba's Criminal Intelligence Directorate, along with two body guards, while he was heading to work, police said. In Yarmouk, unknown gunmen shot dead two traffic policemen, including a first lieutenant. A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol near the central neighborhood of Karrada killed one soldier.
- **May 11, 2006:** In Kirkuk, gunmen ambushed and killed a police lieutenant colonel. South of Baghdad, police found the body of a policeman with his hands bound, signs of torture and shot in the head. In the north, two Iraqi soldiers were killed and four wounded when a roadside bomb went off near an army patrol.
- **May 12, 2006:** The bodies of four people in military uniform, two of them beheaded, were found in Khan Bani Saad, near Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad. An Iraqi soldier was shot dead in Al-Adel

district, eastern Baghdad, after being attacked by militants. Four Iraqi soldiers were killed and seven civilians were wounded in clashes between the Iraqi army and insurgents in the town of Dhuluiya, 25 miles (40 km) north of Baghdad, police said. Clashes erupted between two Iraqi army units following a roadside bombing near Duluiyah, about 45 miles (72 km) north of the capital, and Iraqi police said a Shi'ite soldier was killed in an exchange of fire with a Kurdish unit.

- **May 13, 2006:** Gunmen ambushed and killed two policemen and wounded two others in the city of Mosul, 240 miles (390 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **May 14, 2006:** Three policemen were killed when their patrol was targeted by a bomb in the traditional Sunni neighbourhood of Adhamiyah in north Baghdad. Ten civilians and three other police officers were injured.
- **May 15, 2006:** Members of the Garamsha tribe killed three policemen in an attack near Basra, 342 miles (550 km) south of Baghdad, a local official said. Five other policemen went missing. The attack came after a tribal leader was shot dead near Basra. In Mosul, one policeman was killed and two were wounded when a bomb exploded near a house where gunmen earlier killed six members of the same family, police said. The body of Emad al-Massoudi, a policeman who was abducted by gunmen two days ago, was found with gunshot wounds, bearing signs of torture, on the outskirts of Kerbala, 68 miles (110 km) southwest of Baghdad, police said.
- **May 16, 2006:** Iraqi police discovered four corpses in different areas of Baghdad, including the body of a police officer who had been reported kidnapped on May 15th. Gunmen in eastern Baghdad killed police 1st Sgt. Latif Abdullah, who worked in Interior Ministry intelligence. In Kirkuk, two brothers, both of them police officers, were killed by gunmen as they drove to work.
- **May 17, 2006:** In Baquba, insurgents killed one man and wounded another at a bakery and subsequently bombed the site killing three policemen and wounding five others. An Iraqi officer was killed and two others injured in an explosion as their patrol vehicle was passing by the Al-Malemeen area in Diyali province, northeast Baghdad, Iraqi police said. Two policemen were killed in a drive-by shooting in the northern city of Mosul, police said. One Iraqi soldier was killed and four wounded when a roadside bomb struck their convoy in Kirkuk, police said.
- **May 18, 2006:** In northern Baghdad, seven people, including four policemen, were killed and four other people wounded when a car bomb targeting a police patrol exploded, police said. A policeman was killed and three wounded when a roadside bomb went off near a convoy of US military and Iraqi police vehicles near the Shi'ite city of Najaf, 99 miles (160 km) south of Baghdad, police said. In Fallujah, four policemen were killed in clashes with insurgents, said Dr. Mohammed Ismail of the the western town's hospital.
- **May 19, 2006:** One policeman was killed and seven others wounded in three separate attacks on police in the city of Najaf, 100 miles (160 km) south of Baghdad, police said.
- **May 20, 2006:** Shi'ite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki pledged to rein in violence and heal Iraq's sectarian wounds after his unity government was inaugurated in parliament. In the town of Qaim, near the Syrian border, a suicide bomber detonated his explosive-packed vest inside a police station killing five policemen and wounding 10, police said. An Iraqi army captain and his wife were shot dead in their car by unknown gunmen in Baquba, 37 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad. Police said the couple's three children were wounded. Police found the body of a policeman who had been kidnapped hours earlier near Falluja, 31 miles (50 km) west of Baghdad, police said.
- **May 21, 2006:** An Iraqi soldier was killed and 10 wounded when gunmen attacked checkpoints around their army base in Dhuluiya, 40 miles (60 km) north of Baghdad, Iraqi officers said. Local police, describing the army unit as made up largely of ethnic Kurds, put the army's casualty toll higher. One Iraqi policeman and one insurgent died in clashes that erupted near the town of Iskandariya, south of Baghdad, when insurgents tried to blow up a pipeline feeding a power station, police said. Gunmen killed two policemen working in the Oil Protection Facilities in the town of Riyadh, 40 miles (60 km) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.

- **May 22, 2006:** Four policemen were killed when a roadside bomb went off near a joint US forces/Iraqi police patrol in Jurf al-Sakhar, about 53 miles (85 km) south of Baghdad, police said. One policeman died in hospital after gunmen shot at him in central Hawija, 43 miles (70 km) southwest of Kirkuk, police said. Police Lieutenant Nazem Al-Obaidi, chief of the citizenship and passports department in Kirkuk was gunned dead by a group of unidentified gunmen on the Baghdad road near Al-Mansour Mosque, a senior official at the Kirkuk Police Department said. Gunmen killed Colonel Basheer Qadoori from Samarra police in a drive-by shooting in central Samarra, 62 miles (100 km) north of Baghdad, police said.
- **May 23, 2006:** A policeman was gunned down as he was walking to work in the restive Baghdad neighborhood of Amiriya. A roadside bomb went off alongside an Iraqi police patrol that was winding its way through a shopping district in the New Baghdad area of the capital. The blast killed three people, including one policeman, and wounded six.
- **May 24, 2006:** In Baghdad, a police officer was killed by unknown assailants in a drive-by shooting, police said. Gunmen shot dead General Ahmed Dawod, a deputy chief of Baghdad municipality's protection units, hospital and municipal officials said. Unidentified gunmen opened fire on an Iraqi military highway checkpoint near the US military base north of Baghdad killing one soldier and wounding two, said Iraqi Army Lt. Abbas Kamil. Four gunmen and two members of the Iraqi security forces were killed in clashes that erupted during a raid and search operation by army and police in the town of Yusufiya, 9 miles (15 km) south of Baghdad, police said. Thirty-eight gunmen were detained in the two-day operation.
- **May 25, 2006:** Twenty-two Iraqi soldiers graduated from a three-week training course in managing medical logistics systems at the Iraqi Army Services and Support Institute at Taji Military Training Base. Soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Iraqi Army Division arrested two bomb-makers and seized their cache of supplies after getting a tip from civilians. Soldiers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 7<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division and Coalition troops found and recovered two caches while on patrol.
- **May 26, 2006:** Soldiers from the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division and Bayji police officers detained 17 suspected terrorists in cordon and search operations west of Bayji. Soldiers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 7<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division and Coalition troops arrested 14 suspected insurgents and seized on cache. A roadside bomb hit a police patrol in the northern city of Kirkuk, killing one policeman and wounding four others, police Brig. Khatab Omar said. Employees abducted from the local Diyala Television station in Baquba, 40 miles (65 km) northeast of Baghdad, watched gunmen execute two policemen held with them before being released, one of the hostages said.
- **May 27, 2006:** In Baghdad, one police officer was killed and three others wounded when a bomb was set off against their patrol in the upscale Mansur district, an Interior Ministry source said. Two Iraqi army soldiers were killed and three wounded in an attack on an army checkpoint near Dujail, north of Baghdad, police said. Two police officers were shot dead in separate incidents in Tikrit. Police Colonel Qahtan al-Bawi and his bodyguard were killed when gunmen ambushed their car near the city of Baquba, 40 miles (65 km) north of Baghdad, police said. Two other bodyguards were seriously wounded in the attack. An Iraqi army major was killed and three soldiers were wounded when gunmen in a car blocked their patrol and opened fire on a main road, 25 miles (40 km) south of Kirkuk, police said.
- **May 28, 2006:** In Baghdad's upscale Karrada neighborhood, a policeman and two civilians were killed in a twin bomb attack. The attack wounded 22 civilians. Police found six beheaded corpses wearing military uniforms in the small towns of Numaniya, Suwayra and Shihaimiya near Kut, 106 miles (170 km) southeast of Baghdad, police said. It was not clear if the three incidents were linked. A roadside bomb aimed at a convoy of local officials exploded on a road in Diyala province, north of Baghdad, killing two policemen escorting them, police said.
- **May 29, 2006:** US and Iraqi forces scuttled 32 boats to prevent insurgents from using them to move men and supplies across the River Tigris near the city of Dhuluiya, scene of recent clashes, the US military said. A roadside bomb killed two police officers and wounded three others in downtown Baghdad's Karradah district. In western Baghdad, gunmen attacked a convoy killing two police officers. Gunmen shot at a police patrol in the Yarmouk district of west-central Baghdad, killing three policemen, a police source said. One policeman was killed and two others were wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in central Baghdad, police said. In Amarah, 180 miles (290 km) southeast of Baghdad, insurgents killed

two police officers, identified as former Baathists. A roadside bomb killed a policeman and wounded two soldiers near Falluja, police said.

- **May 30, 2006:** A roadside bomb in southern Baghdad killed one police officer and wounded four. Gunmen killed two police officers in two different incidents in Tikrit, 109 miles (175 km) north of Baghdad, police said. Gunmen shot dead down Colonel Ziad Tareq, deputy commander of a protection unit in Kirkuk, 155 miles (250 km) north of Baghdad, an army source said.
- **May 31, 2006:** The Iraqi National Police took responsibility for Forward Operating Base “Charlie” in the city of Al Hillah. The transition ceremony marked the first transfer of authority to the National Police. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Iraqi Army Division assumed responsibility for the city of Tal Afar, taking over from the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division in a ceremony at For Tal Afar. A parked car packed with explosives exploded near a police patrol in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, killing at least five policemen and wounding 14, including a senior officer. An Iraqi soldier was killed and four others were wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in Khalidiya, 53 miles (85 km) west of Baghdad, police said. Gunmen gunned down a policeman on in the Shi’ite holy city of Kerbala, 68 miles (110 km) southwest of Baghdad, police said.
- **June 1, 2006:** Iraqi police and army forces launched new Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki’s “iron fist” security crackdown in Basra against gangs and feuding Shi’ite factions threatening vital oil exports.
- **June 2, 2006:** One Iraqi soldier was killed and four wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near their patrol in the western Mansoor district of Baghdad, police sources said.
- **June 3, 2006:** Seven Iraqi policemen were killed and up to 10 other people were wounded when insurgents attacked the al-Razi police checkpoint near Baquba, 35 miles (60 km) northeast of Baghdad, with rocket-propelled and hand grenades and small arms fire, police say.
- **June 4, 2006:** A parliament session in which new defense and interior ministers were expected to be chosen was postponed “until further notice”, the deputy speaker said. Khaled al-Attiya did not give reasons for the postponement but government sources said the powerful Shi’ite Alliance is deadlocked on a nominee for the Interior Ministry post. In Kirkuk, 155 miles (250 km) north of Baghdad, one policeman was killed and two wounded when a roadside bomb struck their patrol, police said. In Mosul, unidentified militants killed six policemen in a civilian car wearing civilian clothes in the Al-Mothana district in the city’s center, police said.
- **June 5, 2006:** In the northern oil city of Kirkuk, a roadside bomb killed an off-duty policeman. In Mosul, armed men on a motorcycle opened fire on a gathering of police, killing one and wounding another four.

### *The Killing of Zarqawi*

The most striking of all such developments during the first half of 2006 was the killing of Al-Qa’ida’s leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in early June. The Iraqi government and US forces in Iraq scored a major political and propaganda victory by killing Zarqawi. The fact that this coincided with a new government increased the impact of this victory, and Prime Minister Maliki sought to exploit the resulting window of opportunity by taking a range of actions that affected Iraqi force development:

- ***Appointing Ministers of Defense and Interior:*** The appointment of ministers to head ministries that had seen a year of non-leadership was a key development. The task still remained to convince Sunnis that the Ministry of Interior and its forces would no longer support attacks on Sunnis, and yet to still reassure Shi’ites and Kurds. The new Ministers cannot be successful overnight, but simply appointing them was an important first step. Following up with real action would have a lasting value.
- ***Freeing Detainees and Bringing Sunnis and Ba’athists Back into Government and the Iraqi Forces:*** Maliki has already taken a vital step by freeing some detainees and the eventual total could be much higher. He has talked about bringing more Sunnis into office and the Iraqi forces, as well as more Ba’athists. This latter step is critical because so many leading secular Iraqis joined the Ba’ath simply to survive, and are innocent of any of Saddam’s abuses.



- **Investigating American “Abuses”:** An Iraqi investigation may seem critical of the US, but it is absolutely essential that both the Iraqi government and the US make it clear who is really guilty of what, punish the guilty, and identify the innocent. Only such Iraqi action can show the government is truly sovereign and provide a basis for showing there is no cover up or concealment. It is vital to establishing the fact that many of the charges being piled on the US military are almost certainly exaggerated or false, and to rebuild Iraqi-US trust and confidence.
- **Reaching out to Sunnis:** Maliki has already shown he is actively seeking to include Sunnis in the political process -- and Sunnis who supported the insurgency for political reasons, not out of loyalty to Saddam or religious extremism. Many of these Sunnis have every reason to fear or hate the more extreme insurgents, and Zarqawi’s death may convince them to move back towards the center.
- **Cleaning Up the Ministry of Interior, Security Forces, Police Forces, and Guards:** Maliki has talked about a sweeping clean up and reorganization, with new uniforms and badges, tighter controls and discipline, and backed by a MNSTC-I advisory effort that gives the “year of the police” real meaning. There already has been considerable progress in the MOI, prison system, and several key MOI security units associated with “death squads.” If a broader effort can even be seen to begin to take hold, this could have a major impact.
- **Dealing with the Militias and Irregulars:** Maliki already delivered key messages calling for an end to militia operations, and gave one in Basra -- showing he will deal with Shi’ite militias in even the most trouble areas. Making good on his words will be difficult, dangerous, and time consuming. Once again, however, even a real start would have a major impact.
- **Cleaning Up Baghdad:** Plans have been underway for months for joint Iraqi-US action to try to take back the parts of Baghdad that have come back under Shi’ite militias (Sadr) and insurgent control. A major sweep, led by Iraqi forces with a real Iraqi government, can’t win back the whole city, but could be a critical start. If other actions take place in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Basra, the move toward reestablishing security in the most important areas in the country could offset much of the problems created by more than half a year of political turmoil.
- **Appointing the Group to Review the Constitution:** Finally, Sunnis, Shi’ites, Kurds, and others will be far more willing to believe in the new government if they see a body appointed to deal with the 55 areas in the constitution that must be reviewed to finish a draft that is national and representative.

It was clear that Zarqawi’s death would have at least a positive short-term impact regardless of how seriously the government follows-up on these steps. At the same time, this list of measures illustrates the fact that neither Iraqi force development nor tactical victories against insurgents can produce lasting victories or stability without sustained political progress, moves towards rebuilding the economy, and without providing critical government services and a functioning infrastructure throughout the country. From the start, dollars have been as important as bullets, and creating jobs has been as important as Iraqi combat units.

## **The Emerging “Second Threat:” Adding Shi’ite and Kurdish Violence and Militias to the ISF Mission**

Prime Minister Maliki made bringing the militias under control a key priority for a reason. The CPA and Iraqi interim government had failed to deal with the militias in early 2003, when they had the chance to do so at minimal cost and risk. This left a lasting legacy that grew steadily more dangerous as the insurgency drove Shi’ites and Kurds to react in kind, and by relying on their own forces rather than those of the government. By early 2006, the militias had become a serious threat in virtually all of the provinces, cities, and areas where the insurgency had limited presence.

While any such estimates are extreme uncertain, by mid-2006 some experts estimated that Iraq’s private militia groups might outnumber the 120,000-strong police force, which continued to lose

at least several hundred recruits a month.<sup>152</sup> There were many different small militia and security forces, but the key militias operating in Iraq in the spring of 2006 had three major elements -- all of which posed a direct challenge to the authority and control of Iraqi forces:

**Peshmerga:** A Kurdish word meaning “those ready to die,” the Peshmerga were created in 1946 to fight for an independent Kurdish state. The forces number up to 140,000 with loyalties divided between the two main Kurdish political parties: the Kurdish Democratic Party, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. About 20,000 Peshmerga had been integrated into Iraq’s army by the spring of 2006, but were still largely based in the Kurdish provinces to the north.

**Badr Brigades:** A Shi’ite militia formed in Iran in the early 1980s with the aim of toppling Saddam Hussein from exile. Thought to number up to 20,000 trained individuals, it fought on the side of Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. It was once led by Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, who came to head the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIR), one of the main parties in Iraq’s ruling Shi’ite coalition. Badr changed its name to the Badr Organization after Saddam’s overthrow to shift its image away from its military roots.

**Mahdi Army:** Formed after Saddam’s overthrow in April 2003, it is loyal to Moqtada al-Sadr, who led two rebellions against US and British forces in 2004, and in 2006 threw its political weight in to al-Dawa party behind Shi’ite Prime Minister al-Jafari. The Mahdi Army is estimated to number around 10,000 core fighters, but has thousands more supporters that could be called on to fight.

### *The Shi’ite Militias as the Main New Threat*

The problems with the militias were least damaging inside the areas controlled by the Kurdish government, which had long been under Kurdish control, but the Peshmerga remained a threat to both Iraqi force development and the Iraqi government in areas like Kirkuk and wherever there was tension between Kurd, Arab, Turcoman, and other minorities.

The most serious problems occurred in areas where Shi’ite militias came into contact with Sunnis, which threatened to push the country towards civil war in precisely the way that Sunni Islamist extremists sought in attacking Shi’ites and Kurds in the first place. At the same time, Shi’ite factions contended for power with the central government and each other. The most overt examples were Sadr City in Baghdad, and Basra -- Iraq’s second largest city. In these cases, Iraqi forces at best had formal authority while de facto power was in the hands of the militias -- many of which committed crimes and violent acts against members of their own sect.

The Badr Organization, formerly the Badr Brigade, similarly denied charges that it was using the Ministry of the Interior, controlled by SCIRI member Bayan Jabr, to carry out attacks against Sunnis. Hadi al-Amery, the leader of the Badr Organization, claimed that the abductions and executions were the work of insurgents who had either infiltrated the ISF or were using the uniforms to mask their true identity and generate sectarian tensions. He claimed that 5% of his 20,000 Badr Brigade members had been incorporated into the security forces and that the rest were involved in politics.<sup>153</sup>

He also charged that Shi’ites were more often the victims and that the violence that persists is a result of the US inability to provide security: “When you ask me who kills the Sunnis, I ask you who kills the Shi’ites? I am not responsible for security. The American forces are responsible for security...Rather than asking me, ask the Americans.”<sup>154</sup>

On April 27, 2006, Iraq’s senior Shi’ite Muslim religious figure, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, called on the country’s militias to disarm. In a statement, Sistani said that “Weapons must be in the hands of government security forces that should not be tied to political parties but to the nation.”<sup>155</sup> This issuance, however, came amid growing concerns over militia recruiting successes in 2006. Through better pay, promises of greater levels of safety, and other perks, there was

growing evidence at this time that in some instances the militias were outcompeting local police departments in recruiting to expand their forces.<sup>156</sup>

By the summer of 2006, Shi'ite militias operating in the southern province of Basra had become enough of a problem to prompt a visit from Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki. During his visit to the city of Basra on May 31, 2006, Maliki berated local leaders regarding the breakdown of the security situation. Rival Shi'ite parties and their associated militias became embroiled in a power grab struggle as Coalition and Iraqi officials largely focused on battling the insurgency in other parts of the country. The result was a sharp increase in killings -- 174 in the two months leading up to Maliki's visit -- as the factions fought for control of the provincial government and the region's oil wealth.

Much of the killings were being carried out through rival factions within the local police force. Basra Police Chief Maj. Gen. Hassan Swadi al-Saad, said at the time that he trusted only a small fraction of his forces, as the 15,000-man force was largely manipulated by the various political parties.<sup>157</sup>

It was scarcely surprising, therefore, that one of Prime Minister Maliki's first steps in coming to office was to call for disbanding the militias or somehow incorporating them into the government or security services, and that he saw bringing the militias under control as a critical priority. It was not only critical to create a political compact that Arab Sunnis could live with, it was critical to make the central government the key authority in Iraq, and Iraqi government forces the source of security and order.

Moreover, by now there were so many different kinds of uniformed and non-uniformed guards that it was difficult for Iraqis to know who they all were, or whether they had any legitimacy. Small security detachments were also a problem. The leaders of some political parties appointed to head ministries had recruited members of their parties' armed wings to serve as guards for their ministries' facilities.

Nabil al-Haidari, Radio Free Iraq's Baghdad bureau chief, made this problem clear: "You have different kinds, and many kinds, of guard forces. There is the police, with official cars, and there are army members, with different colored uniforms, and at the same time there are some ministry guard forces, well-armed, and the strangest thing here are the many cars with civilian people who do not wear uniforms, they are well-armed and they are shouting loudly and sometimes shooting [in the air] for the people to make way for them."<sup>158</sup> It is difficult enough to distinguish between the police and members of the al-Mahdi Army as both wear identical blue uniforms, carry the same weapons, and drive blue-and-white marked squad cars.<sup>159</sup>

### ***Tensions Between the Shi'ite Militias***

The problems in separating Iraqi forces from the Shi'ite militias were further compounded by divisions within the Shi'ite militias. These divisions were as much political as familial and tribal. Although the differences between Sadr and Hakim and their respective Shi'ite parties became visible during talks to form a government, the conflict has historical roots extending thousands of years into the past.

Sadr supported Prime Minister al-Jafari and the Dawa party, and rallied a destitute youthful base through his often fiery rhetoric. Sadr, whose age is officially unknown, had a relatively low-ranking formal religious title. This was largely irrelevant, however, since members of both the Sadr and Hakim families had often held the title of grand ayatollah.<sup>160</sup>

Sadr was able to capitalize on government weakness, and exploit a more populist form of Shi'ite Islamist practice than the Hakims. He rebuilt and strengthened his militia. This Mahdi Army and its affiliates were more "grass roots based" than other Shi'ite militia, and did more to reach out to poor and displaced Shi'ites by providing security and basic services.<sup>161</sup>

The Hakim clan was equally well known and ruthless, although it was sometimes portrayed as a wiser "old guard." It had founded SCIRI, the largest political party in Iraq and led the Badr Organization. The leader of the party, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, opposed al-Jafari as the prime minister and openly competed with al-Sadr for the loyalty of Iraqi Shi'ites.<sup>162</sup>

Although both families suffered under Saddam, Sadr argued that those who escaped to surrounding countries to avoid repression should not be allowed to represent the Iraqi people in a new government.<sup>163</sup> The Hakim family largely fled to Iran during Saddam's rule, and Sadr accused it of being an Iranian creation and subject to Iranian influence, SCIRI more or less worked with the US and Coalition forces.

Both factions had leaders that called for early US withdrawal, but SCIRI was far more practical about the need for continuing US and outside aid in force development. Sadr continually called for the US to leave Iraq. The divisions between Shi'ite factions thus not only led to internal clashes, but affected support for any meaningful effort at Iraqi force development.

There were ethnic problems as well. In April 2006, Shi'ite militias began to deploy to Kirkuk in substantial numbers. According to US embassy officials in the region, the Mahdi Army had sent two companies with 120 men each. The Badr Organization extended its reach into the city as well and opened several offices across the Kurdish region. The influx of Shi'ite militias began in the days following the February 22 Askariya bombing. The shift northward was justified by the organizations as a necessary step to protect Shi'ite mosques and families. Yet Shi'ites, many of whom were transferred to the area under Saddam's rule, only made up about 5% of the population in the area.<sup>164</sup>

The Kurdish Peshmerga responded by moving nearly 100 additional troops to the area. Moreover, a Sadr associate in the region, Abdul Karim Khalifa, told US officials that more men were on the way and that as many as 7,000 to 10,000 local residents loyal to the Mahdi Army would join in a fight if one were to break out.<sup>165</sup>

### ***ISF and the Peshmerga***

The Kurdish militias did not present as many problems for Iraqi security and Iraqi force development as the Shi'ite militias, but the deployment of Shi'ite militias into the Kirkuk area made it clear that this was no guarantee for the future. Kurdish separatism and claims to areas like Kirkuk and Iraq's northern oil fields remained potentially explosive issues. Thousands of Kurdish Peshmerga soldiers were incorporated into the Iraqi army during the formation of Iraqi forces.<sup>166</sup> The Kurdish adage, "the Kurds have no friends," seemed to hold true here as well. While Kurdish army units could operate effectively in their relatively ethnically homogenous north, they were often perceived as outsiders in Arab areas.

Even in the northern city of Balad in March 2006, a 700-man Kurdish army battalion was confined to their base by an angry and hostile Sunni population. The battalion, sent from Sulaimaniyah to bolster the lone Shi'ite forces comprised of local residents, was resisted by the large Sunni minority in the area so much so that commanders were afraid to let their soldiers leave the base. US officials in the city said that this was because the battalion was mostly former Peshmerga.<sup>167</sup>

In May, a Kurdish-dominated army unit openly clashed with its Shi'ite counterpart. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Division hit a roadside bomb in Duluiyah north of Baghdad. Although US and Iraqi officials disagreed over the number of dead and wounded in the incident, the Kurdish division raced their wounded to the US hospital in Balad. According to police reports when they arrived they began firing their weapons, ostensibly to clear the way, killing a Shi'ite civilian. As security forces arrived, the Kurdish army unit attempted to leave and take their wounded elsewhere. A Shi'ite army unit from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade tried to stop them and shots were exchanged, killing a member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. As the Kurdish unit attempted to leave in their vehicles, a third army unit attempted to establish a roadblock to stop them. US forces however, were at the scene to intervene and restore calm.<sup>168</sup>

### ***Dealing with the Militias: Integration or Disbandment***

There were no good solutions to these problems. The militias had become far too large and powerful to ignore as political and paramilitary forces, but the largely untrained and politically polarized members of the militias that emerged by the spring of 2006 could not be integrated into Iraqi forces. Even in 2003, there already were cases where recruiting militia members from the Peshmerga and Badr Brigades into various elements of the Iraqi Security Forces showed they often had greater loyalty to their sectarian or ethnic groups than to the nation and the national armed services. The same was true later of recruits from the Mahdi Army. US intelligence agencies had provided warnings about the dangers the militias and divisions in Iraqi forces for more than two years.

By the spring of 2006, however, the resulting problems had become a critical issue. Despite the fact US military planners focused on fighting the Sunni-dominated insurgency and on recruiting and training Iraqi security forces. As US military spokesman Major General Rick Lynch said in April 2006, "Last year, as we worked through the problem set, that (militias) wasn't a problem set we focused on." Now these militias had become the primary security concern in Iraq, and US officials blamed them and their integration into the Iraqi security forces for more civilian deaths than the Sunni insurgency.<sup>169</sup>

As described on April 30, 2006 by Tom Lasseter in the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, US policymakers made several missteps in addressing the problem of Shi'ite militias.

- White House and Pentagon officials ignored numerous warnings from the intelligence community of the danger posed by the Badr Organization and the Mahdi Army. The Badr Organization is the armed wing of the Iranian-backed SCIRI. The Mahdi Army is loyal to the radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.
- In May 2004, L. Paul Bremer, who headed the CPA, appointed a group of high-ranking Iraqis -- known as the Transition Reintegration Implementation Committee -- to persuade militia leaders to disband their groups. However, the group received no funding for its support offices and was rendered almost completely ineffective.
- US diplomats were slow to recognize that the majority Shi'ite population's rise to power would expand rather than diminish militia activity. US officials believed that the members of the militias would either retire or be integrated into the security forces.
- Taking action against the Shi'ite militias would have undercut the Bush administration's position that foreign terrorists and Sunnis from Saddam Hussein's regime were the problem in Iraq. Any such move would also have called into question US policymakers' reliance on training largely Shi'ite security forces to replace US troops in Iraq.

The problems involved in dealing with the militias were scarcely, however, the fault of the US. Iraqi leaders and politicians were equally slow to take action. The Iraqi Constitution, ratified on

October 15, 2005, stated in Chapter 1, Article (9), §1(b) that “Forming military militias outside the framework of the armed forces is banned.”

It was not until March 19, 2006, however, that Iraqi officials agreed to set up a national security council that could give each of the country’s main political factions a voice in making security and economic policies for a new government. This 19-member national security council was formed to address the rising sectarian tensions across Iraq, was to include the Iraqi president and prime minister, and would hold more power than the Cabinet.

Although a council with powers beyond those of the Cabinet was not mentioned in the Iraqi constitution, Kurdish leaders had originally proposed the council in January 2006 to check the power of the Shi’ite alliance, to help stem Iraq’s sectarian bloodshed, and to avert civil war. The Council was expected to set policies governing the army and police, the counter insurgency campaign in Sunni Muslim Arab areas, and the disarmament of Shi’ite Muslim militias accused of sectarian killings. The Council was also to oversee economic matters such as the budget and the allocation of oil revenues.<sup>170</sup>

The push to deal with sectarian militias gathered momentum in other ways. On February 8, 2006, Abdul Aziz Hakim, the head of SCIRI and Iraq’s most powerful Shi’ite political leader, made a rare acknowledgement of Sunni leaders’ demands that the Shi’ite dominated government rein in the police and army. He called upon security forces “to continue strongly confronting terrorists but with more consideration to human rights.”<sup>171</sup>

US Ambassador Khalilzad said on April 23 in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil that militias and other unauthorized armed groups posed “a serious challenge to stability in Iraq, to building a successful country based on the rule of law...There is a need for a decommissioning, demobilization and reintegration plan for these unauthorized military formations so that the monopoly for the use of force will be in the hands of authorized people in the Iraqi government.”<sup>172</sup>

The newly forming Iraqi government announced separate initiatives to address the growing problem of militias and armed groups in Iraq. Prime Minister designate Nuri al-Maliki announced the first of these, called Law 91, on April 22, 2006. This initiative aims to merge the militias into Iraq’s security forces. The law, drafted by the CPA in June 2004, named 11 militias affiliated with parties and political forces. As Maliki told reporters, “Law No. 91 will take care of integrating [militias] into the armed forces according to rules that don’t downplay the rights of those who struggled against the dictatorship.”<sup>173</sup>

Law No. 91 had a dual impact, said Hassan Bazzaz, a political analyst in Baghdad. “It’s a message in two directions, One to those who are scared of the militias and the other message is the the militia people: ‘We will take care of you.’”<sup>174</sup> Unsurprisingly, the law met criticism on several fronts.

- Mohammed Bashar Amin, a spokesman for the Sunni Muslim Scholars Association said of Maliki’s initiative, “He announced that he will merge militias with the security forces instead of bringing those who committed crimes and atrocities to justice. Thousands of Iraqis have been killed by those militias.”<sup>175</sup>
- Sunni leader Salih al-Mutlaq criticized the plan as well, Al-Sharqiyah television reported on May 3, 2006. “Militias are plaguing Iraq. They, along with the occupation, are responsible for the current state of Iraq. We feel that retaining the militias within the security services is extremely dangerous. We are opposed to retaining them in, or further integrating them into the armed and security forces.”
- Secular Shi’ite politician and former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi voiced his opposition to the plan in an April 26, 2006 interview with Radio Free Iraq. “We want militias to end. We do not want to have them

integrated in the military and similar structures of the state. No integration. The integration would mean creating one regiment Shi'ite, another one Sunni, and another one loyal to the [Iraqi National] Accord, another one loyal to the Supreme Council [of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq], another one loyal to someone else -- and what will be the result? There will be fights. We want an army built in a style that is recognized."

While Sunni Arab leaders opposed this Maliki initiative, they voiced support for President Jalal Talabani's proposal, announced on April 30, 2006 to begin a dialogue with seven, unidentified armed groups to lay down their arms and join the political process. Sunni leaders were skeptical that the groups with whom Talabani was talking were really major players in the insurgency, but as Sunni leader al-Mutlaq said, "I encourage him (Talabani) to stick to this approach and try to reach the real [resistance] factions so that they may be contained within the political process." Shi'ite politicians were more skeptical of Talabani's proposed talks and speculated that the armed groups in question were linked to terrorists and Ba'athists. Talabani denied that the groups were either Saddam Hussein loyalists or linked to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.<sup>176</sup>

One key problem was that efforts to disentangle Iraqi politicians from militia groups posed a complicated challenge. Eleven of Maliki's main political rivals in parliament still ran their own armies in the spring of 2006.<sup>177</sup> Prime Minister Maliki's political coalition was supported by the two main Shi'ite militias, the Iranian-trained Badr Brigade -- also known as the Badr Organization and the Badr Corps -- and Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army. Salman Jumaili, a spokesman for the Iraqi Islamic Party, a leading Sunni political group, summarized this situation as follows: "He (Maliki) has a very hard task in front of him, especially in dealing with the militia...The Sadr [faction] supports him, but he has to defuse their militia...to comply with the national unity project."

Similarly, President Talabani, a Kurd, defended the 70,000-strong Kurdish peshmerga as a "regulated force."<sup>178</sup> Talabani said that he would not permit the disbandment of the Peshmerga because it has played a major role in protecting the Kurdish people.

Moreover, many Shi'ite politicians refused to refer to their armed wings as militias and dismissed allegations that any members of the Iraqi security forces were loyal to Shi'ite clerics such as Sadr rather than to Baghdad. Hadi al-Amiri, secretary-general of the Badr Organization, said that he favored disarming militias and merging them with the national army. But he did not characterize the Badr Organization as a militia. "This organization proudly carried weapons against the Saddam regime. After the downfall of the Saddam regime, it turned into a political organization," he said.<sup>179</sup>

Baha al-Araji, a Sadr supporter in the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), echoed these sentiments. He said that there were many laws that applied to militias, "but if they mean the al-Mahdi Army, then this army is not affiliated with any institution. It represents a popular trend. It was formed according to a natural reaction."<sup>180</sup>

On April 22, 2006, Iraq's prime minister designate, Nuri al-Maliki told reporters at a press briefing in Baghdad that the government would take steps to integrate militias into the Iraqi national armed forces. Pursuant to the new Law 91, 11 militias affiliated with parties and political forces were named in the law, according to al-Maliki. The law was drafted by the Coalition Provisional authority in Jun 2004.

US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad responded to this action by asserting the necessity for a decommissioning, demobilization, and reintegration plan for these unauthorized forces, adding that unauthorized formations are the "infrastructure of a civil war."<sup>181</sup> The law also had the

support of Shi'ite Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. A statement issued by Sistani's office stated that only government troops should be allowed to carry weapons in Iraq.

The integration plan faced opposition from both Sunni and Shi'ite leaders. Sunnis criticized a plan that called for the integration of individuals responsible for acts of sectarian brutality into the armed forces. Meanwhile, secular Shi'ite politicians and former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi voiced concerns of a national military with individuals who could remain more loyal to other political or ethnically affiliated organizations than to the state of Iraq.<sup>182</sup>

## **The “Third Threat”: Internal Problems in the Ministries of Defense and Interior and Iraqi Force Development**

The combination of the insurgent and militia threats interacted to create another threat to Iraqi force development, this time within Iraqi forces. It created a growing risk that Iraqi force development could fail because of ethnic and sectarian tensions. At a minimum, Iraqi force development faced a growing problem in terms of internal discipline and ties between some elements of Iraqi forces and Shi'ite attacks on Sunnis.

These problems were worst in the Ministry of Interior, but they were only part of the problem. They were serious in the Facilities Protection Service and local security forces of other ministries. They were compounded by the failure of the Ministry of Justice to create an effective criminal justice, court, and prison system throughout the country, even in many areas where the insurgency was a relatively minor threat.

### ***Militia Infiltration into Iraqi Forces***

Militia infiltration into the Ministry of Interior security and police forces was a steadily growing problem in 2005 and early 2006. Substantial numbers of men from both the Badr Organization and the Moqtada Al Sadr's Mahdi Army joined the force. In the case of the roughly 65,000 strong mix of MOI and police forces in the greater Baghdad area, the men from the Badr Organization tended to go into the MOI special security units and those from the Mahdi Army tended to join the police.

Both MNF-I and the Iraqi government were slow to react. The Iraqi government and Coalition continued to claim the situation was improving during much of 2005, although a September 2005 report by the ICG suggested that the process of drafting a constitution had helped exacerbate the existing ethnic and sectarian divisions between Iraqis.<sup>183</sup>

Much of the problem began at the top of the MOI. The appointment in May 2005 of Bayan Jabr, as the interim head of the Interior Ministry -- which oversaw the nation's police and specialized security units -- exacerbated all these problems. Jabr was a prominent member of SCIRI, with close ties to Iran and to the Badr Brigade. It is unclear how many of the growing problems with the special security forces, police, prisons, and militias were really Jabr's fault -- he had limited power and freedom of action -- but it is clear that no decisive action took place without major pressure on the minister by the US embassy and MNF-I.

This situation was made worse by severe understaffing of the Coalition advisory effort to both the Ministry of Interior and the police, a problem that continued until at least early 2006. It was also made worse by the fact that control of the US advisory effort to the MOI was placed under the US State Department while control of the advisory effort to the MOD was placed under the Department of Defense. This situation was corrected in October 2005, by putting the MOI under



the Department of Defense, but this scarcely meant adequate staffing of the advisory effort, and problems in getting qualified civilian advisors continued to be severe.

In any case, Sunni politicians increasingly viewed Jabr's position as particularly troubling during the efforts to form a new government, and blamed the ministry for a wave of Sunni-targeted kidnappings, tortures, and murders allegedly carried out by men wearing police uniforms. In late 2005, the Interior Ministry was found to be running secret detention centers in which more than 800 men and boys, mostly Sunnis, were held in horrific conditions. (The Iraqi Constitution only authorizes the Ministry of Justice to run prisons.)<sup>184</sup>

By late 2005, US officials and military sources were complaining that the MOI and Minister Jabr were not informing them of some MOI and police operations and privately acknowledged that they had observed prisoner abuse. Commenting on the futility of filing reports against the incidents, one US official equated it with "trying to put out a forest fire with a bucket of water."<sup>185</sup>

They expressed particular concern about the actions of the MOI's Maghawir or Fearless Warrior special commando units, and that they were carrying out illegal raids and killings. This 12,000-man force had a number of Sunni officers and had originally been formed under the authority of former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. Since the new government was formed in April 2005 however, it had recruited larger numbers of new Shi'ite members. Its commander, General Rashid Flaih Mohammed, was reported to have acknowledged that the unit had had some problems. Sunni police commanders like Brigadier General Mohammed Ezzawi Hussein Alwann, commander of the Farook Brigade, were also purged from the MOI forces, along with junior officers.<sup>186</sup>

The inability to distinguish clearly between different types of Iraqi forces, and imposters from real elements of Iraqi forces, became steadily more serious over time. During the winter of 2005 and 2006, body dumps became a favored tactic for both insurgents and militias. Although this trend existed long before the February 22 Askariya bombing, it increased thereafter and became part of the cyclical sectarian violence carried out by Shi'ites and Sunnis. It would be almost impossible to catalogue all of the discoveries, but finding ten to twenty corpses at one site was not uncommon, and each day usually resulted in at least one "body dump" being reported. For example, in the period from March 7 until March 21, over 191 bodies were found. On one day in May, it was reported that 51 bodies were found in Baghdad alone. A health official in Baghdad said that there were over 2,500 murders in the capital since the February bombing, excluding mass-casualty bombings.<sup>187</sup>

There were common characteristics to many "mystery killings." The victims increasingly were relatively ordinary Shi'ites or Sunnis and were not directly working for the government of Coalition forces. Often times victims were taken from their homes or businesses in daylight by masked gunmen or men wearing police or security force uniforms and driving standard issue trucks. These attributes, and the fact that the bodies were almost always found in the same condition -- blindfolded, handcuffed, and shot in the head showing signs of torture-- lent credibility to the claim that many of the killings were perpetrated by Shi'ite militias themselves, or elements of security forces dominated by these militias.

The frequency of such "extra-judicial killings" was discussed in a UN Human Rights Report and linked to police forces: "A large number of extrajudicial killings, kidnappings and torture were reportedly perpetrated mainly by members of armed militias linked to political factions or criminal gangs. The same methods of execution-style killings are usually used: mass arrests

without judicial warrant and extrajudicial executions with bodies found afterwards bearing signs of torture and killed by a shot to the head.”

In its 2005 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Iraq, released March 8, 2006, the State Department reported that Iraqi police units, often infiltrated and even dominated by members of sectarian militias, continue to be linked to arbitrary arrests and to the torture, rape, and sometimes death of detainees. The report said of the situation in Iraq:

The vast majority of human rights abuses reportedly carried out by government agents were attributed to the police. Militias, including members of the Badr Organization and the Mahdi Army, penetrated some police units. The minister of interior was an official in SCIRI, the sponsor of the Badr Organization; the governor of Baghdad was a SCIRI member and a leader in the Badr Organization, as were five other provincial governors selected by their respective Governorate Councils under CPA Order 71. On June 7, President Jalal Talabani praised the Kurdish and Badr militias, calling them necessary to sweep away the remnants of the dictatorship and defeat terrorism. Police officers, some of whom were members of militias, abused official powers and resources, including police vehicles, to pursue personal, criminal, and party agendas. Criminals impersonating police officers also carried out illegal acts including kidnapping.

The level of actual abuses is hard to determine. Far more charges were made than could be validated, and Sunni Islamic insurgents and some Sunni political figures had a strong motive to try to implicate the security services even when they had no guilt. Some of the killings in late November involved key Sunni politicians, leading members of the Iraqi Islamic Party, and a member of the Sunni coalition competing in the December 15 elections. Shi'ites seemed to have little reason to strike at such targets.<sup>188</sup>

Nevertheless, by the beginning of 2006, it was clear that both the Coalition and Iraqi government had to react, and that political progress could not occur without progress in security. Accusations of “retaliation killings,” and the implication of Shi'ite-dominated MOI and security forces in acts of violence perpetrated largely against Sunni Arabs, increased sectarian tensions and moved the country closer toward civil war.

US Maj. Gen. William G. Webster, Jr. stated during a press briefing that one of the most important focuses of the US military in Iraq in the coming months would be to train Iraqi forces to operate within the rule of law and with respect for human rights. In addition, he called for efforts to promote “a greater ethnic and sectarian balance within those forces” and a “spirit of national service.”<sup>189</sup> In an attempt to address these concerns, the US had tripled the number of training teams being attached to Iraqi police forces.

Shi'ite and Sunni tensions had other impacts on efforts to develop Iraqi forces. In December 2005 the US Army's 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, deployed to Baghdad, had to threaten to demote the readiness rating of an Iraqi Army division scheduled to take over part of the Green Zone and to suspend the transfer of authority indefinitely when Iraq's Defense Ministry refused to confirm the appointment of Col. Muhammed Wasif Taha, a Sunni. US Col. Ed Cardon, commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> infantry's fourth brigade, defended the decision saying, “The hand-over was contingent upon their leadership remaining where it was.” Although the Defense Ministry eventually capitulated and confirmed Taha as the commander of the brigade, a spokesman for the ministry indicated that it still had the right to replace Taha at a later date.<sup>190</sup>

### ***Continuing Prison, Death Squad, and Other Abuses***

The discovery of some 200 Sunnis held in horrible conditions in a bunker in Baghdad in November 2005 was one of the first clear indications of how serious the problem had become. Many of these prisoners were tortured, and the Special Investigative Unit carrying out the

detentions was an MOI unit run by an MOI brigadier general and colonel. The colonel was an intelligence officer said to be reporting directly to Jabr.

While the revelations of such large-scale abuses drew the most attention, less severe, day-to-day incidents are no less important and can be illustrative of the underlying sectarian tension in Iraq. For example, when several policemen arrived at an Iraqi police station with three suspected insurgents in plastic cuffs, US Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Joel Perez had to cut the cuffs because they were too tight and causing the prisoners' hands to swell and turn blue. Later, one of the Iraqi policeman involved confided in a reporter, "They [the insurgents] need to be beaten up. The Americans wont let us...I want to have two cars and tie each hand to a different car and break them in half."<sup>191</sup>

In the early months of 2006, these allegations led to investigations. In February, enough evidence and outcry had accumulated to force the MOI to launch an investigation into allegations it was supporting death squads. This investigation however focused only on one incident in which 22 Iraqi police were briefly detained by US authorities on their way to kill a Sunni prisoner in their custody.<sup>192</sup>

This event led to the first public acknowledgement by the MOI that death squads operated within its own department and the Ministry of Defense. During a press conference in March, Bayan Jabr, Minister of the Interior said, "The death squads that we have captured are in the defense and interior ministries...There are people who have infiltrated the army and the interior."<sup>193</sup>

Only one month later however, Jabr made a statement to the contrary. In April he said that these death squads were members of private security forces, not government forces. He claimed that such private companies employ 180,000 security agents, many of whom "are uniformed like the police, their cars like the police." Similarly, he claimed that, "[t]errorists or someone who supports the terrorists...are using the clothes of the police or the military."<sup>194</sup> In May, he reiterated this claim, but upped the number of private security agents to 200,000.<sup>195</sup>

There was evidence to support this. Police uniforms, insignia and equipment were available at some markets. Reportedly, patches with the emblem of the Iraqi police, "IP," were available for as little as 35 cents and entire uniforms could be purchased for \$13.50.<sup>196</sup>

These problems were yet another factor that eventually forced the Iraqi government to conduct a major reorganization of all the Iraqi forces in the MOI, rename some units guilty of sectarian or ethnic abuses, and issue some units new uniforms and new badges. But these steps did not gather full momentum until May, and it was not until mid-June that Iraqi forces were deployed in large numbers in areas like Baghdad with new badges and insignia.

Iraq's Deputy Justice Minister, Pusho Ibrahim Ali Daza Yei (a Kurd) sent a letter in June to Major General John D. Gardner, the officer in charge of the US detention system, stating that the nation's prison system had become so dominated by Shi'ite militias, who continued to free criminals and revanchists of their own sect, and persecute Sunnis, that the Coalition should delay transferring prisons and detainees from Coalition control to the Iraqi government.<sup>197</sup> The abuses of Sunnis included torture and rape, and Yei indicated that he believed the problem could not be fully corrected until the end of 2006 or in 2007.

This announcement came at a time that Prime Minister Maliki was freeing thousands of detainees, many of whom had turned out to be innocent or only had tenuous ties to the insurgency. The total number of prisoners in early June included more than 15,000 detainees in five US prisons, 7,426 prisoners in Ministry of Justice facilities (many transferred out of the

MOI because of past abuses), 1,979 still in MOI facilities, and an unknown number in MOD prisons.

### ***Dealing with Growing Problems in Basra and the South***

It was particularly difficult for the US and its allies to deal with abuses of power by Shi'ite dominated security forces in the south. In the predominately Shi'ite city of Basra, British troops arrested 14 Iraqi law enforcement officials, including two senior police intelligence officers, in late January 2006. While several were released, the British claimed those who remained in custody, including the deputy chief of intelligence for Basra, had been involved in political corruption, assassinations, and bomb-making.

Local Iraqi officials denounced what they viewed as excessively "random arrests" and threatened to suspend relations with British forces until the men were released. Maj. Peter Cripps, a British military spokesman in Basra, defended the arrests saying that those arrested "were all part of the former Internal Affairs department that was disbanded by the Ministry of Interior and are now in the criminal intelligence unit and the serious crimes unit. They are alleged to be following their own agenda, including corruption, assassinations and persecutions of citizens."<sup>198</sup>

The British cited the role of militias in the security forces as one of the factors that contributed to the decline of the security situation in Basra, where murder rates doubled to more than one per day between November 2005 and February 2006. The Basra police chief stated that more than half of the 12,000 member forces were militia members and that he could only trust a quarter of his officers. British efforts to instil humane treatment techniques in local police and teach them forensic investigative methods were frustrated by the release of a video showing British soldiers beating a group of young, unarmed Iraqi boys.<sup>199</sup>

The growing distrust between the British and certain parts of the new police force resulted in UK troops being asked to leave when they arrived for a meeting at a Basra station to discuss equipment and professional development. The Iraqi officer who instructed them to do so said he had received a call from his superior who threatened his job if he allowed the British to enter.<sup>200</sup> Tensions between British troops and Shi'ites in Basra flared again in May when a British helicopter crashed in a populated area. When British soldiers arrived on the scene they were pelted with rocks and even Molotov cocktails from demonstrators, estimated to be around 300, cheering the wrecked Lynx helicopter.<sup>201</sup>

Although initial reports did not rule on the cause of the crash, in subsequent days British intelligence indicated that it was likely a surface-to-air missile, possibly with Iranian origins.<sup>202</sup> British officials said that a splinter group of the Mahdi Army, backed by fundamentalists in Iran, was responsible for the violence that followed when soldiers arrived to rescue any survivors of the crash. Intelligence sources also indicated that there were groups that had broken off from the Mahdi Army and were no longer under Sadr's control, but were rather being supplied and funded by terror groups from within Iran.<sup>203</sup> This caused Lt. Gen. Sir Rob Fry, deputy commander of all multi-national forces in Iraq, to assert that if the Iraqi government failed to take control of the militias in Basra, British troops would be used to clear them out.

### ***Rising Uncertainty as to the Role of Iraqi Forces in Sectarian and Ethnic Violence***

Abductions committed by groups of individuals wearing Iraqi Special Forces uniforms were an ongoing problem in early 2006. Although the Ministry of Interior continually denied the existence of "death squads" within the predominately Shi'ite MOI forces, the ministry launched

an internal investigation to address the accusations. Some Sunni leaders estimated that 1,600 people had been killed in what they identified as a campaign of sectarian violence.<sup>204</sup>

For example, an inquiry was launched into the infiltration of Iraq's police by militia forces in mid-February 2006. A 22-man death squad was caught red-handed at a checkpoint in Baghdad. When questioned, the men admitted they were on their way to executing a Sunni prisoner. Four of the men were suspected of having links to the Badr brigades, the armed wing of the Shi'ite Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution. They were arrested and held in the US detention facility at Abu Ghraib. The others were taken to an Iraqi jail.

Although accurate numbers are impossible to obtain, the increasing scale of targeted sectarian killings and similar violence reached the point by 2006 where it changed the nature of the Iraq war and threatened to plunge Iraq into deeper civil conflict.

Baghdad, a "mixed" city, was ground zero for much of this violence. More Iraqi civilians were killed in Baghdad during the first three months of 2006, than at any time since the end of the Saddam regime. Between January and March, 3,800 Iraqi civilians were killed, a significant number of which were found tied, shot in the head, and showing signs of torture.<sup>205</sup> According to the Baghdad morgue in May 2006, it received on average 40 bodies a day. Anonymous US officials disclosed that the targeted sectarian killings, or soft-sectarian cleansing, claim nine times more lives than car bombings, and that execution killings increased by 86% in the nine weeks after the February Askariya mosque bombing.<sup>206</sup>

Sectarian militias did more than infiltrate the security forces. There were numerous incidents of the Mahdi Army installing its own members to head hospitals, dental offices, schools, trucking companies, and other private businesses. Rank employees are often fired for no reason. As a Baghdad University professor said, "We are all victims of this new thought police. No longer content to intimidate us with violence, these militias want to control our every move, so they appoint the administrators and managers while dissenters lose their jobs."<sup>207</sup>

The end result was that Sunni neighborhoods in western Baghdad formed citizen groups to keep the paramilitary forces out of their areas entirely. Young men took turns standing in the streets after the 11 pm curfew and sent signals by flashlights and cell phones if strangers approached. In some cases, citizens set up barricades and took up arms against Shi'ite-led commando raids into their neighborhoods. In other cases, residents tipped off Sunni insurgents.<sup>208</sup> Sunni residents attributed the recent drop in paramilitary raids to neighborhood patrols obstructing them. Sunnis cited the fact that killers now struck targets at their workplaces, in hospitals, and while they commuted.<sup>209</sup>

Such actions also, however, created new divisions within the Iraqi forces. For example, Iraqi Army night patrols checked in on the citizen watch groups in some areas in Baghdad after dark. Many Sunnis said that they tolerated the Iraqi Army, despite their fear of the Iraqi special police, considering it more professional and less partisan.<sup>210</sup>

### ***The Battle for Adhamiya***

One key example of the problems such violence created for Iraqi force development occurred in Adhamiya in April 2006. Although the exact events were unclear, it appeared that in a two-day gun battle in the Adhamiya district, a Sunni neighborhood near Baghdad, had been the result of a local Sunni militia attempting to repel what it thought were Shi'ite "death squads." US officials countered however, that Coalition forces and the Iraqi Army were on patrol when they received fire from insurgents. Later a joint US-Iraqi checkpoint again took fire, at which point

reinforcements were called in. Although the residents may have mistaken US and Iraqi Army patrols for the Shi'ite dominated police, it nonetheless demonstrated that localized Sunni militias were capable and willing to mount a coordinated defense. Moreover, it was a testament to the increasingly polarized divisions between the security forces and the overall relationships between Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'ites.<sup>211</sup>

Residents said that the neighborhood security force, which had formed in the aftermath of the February 22 Askariya bombing to protect their families and homes from Shi'ite militias, took up positions on rooftops and began firing at military vehicles. Other men went house-to-house urging able males to join the fight. "We defended our neighborhood, our mosques and our honor," said one man who was part of the battle.<sup>212</sup>

Word spread throughout the town that the incoming men were "Iranians;" a slang term meaning that they were part of the Shi'ite groups that fled to Iran during Saddam's rule, and then returned after his fall in 2003.<sup>213</sup> Both the Badr Organization and the Mahdi Army were said to have ties to Iran.

There were unconfirmed reports by some witnesses that the Iraqi Army, which was generally more Sunni-dominated, fought with the residents against the Shi'ite-dominated police forces of the Interior Ministry. One woman claimed that the local "heroes of Adhamiyah" were rallying the townspeople to "teach [the Iranians] a lesson" and urged them to "support the Iraqi Army."<sup>214</sup>

Regardless of whether Shi'ite militias, security forces, or the Iraqi army were the ones entering the town, the perception in the larger Sunni community was that it was another example of Shi'ite death squads tied to the government conducting sectarian cleansing, and their outrage was expressed accordingly.

"We have evidence that some officials and militias are up to their necks in the killings and kidnappings that take place daily in Baghdad," said Sunni politician Dhafi al-Ani. Well known Sunni politician Adnan al-Dulaimi echoed these sentiments and accused the government of waging "the ugliest form of ethnic cleansing," against the Sunni communities and blamed "the existence of unleashed militia, including some militia backed by foreign powers who have only one goal that is to see Iraqis slaughtered in a sectarian war." Saleh al-Mutlaq, a possible candidate for a high level ministerial post and the leader of the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue, demanded that government police forces "stop their raiding, kidnapping and looting."<sup>215</sup>

The following day, al-Qa'ida in Iraq issued a statement promising "a new raid to avenge the Sunnis at Adhamiyah and the other areas, and the raid will start with the dawn of Wednesday, if God wishes...The Shi'ite areas will be an open battlefield for us."<sup>216</sup>

The Jafari government claimed that the violence was instigated by terrorist groups masked as security and police forces that had moved in the area. Specifically, the Shi'ite dominated government accused the Islamic Army of Iraq, the 1920 Revolution Brigades, and al-Qa'ida of intentionally trying to "destabilize the city because of its political, demographic and media importance." The statement by al-Jafaari's office continued, "They launched ugly rumors that they belong to the Interior Ministry commando force. These armed groups started to shoot at an Iraqi army camp in two assaults."<sup>217</sup>

With such a wide variety of accounts of the same events, it was impossible to prove or disprove the version put forth by the Iraqi government. However, in the past, the MOI and the government in general frequently deflected accusations of atrocities by Shi'ite "death squads" by claiming that it was the work of insurgents purporting to be Iraqi security forces. While it would make

sense for Islamist insurgents, seeking to foment a civil war, to utilize this tactic, there seemed to be scant evidence to support this claim. To the contrary, the incorporation of Shi'ite militias into the security forces, and the frequency of mysterious abductions and body dumps, especially since the February bombing of the Shi'ite shrine, were all well documented.

While it was unclear if these Sunni "neighborhood watch" groups would cooperate with, or support the "Ba'athist," "nationalist" or "Islamist" elements of the insurgency, reporting of the events portrayed the acts by the "Adhamiya Defense Committees" as a legitimate act of self defense, rather than an insurgent attack on US and Iraqi forces. For example, the Iraqi newspaper al-Zaman asserted that the "people of Adhamiya had foiled a night assault" by Shi'ite "death squads."<sup>218</sup>

These incidents help lead the US to openly voice its disapproval of al-Jafari as the next prime minister in late March. Ambassador Khalilzad added that due to his lack of leadership, Shi'ite-led militias were now killing more Iraqis than the Sunni insurgency.<sup>219</sup> Al-Jafari's response, which warned the US not to interfere with the democratic process in Iraq, addressed the issue of Shi'ite militias being incorporated in the security forces and his political alliance with al-Sadr, whose support put him in office. He stated that he favored engaging with Sadr and his followers instead of isolating him and that he viewed the militias as part of Iraq's "de facto reality." He continued to voice support for a government that looks past sectarian differences and to work toward integrating the militias into the police and army.<sup>220</sup>

### ***The Growing Cost of the Iraqi Political Vacuum***

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq's Human Rights Report specifically highlighted the threat of militias within the security forces and that it had received information "regarding the actions of some segments of the security forces, in particular the police and special forces, and their apparent collusion with militias in carrying out human rights violations."<sup>221</sup>

There were concerns that even Iraqi brigades that were regarded as "mixed" -- in that they struck a balance between Shi'ites and Sunnis within their ranks -- sometimes had elements that took the Shi'ite side. There were reports of at least one soldier who was proudly wearing an al-Sadr t-shirt under his Army uniform. In interviews as well, many of the soldiers privately confided that if they were ever asked to fight the Mahdi Army, they would have to quit the Iraqi forces.<sup>222</sup> Brig. Gen. Abdul Kareem Abdul Rahman al-Yusef, a Sunni, admitted that his brigade was 87% Shi'ite and included members of the Badr Organization. Despite this, he still believed that "it's not the time to ask the militias to put down their arms," given that the government cannot provide security to its citizens.<sup>223</sup>

As Lt. Col. Chris Pease, deputy commander of the US military's police training programs in eastern Baghdad put it, "We're not stupid. We know for a fact that they're killing people. We dig the damn bodies out of the sewer all of the time. But there's a difference between knowing something and proving something." Capt. Ryan Lawrence, an intelligence officer with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Special Police Transition Team, displayed similar feelings: "Training and equipping a force, while knowing that at least some element is infiltrated by militias, is a difficult situation."<sup>224</sup>

Pease also admitted that an Iraqi police officer had confided in him the reality and extent of the militia infiltration into ISF. "His assessment was that the militias are everywhere," Pease said, "and his officers weren't going to do anything about that because their units are infiltrated and they know what the cost would be for working against the militias."<sup>225</sup>

US observers also noted that the fact that militias and other armed groups could sometimes operate unimpeded by Iraqi Security Forces did more than demonstrate to the Iraqi people that Iraqi government had no monopoly on the use of force. This had a direct effect on how citizens viewed the government as an effective purveyor of security. For some, militias were viewed as the only way to protect against insurgents and terrorists. For others, often the militias and at times the security forces were the source of the terror. As one Baghdad resident, a member of a joint-Sunni/Shi'ite "neighborhood watch" group put it, "We've been told over and over that the political process is going to make us safer, but all we see are parties fighting over ministries so they can get jobs and money for themselves. If we don't protect ourselves, no one will."<sup>226</sup>

### ***MOI Problems Continue***

Problems with the MOI continued well into the spring of 2006, sometimes in less obvious ways like tacitly allowing violence. For example, when specific intelligence indicating a series of car bombs were likely led to public warning on April 7 by the MOI that told Iraqis not to gather in crowded areas, the ISF failed to act. The ministry had to threaten legal action against "any security official who fails to take the necessary procedures to foil any terrorist attack in his area."<sup>227</sup>

Another method was failing to use the output of the MNSTC-I training effort properly. Jonathan Steele reported in *The Guardian* on April 4, 2006 that the Interior Ministry had not deployed any graduates of the civilian police assistance team (CPATT), a joint US/UK-trained unit, for three months and instead hired its own men to put on the streets. The CPATT was designed to put the police on a fair footing in the wake of Saddam Hussein's regime and to ensure that the force maintained an equitable ethnic and sectarian balance. While senior Interior Ministry officials argued that they had no control of the CPATT's selection process, the Interior Ministry's refusal to deploy the new recruits further fueled accusations among Sunni leaders that the ministry supported partisan militias infiltrating Iraqi police forces and so-called "death squads" which were said to be responsible for abducting and murdering hundreds of Sunnis.<sup>228</sup>

In what may have been the largest incident at the time involving MOI security forces, gunmen wearing MOI uniforms allegedly stormed a Sunni owned security firm in early March and abducted 50 of its employees.<sup>229</sup> The Interior Ministry denied its involvement in the event, but few Iraqis had confidence in such denials, and this was only one incident of many.

Later in the same month, for example, investigators discovered and broke up a group of police who ran a kidnapping and extortion ring. Allegedly led by an Iraqi police major general, this group kidnapped individuals, sometimes killing them, and forced their families to pay ransoms that they then pocketed.<sup>230</sup>

In April, the bodies of three young men were recovered from a sewage ditch. According to co-workers, the three were last seen being arrested by MOI forces after their minibus had been pulled over.<sup>231</sup> In May, two employees of the al-Nahrain television station were kidnapped on their way home by MOI forces, according to witnesses. Their bodies were found the next day, along with six other Sunni men. All had been blindfolded, burned with cigarettes, and severely beaten.<sup>232</sup>

The MOI continued to deny that it had any role in the increased sectarian violence since the February shrine bombing, but accusations mounted and the accumulation of incidents made this denial more difficult.



In some cases, this benefited Coalition forces at the expense of Iraqi forces. For some Sunnis, the presence of US forces provided a degree of assurance against abuses of power by Iraqi security forces. For example, an advisory on a Sunni-run television network told its viewers not to allow Iraqi police or soldiers into their homes unless US troops were present.<sup>233</sup> In Dora, local leaders agreed that Iraqi forces could only conduct raids in mosques if US soldiers accompanied them. This same rule was later implemented in Baghdad as well.

Sunnis sometimes requested the presence of US troops in Islamic holy places during searches, something that earlier would have been inconceivable. This was a testament to the depth of sectarian divides and the genuine distrust between the Shi'ite dominated police forces and Sunni communities.<sup>234</sup> As Ali Hassan, a Sunni, bluntly stated, "We prefer to be detained by Americans instead of Iraqis. Second choice would be the Iraqi army. Last choice, Iraqi police."<sup>235</sup>

### ***Seeking to Change the Iraqi Force Development Effort in Response***

These pressures forced the Iraqi government and Coalition to react in ways that had a growing impact on Iraqi force development. There were questions about the proper response. For example, US military procedure and policy in dealing with Iraqi force abuses of prisoners and detainees led to a back-and-forth between Secretary Rumsfeld and Joint Chief of Staff Peter Pace. Pace declared that, "it's absolutely the responsibility of every US service member if they see inhumane treatment being conducted to intervene to stop it." Secretary Rumsfeld countered, "I don't think you mean they have an obligation to physically stop it; it's to report it." Pace respectfully reiterated, "If they are physically present when inhumane treatment is taking place, sir, they have an obligation to stop it." At the same time, former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi commented to a British newspaper that "people are doing the same as Saddam's time and worse."<sup>236</sup>

The US did, however, push hard for the overall reform of both the Ministry of Interior and the rogue elements of Iraqi forces. In a February 2006 Department of Defense report to Congress, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," police, military and justice detention facilities were singled out as being "typically maintained at higher standards than those of the Ministry of Interior facilities." The report also suggested that in an effort to correct the "imbalance," joint US-Iraqi "teams will continue to inspect Iraqi detention facilities, with appropriate remediation through Iraqi-led triage and follow-up logistical, security, public relations, and political support."<sup>237</sup>

Events also made it clear that other aspects of the Iraqi force building effort had to be improved, and that Iraqi forces needed to be further reformed to improve both their loyalty and integrity. This was particularly true of the forces under the Ministry of the Interior. These forces were divided into three main groups: commandos, the public order brigades, and a mechanized brigade that will ultimately be shifted to the army. As of March 2006, the security forces totaled 17,500. The regular blue-uniformed police force numbered 89,000, and the border force totaled 20,000. Matthew Sherman, a former advisor for the Interior Ministry, said that Shi'ite parties were especially keen to seize control of these forces because they had more autonomy and could operate anywhere in Iraq.<sup>238</sup>

The police were most serious problem. In April 2006, Gen. Barry McCaffrey reported that "the police are heavily infiltrated by both the [anti-Iraq forces] and the Shia militia." He went on to predict that the turnaround would likely take ten years, as the forces were currently "widely distrusted by the Sunni population." Furthermore, he wrote that "they are incapable of

confronting local armed groups. They inherited a culture of inaction, passivity, human rights abuses and deep corruption.”<sup>239</sup>

Iraqi officials proposed several possible alternatives for addressing the problem of militia groups posing as security forces and for countering the infiltration of security forces by militia groups.

- The Iraqi government has proposed restructuring all of Baghdad’s security forces by putting all police officers and paramilitary soldiers under one commander. Iraqis in the National Police force would also wear a newly designed uniform and drive similar patrol cars, said Col. Ali Rashid, a police supervisor at the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>240</sup>
- Gen. Mahdi al-Gharawi, head of the second division of the Iraqi National Police, said that the Interior Ministry had fired 7,000 officers for corruption and that Iraqi police would be given new imported uniforms to stop what the ministry describes as the counterfeiting of uniforms.<sup>241</sup>
- Ellen Knickmeyer reported in the *Washington Post* on May 15, 2006 that the Interior Ministry changed the name of its paramilitary and police forces, grouping commando and public order brigades under the single designation of National Police.

In May 2006, Iraqi leaders began to consider implementing plans to act on such options. One key alternative was to put all of Iraq’s police and interior security forces in the capital under a “unified command,” rather than have them divided between various ministries. The goal of this re-arrangement, was to curb sectarian divisions within the forces, diminish the presence of Coalition forces on the streets, and to instill confidence in Iraq’s citizens and send a message that the Iraqi government was capable of bringing security to Baghdad. The logic behind such a move was summed up by Vice President Adel Abdul Mahdi, “No one knows who is who right now -- we have tens of thousands of forces. We need a unified force to secure Baghdad: same uniform, same patrol car, one commander.”<sup>242</sup>

Many remained skeptical of the plan, emphasizing that simply restructuring the forces by putting them all together would do little to solve the internal sectarian divides or diminish the presence of militias and death squads within the forces. For some U.S advisors and diplomats in Iraq, a “big-bang” solution seemed unlikely to solve the problems plaguing Iraq’s security forces. These same officials assessed that it was not so much about the structure or command of the forces, but Iraqi political will to confront the issue and implement what would be difficult and controversial solutions.<sup>243</sup>

Sunnis, most often the victims of Shi’ite death squads, did not see the proposal as a workable solution. Baha Aldin Abdul Qadir, a spokesman for the Iraqi Islamic Party said, “If we [consolidate] the militias and put them in the official forces of the Interior and Defense ministries, this will convey the problem [of the militias’ own violent agendas] to these ministries.”<sup>244</sup> He suggested that if absorption of militias into security forces were to occur, that it would have to be limited to the integration of these members only into civilian positions such as public-works programs, or be stationed as border guards in remote areas.<sup>245</sup>

However, a less ambitious version of the plan began to be implemented in May. The Interior Ministry issued new and distinctive badges and seals for the Facilities Protection Service, a group of more than 145,000 building guards that were increasingly independent of any command or ministry according to US and Iraqi officials. Initially established by Paul Bremer in 2003, the armed units numbered no more than 4,000 and were charged with protecting the facilities of various ministries, but were not under control of either the Defense or Interior ministry. Because these forces lacked any formal accountability and wore similar uniforms to the other police and

security forces, officials speculated that these units were those often implicated by Iraqis in the abductions, executions, and body dumps that had been long blamed on the interior police force.<sup>246</sup>

### ***Seeking a Better Mix of Sectarian and Ethnic Background in Iraqi Forces***

As was the case in Lebanon and the Balkans, events showed the need to improve the sectarian and ethnic balance of Iraqi forces. Iraqi force development had favored Shi'ite and Kurdish recruitment and retention through mid-2005, and efforts to recruit Sunnis remained slow. This led to new efforts to improve the balance of Iraqi forces but progress remained slow.

In March 2006, for example, American commanders stated that virtually all the members of the 7,700-member public order brigades were Shi'ites. American officials made it clear that they were pushing the Interior Ministry to diversify its forces. Major General Joseph D. Peterson, in charge of police training, said in early March 2006 that in the last three public order brigade training courses, the number of Sunni Arabs enrolled had increased from 42% to 92%, to virtually all Sunni.<sup>247</sup>

A State Department official reported in April 2006 that Sunnis made up less than 10% of the enlisted forces or roughly half their share of the country's overall population, and most units lacked a sectarian mix of Sunnis, Shi'ites, and Kurds. Consequently, US and NATO military commanders often trained units made up almost exclusively of Shi'ites or Kurds, which raised fears that those units could one day turn on the Sunnis or on each other in a civil war.

By contrast, under Saddam Hussein, Sunnis accounted for more than 20% of the officer corps. A draft Congressional Research Service report described the situation as follows: "With a shortage of reliable Sunni soldiers to patrol Sunni provinces, the US and Iraqi governments have been forced to deploy mostly Shi'ite units to Sunni towns, which has only exacerbated intercommunal tensions."<sup>248</sup>

The unreleased Congressional Research Service report summed up the obstacles to creating a multisectarian security force in Iraq: "There is concern that the ethnic-sectarian nature of the burgeoning insurgency is undermining US and Iraqi efforts to create a unified Iraqi security force that can prevent internal insurgent violence from metastasizing into a larger civil war." The report continued: "With violence unabated in Baghdad and Iraq's three main Sunni provinces, there has been considerable emphasis on recruiting, training, and equipping Iraqi soldiers and policemen, but substantially less attention on the future ethnic/religious makeup of various security entities."<sup>249</sup>

MNF-I officers and officials acknowledged that reforming the police forces to eliminate sectarian and ethnic divisions could take years because sectarian loyalties had become so entrenched and most police officers are rooted in their communities. The MNF advisory effort has only limited control over any aspect of Iraqi security and police manpower.<sup>250</sup> Moreover, many recruits who graduated from US-run police academies have defected to private militia groups. Several factors made joining militias more attractive than staying with the security forces -- better pay, less onerous duties, and far less chance of being killed.<sup>251</sup>

Col. Donald Currier, an officer leading of the US National Guard brigade advising Iraqi police, discussed the difficulty in training and professionalizing Iraqi police forces. "The biggest reason we lost momentum in our ability to train and professionalize the police in Iraq, is when you didn't have a sitting government, and you had a rise in sectarian violence, then you had everyone looking at protecting their own physical security interests. So instead of sending young men to be

policemen and supporting the local police, you start asking people to leave the police force and become part of your militia so that you have more influence by force.”<sup>252</sup>

Moreover, the problem of factional loyalty has been matched by the problem of corruption. Staff Sgt. Ryan Horton, a military policeman from Dallas who worked closely with the Iraqi police, described the situation: “It’s like the Chicago police department in the 1920s, so infested with mobsters that even the good ones are corrupt because they don’t want to get killed...They all live in the community with the terrorists, and so do their families. They are very, very intimidated.”<sup>253</sup> Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch addressed the problem of private militias on February 17, 2006. “There is no denying that there are militias present in Iraq and that some of those militia forces have displaced loyalties, and some of those militia forces have indeed integrated with the Iraqi security forces.”<sup>254</sup>

These developments created other kinds of problems for the force development effort. Although US troops increasingly accompanied Iraqi units on raids to ensure proper treatment of detainees, as Iraqis increasingly take the lead and missions are based on Iraqi intelligence, the line between counterinsurgency and revenge can become blurry for Coalition soldiers. After a joint US-Iraqi raid in March in which 10 Sunnis were rounded up, for example, one US colonel remembered thinking immediately after, “Wait a sec, were we just part of some sort of sectarian revenge?”<sup>255</sup> Indeed, many of the soldiers on their second tour in Iraq felt they were returning to a different war. Where their previous focus was on the Sunni insurgency, it had now broadened to containing the Shi’ite militias and preventing further infiltration into the security forces.<sup>256</sup>

## **Corruption as the “Fourth Threat” to Iraq and Iraqi Force Development**

Corruption added a “fourth threat” to the insurgency, militias, and internal problems in Iraqi forces. It is impossible to determine whether corruption in the Iraqi government was more serious in mid-2006 than it had been in the past, but senior Iraqi officials made it clear that both the MOI and MOD presented major problems because of corruption at virtually every level. This was not simply a matter of money. Its impact included phantom hires and absentees, weapons and equipment sales to outside parties, penetration by insurgent and factional elements seeking intelligence, and a host of other problems in functioning at an honest and effective level. The same problems were common in all ministries, and wasted billions of dollars in scarce Iraqi funds, but had a major impact on Iraqi force development.

The Ministry of Defense had suffered badly under the previous interim government from corruption at the ministerial level, and the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars through the purchase of worthless equipment. These problems had presumably been greatly reduced under the Jafari government, but neither Iraqi nor US officials claimed they were eliminated.

In the case of the MOI, corruption inevitably affected virtually every aspect of the police, from the appointment process to the sale of justice and services in the field, at almost every level. This corruption in the in the MOI interacted with corruption in the Ministry of Justice, and affected the courts in the areas where they actually operated.

The result was often a mix of pressures from insurgents, militias, and criminals that made effective policing and the administration of justice almost impossible. Where the law was not for sale, it was paralyzed by threats and intimidation -- as well as sectarian, ethnic, and tribal ties.

## Overall Progress in the Recruiting, Training and Deployment of Iraqi Forces January-June 2006

It is difficult to separate the progress made within each major element of Iraqi forces from the impact of the political climate and changing threat environment in which they had to operate. Some MNF-I and Iraqi government reporting was anything but objective or transparent in character. It is clear, however, that significant progress did occur, especially in Iraq's regular forces.

The US Department of Defense outlined the following progress in Iraqi Security Force development in its February 2006 report to Congress:<sup>257</sup>

- **A continued increase in the number of Iraqi units able to take the lead in combat operations against the insurgency.** As of January 23, 2006, 98 Iraqi Army and special operations battalions are now conducting counter-insurgency operations, 11% more than reported in October. Fifty-three of these battalions are assessed as being "in the lead or full independent" -- a 47% increase since October. There are 27 National Police Force battalion (formerly the Special Police Forces) and one Emergency Response Unit capable of combat operations, with 10 units assessed as being in the lead.
- **Progress of Iraqi units in assuming responsibility for the battle space.** Thirty-seven Iraq Army battalions now control their own battle space. Iraqi Security Forces are responsible for security in roughly 460 square miles of Baghdad and more than 11,600 square miles in other provinces of Iraq, an increase of almost 4,000 square miles since the last report [October 2005].
- **A continued increase in the number of units and individuals trained, equipped, and formed into operational status.** The program of training and equipping members of the Iraqi Security Forces continues on track. Almost 107,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen have now been trained and equipped -- an increase of 19,000 since the last report. More than 82,000 police have been trained and equipped -- an increase of over 13,000 since the last report. These police work alongside 38,000 other Ministry of Interior forces. Overall, there are over 227,000 Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior forces trained and equipped for counterinsurgency operations -- an increase of 18% since the October 2005 report.

### *Trends in Quantity and Quality*

Figure 4 shows the growth in total "trained and equipped" manpower in Iraqi forces between January 2006 and May 2006. Such data are the totals of men, however, MNSTC-I and the MNF-I do not attempt to take full account of desertions, or men on unauthorized leave or absent. They also do not report large numbers of police, security, and militia forces that have not been "trained and equipped" but which are present in most of Iraq and actually dominate or control security in many areas, including key areas where there is a negligible insurgent presence, like Kirkuk and Basra.

Nevertheless, the May total of 263,400 was 14% higher than the total reported in February, and 35% higher than the total of 171,300 reported in the first quarterly report to Congress, issued in July 2005. As the following analysis shows, the qualitative improvements in Iraqi forces were as important as the improvements in size, although the effectiveness of such forces was still very mixed.

In the case of Tal Afar, for example, an increase in US troops and better counterinsurgency tactics led to claims the situation was improving because attacks dropped from five per day to fewer than two per day. But the real test was whether Iraqi soldiers could "hold" these cities themselves.

According to Coalition forces in the city, Iraqi troops were displaying more confidence and demonstrating greater discipline by late March 2006. At the same time, problems with pay and

equipment shortages continued to plagued Iraqi forces. “AK-47s and Russian jeeps are not going to keep the peace in northern Iraq,” noted one US tank company commander.<sup>258</sup>

Sectarian tensions within the town were also a major problem and some US soldiers worried that heavy-handed tactics by the 1,700 Shi’ite-Sunni mixed police force were alienating Sunni residents. In one instance, after an officer was shot in a Sunni neighborhood, police returned the following day arresting nearly 100 people and put them all in a small cell at a local makeshift jail. US troops took the Iraqi police back to the neighborhood the following day to hand out food and refurbish their image, but local residents such as laborer Fakari Wahab were hesitant to accept the good will. Wahab had lost 30 tribesmen to the Iraqi police “dagnet” and when told to take a list of their names to the jail he protested, “If I go...I’ll be locked up!”<sup>259</sup>

While some reports talked about Iraqi “control,” questions arose as to just what Iraqi forces were controlling. Many of the areas transferred to Iraqi “control” were Shi’ite dominated and typically less violent. This reflected the fact that the level of the insurgent threat in the area was just one of four considerations taken into account by the US military when deciding when Iraqi forces are capable of controlling an area. The other three were the size, readiness, and preparation of Iraqi forces; the quality of the local government; and the ability of multinational forces to back up the Iraqi forces if they are over-run.<sup>260</sup>

In some cases, “control” seemed to mean assigning responsibility, not actual capability. Some maps showed Iraqi forces as in charge of areas where militias and local security forces clearly had actual day-to-day authority. In a few areas, Iraqi forces were said to be in charge of areas which actually did have a significant insurgent presence, or where at least the police confronted significant “no go” or “don’t intervene” areas.

“Control” also had its costs as well as its benefits. In Rutbah, which joins Tal Afar, Mosul and Samarra, US forces built a 10 and a half mile long, seven foot high, ring of sand around the city, allowing only three possible entrances. This allowed Coalition forces to man a few checkpoints with their Iraqi counterparts rather than patrol the city on foot.<sup>261</sup> Although the number of car bombs declined from 25 per month to just five per month once the wall was built, the limited points of entry and exit created massive traffic jams for the citizens and waits could last from one to three hours during peak travel times. Marine Lt. Col. Robert Kosid admitted that the wall was only “an intermediate solution” and that “the long-term success of Rutbah involves a permanent presence in the city.” Although the city had a police force, it was disbanded in 2005 because of corruption within its ranks. Other Iraqi soldiers that were in the surrounding area were moved north for another joint US-Iraqi operation near Qaim.<sup>262</sup>

Iraqi forces did, however, continue to expand their role. By the end of April, Iraqi police and military forces had taken responsibility for of Sulimaniyah and Salahuddin provinces.<sup>263</sup> In early May, soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 327<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment (“No Slack”), 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division turned over large parts of Kirkuk to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division, Nisser Battalion. This marked the second transfer of battle space in the region to the Iraqi army in the same year.<sup>264</sup>

Still, in military press briefings and releases, Iraqi forces were increasingly given credit for operations that netted terrorists, insurgents, weapons caches, and an increase in actionable intelligence from Iraqi citizens. Specifically, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch said in May that Iraqi security forces were responsible for capturing or killing more than 161 senior leaders of al-Qa’ida in Iraq and seizing more than 2,000 weapons caches in the past six months. He also said

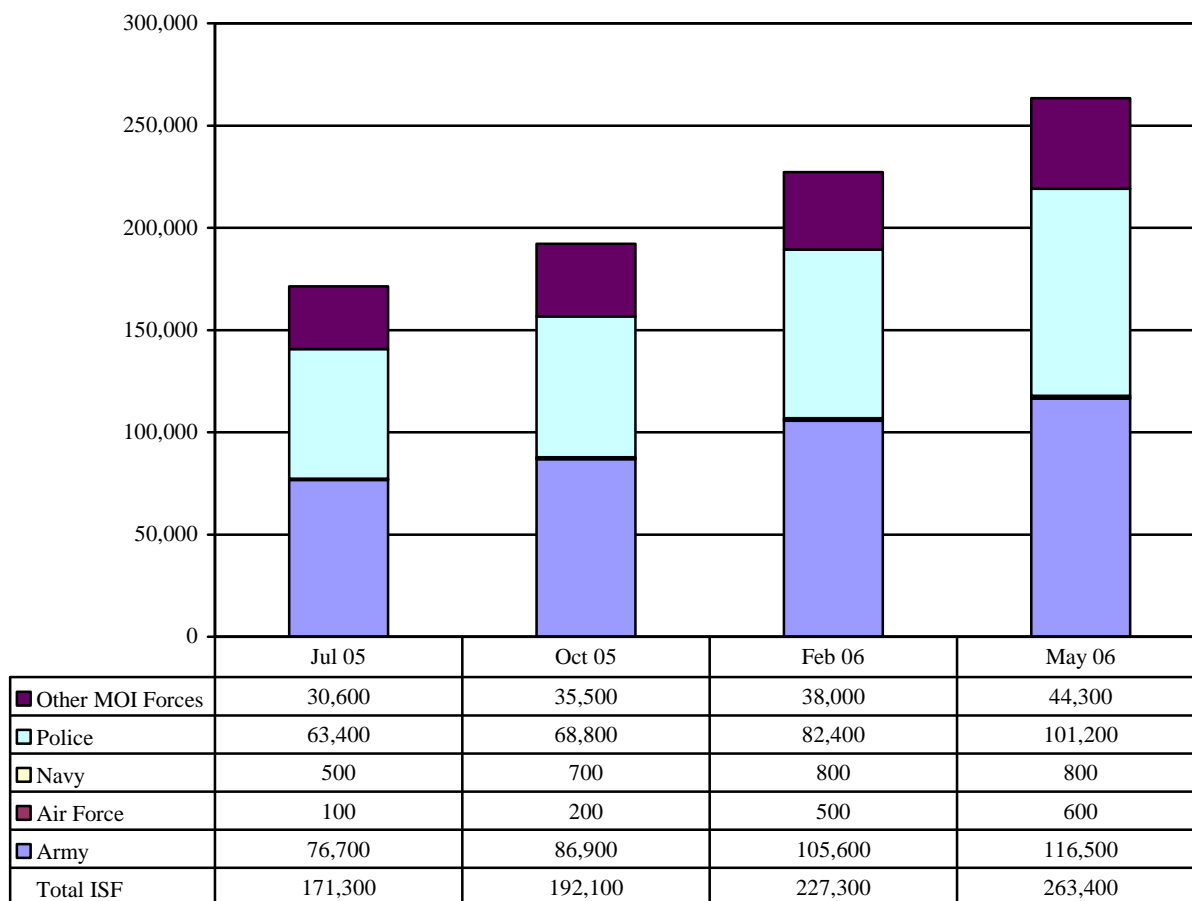
that because of the increasing ability of ISF, more than 50% of bombs in the country were defused before they could detonate.<sup>265</sup>

### *Intelligence*

Iraqi intelligence was another factor that affected all aspects of Iraqi force development. It remained heavily dependent on Coalition forces for virtually all technical means, security, and ties between command, operations, and intelligence. One aspect of Iraqi intelligence did improve, however. Between April and May Iraqis called in 1,500 anonymous tips about insurgent activities to a nationwide hotline. Of these, 98% resulted in “usable intelligence.” Lynch credited the visibility of Iraqi forces for the increase in intelligence tips from civilians saying that Iraqis were “tired of the insurgency, so as Iraqi forces conduct operations on the streets, Iraqi people come up to those patrols and provide actionable intelligence, and it’s happening all the time.”<sup>266</sup>

General Barry McCaffrey of the US Military Academy of West Point gave an assessment of the status of Iraqi Security Forces after his return from Iraq in April that summarized the still uncertain level of progress. His key points included:<sup>267</sup>

- The training of the Iraqi Army has made real progress. They continue to show and willingness to fight, and are taking on greater lead responsibilities in expanding areas. At the same time, they are poorly equipped with “only a few light vehicles, small arms, most with body armor and one or two uniforms.” He also noted that they lack decent communications equipment, air transport or strike support.
- The “corruption and lack of capability” of the Defense and Interior Ministries means that they “will require several years of patient coaching and officer education in values as well as required competencies.” Two to five more years of partnerships with US teams embedded with Iraqis will be necessary to bring the forces up to a level where the forces can hold their own.
- The Iraqi police are beginning to improve and the National Police Commando Battalions increasingly capable; a few even “on par with the best US SWAT units.” As a whole, their intelligence collection capability exceeds that of the Coalition’s. At the same time, “the police are heavily infiltrated by both the AIF and the Shia militia. They are widely distrusted by the Sunni population. They are incapable of confronting local armed groups. They inherited a culture of inaction, passivity, human rights abuses, and deep corruption.” If properly resourced, it will take ten years to surmount these challenges.

**Figure 4****Status of Trained and Equipped Iraqi Security Forces: July 2005 to May 2006**

\* Source: Adapted from "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Reports to Congress: July, 2005, October 2005, February 2006, and May 2006.

## Developments in the Ministry of Defense

In spite of Iraq's political problems, the MOD made progress in developing its civilian functions during the first half of 2006. The Ministry made strides in building the identified minimum essential processes, which included executive support, contracting, logistics, plans and policy, personnel management, communication, budgeting, and intelligence.

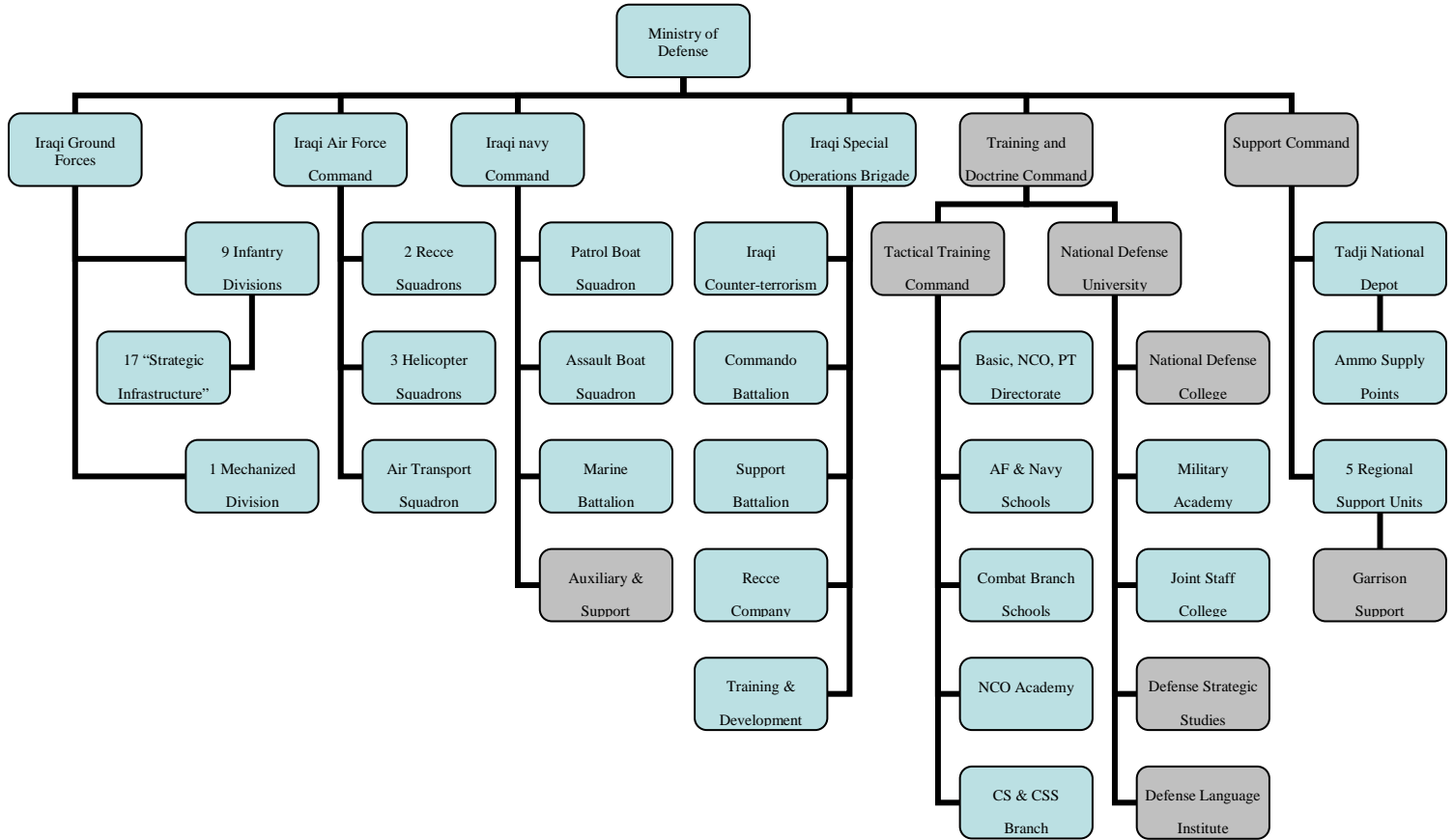
The MOD also approved the Defense Resources and Requirements Management Process to help establish a strategic decision-making model that was to ensure that authority was delegated to the appropriate level and that decisions were balanced and informed. This modularized business model was focused on planning, programming and budgeting, execution, and review.

Although Coalition advisors established these processes in late 2004 and early 2005, Iraqi officials had neglected them and much still needed to be done by June 2006. There was at least, however, a potential basis for action, and one that the establishment of a new government with a longer tenure gave the MOD the opportunity to move forward.

The organization of the MOD at the time the new government came to power is shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5**  
**MOD Organization: April 2006**



Note: Gray boxes indicate that the formation is not complete as of April 2006. Source: MNSTC-I, April 2006.

### ***Total MOD Force Size and Manning***

Each of the military services was coming on line as an active force: the army (including special forces), the air force, and the navy (including marines). As Figure 6 shows, the MOD made significant additional progress towards reaching its manning goals by May 2006.

**Figure 6**  
**Manpower: MOD Forces: January 4, 2006 vs. May 31, 2006**

January 4, 2006		May 31, 2006	
COMPONENT	TRAINED & EQUIPPED	COMPONENT	TRAINED & EQUIPPED
ARMY	~104,400	ARMY	~116,000**
AIR FORCE	~500	AIR FORCE	~600
NAVY	~800	NAVY	~800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>~105,700*</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>~117,900</b>

\* Unauthorized absence personnel are included in these numbers. \*\*Numbers include Special Operations Forces and Support Forces. Source: [Iraq Weekly Status Report](#), Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, US Department of State, January 4, 2006 and May 31, 2006 issues, p. 7.

### ***Iraqi Readiness and “Owning the Battle Space”***

Figure 7 shows that Iraqi regular forces made similar progress in increasing the strength of their combat units. By February 2006, the Department of Defense reported that insurgents in Iraq had largely begun to avoid highly coordinated attack scenarios against the ISF, preferring stand-off or hit-and-run attacks instead. However, 80% of all attacks remained directed at Coalition and Iraqi forces at this time, with Iraqis suffering three-quarters of all casualties. Improvised explosive devices remained the primary insurgent method of attack.<sup>268</sup>

According to the February 2006 DOD report to Congress, 37 Iraqi battalions controlled their own battle space at that time. The report further stated that Iraqi Security Forces were responsible for security in roughly 460 square miles of Baghdad and more than 11,600 square miles in other provinces of Iraq, an increase of more than 4,000 square miles since the DOD last reported to Congress in October 2005. Furthermore, according to the report, ISF independent operations had increased by 24% since May 2005.<sup>269</sup>

More Iraqi units reached Level 3 and Level 2 readiness. The number of Iraq troops in control of their own territory, for example, rose from less than 13,000 in September 2005 to about 30,000 in January 2006. According to Multinational Forces spokesman Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, Iraq’s security forces planned and carried out more than a quarter of all counterinsurgency operations in Iraq in January, a total of 490 Iraqi-run missions, and a nearly 50% increase over the September figure.<sup>270</sup>

At the end of January, US officials said that Iraqi forces were responsible for more than half of Baghdad. During that same time, US and British forces handed over the eastern Diyala Province, and all or parts of Rawa, Falluja, Karbala, Kirkush, Numaniya, Kut, Najaf, Hilla, and Amara to Iraqi forces. The Iraqi 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Division also inherited a 58 square mile

area south of Mosul from the 172<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Before taking control of the area, US military officials said that the battalion had conducted “two dozen major, battalion-level missions,” and had lost 13 soldiers.<sup>271</sup>

At an appearance before the House Armed Services Committee February 8, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said that there were about 227,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces at that time. General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that that number broke down to 106,000 military forces and 121,000 police forces. Rumsfeld added that between 5,000 and 10,000 more were being trained at any given time as well. Pace said that by year’s end, they hoped to have 325,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces, both military and police forces combined.<sup>272</sup>

In a February 17, 2006 briefing to President Bush at MacDill AFB in Tampa, military leaders said that there were some 100 Iraqi Ministry of Defense combat battalions in the fight, up greatly from August 2004, when only “a handful” were engaged in the fight. Furthermore:<sup>273</sup>

- There were 10 brigade headquarters and 43 battalions that had assumed battle space, compared to July 2004, when there were no operational Army division or brigade headquarters, and no Iraqi battalions owned their own battle space.
- In December 2005, the Iraqi armed forces performed more independent operations than did Coalition forces.
- There were more than 227,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces -- up from 115,000 14 months prior.

On February 24, Lt. Gen. Gene Renuart, head of international relations at the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that the number of Iraqi battalions rated at Level 1 had fallen from one to zero over the prior six months. However, Renuart also said that the number of Level 2 battalions had increased from 36 in September 2005 to 53. While battalions with a Level 2 rating were not deemed capable of operating independently, as were Level 1 units, they were capable of taking the lead in operations. This was far more important than a somewhat theoretical capability to operate without US support at a time when Iraq had no real army, artillery, or combat airpower, and was only beginning to acquire support and logistic capabilities.<sup>274</sup>

US military trainers were careful to try to find the right balance and timing. They made it clear that it was important the Iraqi forces face real world situations. At the same time, they warned that if Iraqi units were exposed too quickly, they would -- as one Col. Steve Zotti put it -- “get their clock cleaned. Either that, or they may become frightened and be unwilling to fight... You’ve flushed all that effort down the toilet.”<sup>275</sup>

There were other kinds of progress. As US and Iraqi forces increasingly worked together and conducted joint operations, trust and interoperability improved. According to Lt. Col. Fred Wellman, of the 102 Iraqi battalions deployed in the beginning of 2006, about half could take the lead in operations if given logistical and medical support from Coalition forces. Six months earlier, only 30 battalions were capable of leading counterinsurgency operations. Lt. Col. Wellman stated that by the end of the year, all Iraqi battalions should be capable of taking the lead.<sup>276</sup>

These shifts took place even in high threat areas like Ramadi, where even in November of 2005, Iraqi units did not conduct operations on their own. By January of the next year however, US commanders said that four of the six Iraqi infantry companies could patrol and conduct raids alone. This broke down to 10% of operations within the city being conducted by only Iraqis; 60% as joint US ventures; and the remaining 30% as solely US initiatives.<sup>277</sup>

Progress continued in the spring. A White House press release, dated March 13, 2006 stated that more than 60 of the 130 Iraq battalions were taking the lead in the fight. This compared with 40 of 120 total Iraqi Army and Police combat battalions taking the lead in fall 2005.<sup>278</sup>

In a speech delivered in March 2006, President Bush highlighted progress in turning over areas patrolled by US troops to Iraqi forces and made it a goal to turn over the majority of Iraq to Iraqi soldiers by the end of the year.<sup>279</sup> He stated that there were more than 130 Iraqi Army and Police battalions that were operational, 60 of which were taking the lead in operations. He also said that at that time Iraqi forces conducted more independent operations than did Coalition forces.<sup>280</sup> If measured in actual territory, Bush said that Iraqi units had “primary responsibility” for over 30,000 square miles, an increase of 20,000 since the first of the year.<sup>281</sup>

Quantity also continued to improve along with quality. In an April report, the Government Accountability Office stated that the number of security forces trained and equipped increased from 142,000 in March 2005 to 242,000 in March 2006.<sup>282</sup> This included 52 Iraqi army battalions, 14 army brigades, and two army divisions that took the lead in counterinsurgency operations supported by Coalition forces. This covered about 18% of Iraq’s territory and about 65% of Baghdad.<sup>283</sup> It also stated generally that:<sup>284</sup>

Many Iraqis in Baghdad and the central and northern Sunni areas have lost confidence in the Iraqi army and police to improve the security situation. In some Sunni areas, support for the insurgents has increased, and Iraqi Shi’as have expressed greater confidence in their militias. The poor security situation in Iraq has impeded the development of an inclusive Iraqi government and hindered the development of effective Iraqi security forces.

In a statement to Congress in May, in which he urged the body to pass an emergency supplemental spending bill for the training of equipping of ISF, Secretary Rumsfeld stated that 254,000 Iraqi police and army forces had been trained and that 75 security force battalions were leading operations. In addition, early that month the Iraqi army opened its first joint operations center giving it national command and control over its ground forces.<sup>285</sup>

US military spokesmen claimed that as Iraqi forces increasingly took on more responsibility for policing neighborhoods and cities, residents became more willing to work with them and the Coalition, offering intelligence and assistance. For example, in the northern city of Tarmia, local officials approached Coalition soldiers and asked them to route out the insurgents in the area. US and Iraqi forces subsequently cordoned off the city, established checkpoints and swept through the area.<sup>286</sup>

According to the spring 2006 DOD Report to Congress, as of May 15, 2006, there were two Iraqi divisions, 16 brigades, and 63 Army and National Police battalions with the security lead in their areas of responsibility. These areas covered more than 30,000 square miles of Iraq. As of May 6, 2006, the MOD, MOI, and Ministry of Finance had assumed control and responsibility for 34 Forward Operating Bases from Coalition forces.

Coalition officials, partnered with four divisions of the Iraqi army in the north, said that two of those divisions would be ready to take the lead in operations by the end of the summer and the other two by the end of the year.<sup>287</sup> In a video conference with the Pentagon on May 20, 2006, Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, Commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq, said that the ISF was on pace to control about 75% of the country’s battlespace by the end of the summer. That same month, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said that the Iraqi army and police would be able to assume responsibility for security across the entire country by late 2007.

This did not mean, however, that Iraqi forces were moving rapidly towards being able to operate without continuing US support, a point many Iraqis seemed to have accepted. In a poll conducted by the Brookings Institution in May 2006, 59% of Iraqis surveyed said that Coalition troops would be needed to maintain security for at least six months.<sup>288</sup> At this time, 130,000 US troops were still in Iraq, with American military officials projecting that 100,000 to 110,000 American forces would still be in Iraq by the end of 2006.<sup>289</sup>

### ***Rethinking the Focus of Operations***

In late May 2006, US Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad addressed the overall approach to defeating the insurgency, as well as the effort to reclaim Baghdad. Broadly speaking, Khalilzad asserted that “For the insurgency to end, there has to be a program of national reconciliation with emphasis on unity, for the insurgents have to be engaged and convinced to lay down their arms.” He went on to address the militias:

And for the other unauthorized military formations and militias, there has to be a decommissioning, demobilization, and reintegration plan. There have to be steps with regards to de-Ba’athification. There has to be an overall plan with different elements and sequenced appropriately to end this conflict.

Khalilzad further stated that Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki had, in principle, approved a plan presented to him by US and Iraqi officials on May 25 for enhancing security in Baghdad: “It’s going to be operationalized, turned into an operational plan, in the coming period and then taken back to him for final approval.” No specific details on the plan, however, were provided at that time.<sup>290</sup>

One method employed by Coalition forces in building up effective security forces in the midst of frequent intimidation and harassment by insurgent actors was the cordon method. In spring 2006, Coalition troops cordoned off the Baghdad suburb of Tarmiya with six miles of concertina wire in order to create a safe haven in which to train local police. The method, used previously in the Al-Anbar towns of Falluja and Tal Afar, was meant to give the 40 police respite from the frequent insurgent attacks that had decimated the force leading up to the operation.

The operation was welcomed by a Sunni population that was largely unsupportive of the Sunni insurgents operating in the town. However, as of May 2006, local residents still complained of being effectively cut off from Baghdad proper by the Shi’ite militias that still controlled much of the capital city.<sup>291</sup>

Another fundamental issue that had begun to take shape in the spring and summer of 2006 was the balance of power between Baghdad and the provinces with regard to security responsibilities. A law drawn up by former administrator L. Paul Bremmer stipulated that the provinces had full control over their police forces and their local governments. This created for Baghdad a legal barrier to controlling the conduct of local police in the respective provinces, where factional fighting and sectarian intimidation and killings remained an issue.<sup>292</sup>

At the same time, however, plans were starting to take shape to turn over additional key security responsibilities to local authorities. In comments on May 27, 2006, a senior US military official outlined plans to hand over security duties to Iraqi police in Baghdad province, Najaf, Karbala, and Babil before the end of the year. Under the plan, local governors would initially take control of the police, intended as a “bridging phase” before the Iraqi government assumed full responsibility for security.<sup>293</sup>

These transition plans took on added urgency because of domestic American politics. The enormous cost of the entire reconstruction effort increasingly became an issue of contention

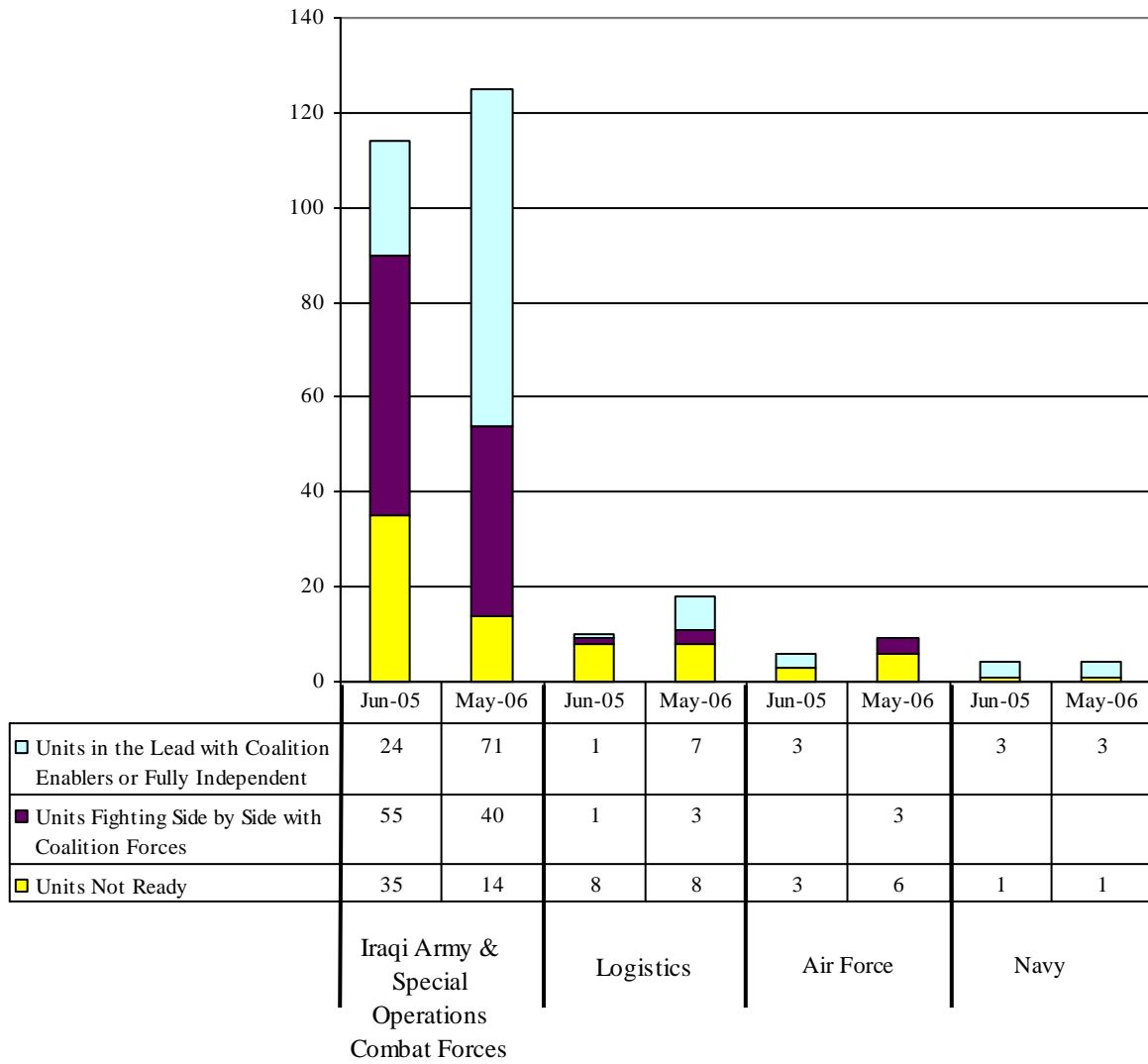
between the Pentagon and Congress. In May 2006, Secretary Rumsfeld urged Congress to pass the emergency supplemental spending bill in order to continue the progress being made in training Iraqi security forces.

Although both the House and Senate versions of the bill were close to the dollar amount requested, money devoted to security forces was shifted toward US tanks and armored vehicles. Warning that the delay could have adverse affects on US programs in Iraq, Rumsfeld told Congress, "A slowdown in training and equipping the Iraqi security forces will have unacceptable harmful effects postponing the day when our men and women in uniform can return home with the honor and appreciation they deserve."<sup>294</sup>

The Congress eventually voted to provide most of the requested funds. Both US and Iraqi officials made it clear, however, that they had increasing concerns over whether the time needed to create an effective and independent Iraqi security force -- at least another year -- would be too long for American patience, and that resources would dry up before the job was complete.<sup>295</sup>

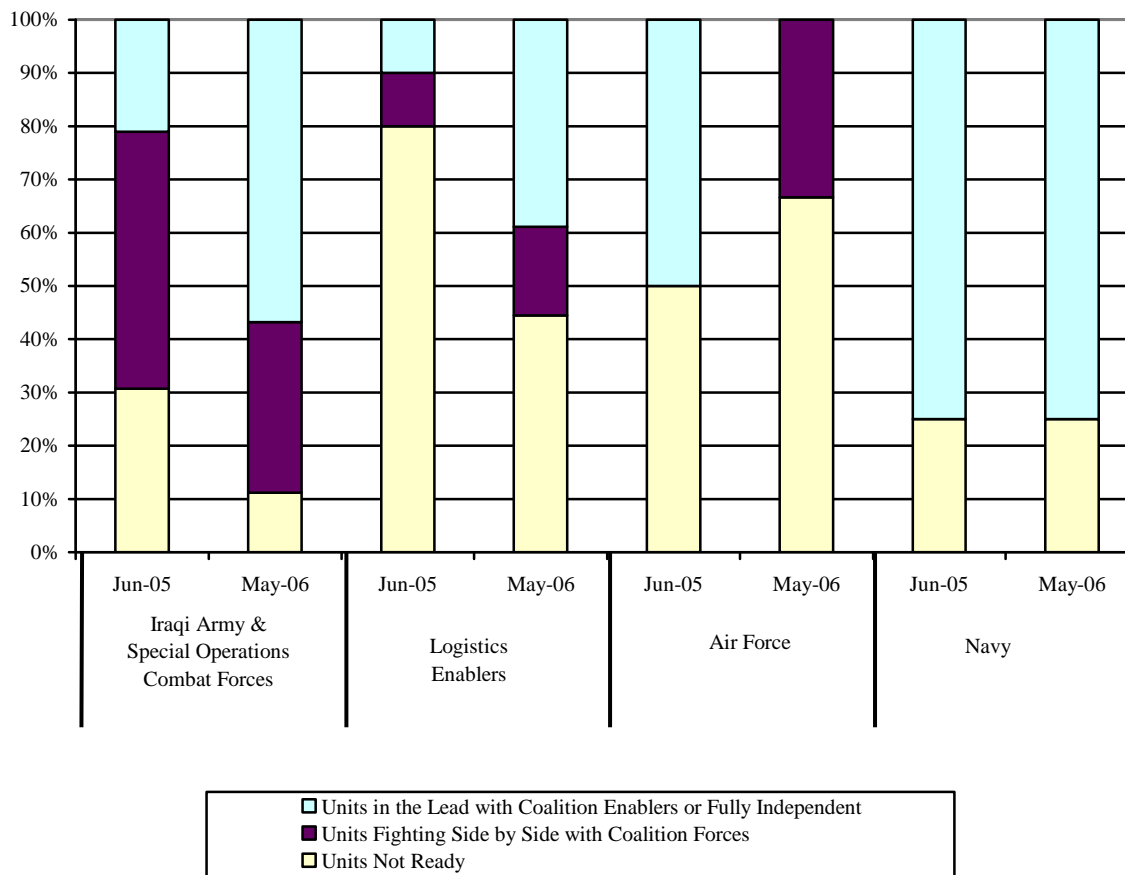
**Figure 7**  
**MOD Forces' Assessed Capabilities - Part One**

**Number of Units**



**Figure 7**  
**MOD Forces' Assessed Capabilities - Part Two**

Category by Percentage



Source: Adapted from "Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq," Report to Congress, May 2006, p. 47.

***Ongoing Efforts to Recruit and Train the ISF***

By the winter of 2006, the basic training system for the Iraqi army was expanded and consolidated under the command of the Iraqi Training Brigade, which was set to consist of three Iraqi Training Battalions (ITBs). At the time, two ITBs were operational at the Kirkush Military Training Base, and a third was partially formed and conducting training at An-Numaniya.

New recruits to the training brigades attended a five-week program of instruction. Upon graduation, they received an additional three to seven weeks of training depending on their military occupational skill assignment. The specialized training developed infantry, supply, communications, administration, armor, transportation, maintenance, and military police skills, among others. Other training initiatives, such as the Military Intelligence School, Signal School, and Engineer Training School, were also implemented.<sup>296</sup>

Although the Iraqi security forces competed with local militias and gangs for recruits, Coalition troops attempted to seize the initiative by improving Iraqis' lives on a local level with the hope that turnouts at recruitment stations would increase. For example, in the northern Iraqi city of Tamia, Coalition forces constructed a medical clinic that treated over 375 people on its first day



of operation. Local leaders then asked citizens to join the police forces to provide security for the town. US military spokesman Maj. Gen. Lynch said that 2,000 Iraqis volunteered, 225 of which were selected for training in Jordan.<sup>297</sup> Such successes were particularly important because of the failures in the civil aid program. Only 20 of the 142 health clinics the US had originally planned for construction in 2003 were still scheduled to be completed in 2006.<sup>298</sup>

In early March 2006, the US further standardized its methods for training US advisors to Iraqi forces. The US Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat team took over the training of the Army's Military Training and Transition (MITT) teams, the groups imbedded with Iraqi units. These teams were expected to remain with Iraqi forces for what military officials called a "multi-year commitment."<sup>299</sup>

The new training process reassigned the recruits from Fort Carson to Fort Riley, where a small-scale replica of an Iraqi urban center was being constructed. The number of days devoted to training at the fort was extended as well from 45 to 60. Trainers received an additional 10 days of training in Kuwait, followed by 10 more days of training in Taji, Iraq at a major US training facility. Before beginning their official stint with Iraqi units, new trainers spent two weeks following their predecessors in the field.<sup>300</sup>

The MITT teams were embedded at the battalion, brigade, and division level with 11, 10 and 15 man teams at each, respectively. They were there not only to serve as a professional example, but also to provide additional firepower and air support to the Iraqi forces as needed.<sup>301</sup>

By April 2006, the Department of Defense noted the following key measures of progress in the effort to train the ISF.<sup>302</sup>

- Continued increases in the numbers of individuals trained, equipped, and formed into operational units: As of March 20, US and coalition forces have trained and equipped more than 111,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen. More than 89,000 police have been trained and equipped. Police work alongside 41,700 other Ministry of Interior forces, such as the National Police (formerly the Special Police). Overall, over 240,000 Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior forces have been trained and equipped.
- Continued increases in unit readiness and ability to take the lead in combat operations against the insurgents: As of March 20, 102 Iraqi Army regular and special operations battalions are conducting counter-insurgency operations. Sixty-two of these battalions are able to lead in such operations. There are 27 National Police Force battalions (formerly the Special Police Forces) and one Emergency Response Unit conducting combat operations. Seven of the National Police battalions and the Emergency Response Unit are able to lead such operations.
- Progress in assuming responsibility for their battle space: As of March 20, forty-nine Iraqi Army battalions now control their own battle space. Iraqi units have primary responsibility for 65% of Baghdad.

The DOD report also addressed the structure of the ISF, manning progress, and the question of battalions operating "in the lead":<sup>303</sup>

The Iraqi government, together with the Coalition, has identified a force structure to maintain a security environment in Iraq to provide a basis for transitioning Iraq to security self-reliance. The end-strength forces structure of the Iraqi Armed Forces is approximately 131,000 personnel, manning one Iraqi Ground Forces Command, 10 divisions and 36 brigade headquarters, 114 Army and special operations battalions, six Air Force squadrons, three Navy squadrons, and 18 combat support, combat service, and support battalions. As of March 20, 111,000 personnel or 85 percent of the authorized end strength has been trained and equipped. With the initial focus on establishing combat units, attention is now shifting toward the logistics backbone needed to facilitate independent operations. One hundred-two Iraqi Army and Special Operations battalions are now conducting counter-insurgency operations with 62 battalions "in the lead." ISF have conducted more independent operations than MNF-I in three of the last five months.

The report went on to assert that “There is no specific threshold for the number of Iraqi Armed Forces battalions that must be judged capable of operating independently before the number of US forces in Iraq can be reduced.”<sup>304</sup>

### ***Creating an Effective Officer Corps***

The effort to create a functioning leadership corps within the ISF command chain continued into the winter of 2006. The DOD’s February 2006 Report to Congress marked the progress as such:<sup>305</sup>

Leadership development is a major focus in order to build a capable and professional Iraqi Army. To achieve this, a system of Regional Training Centers (RTCs) has been established to meet the Iraqi Army’s need for professionally trained junior leaders. Six RTCs enable increased numbers of students to attend training such as the Squad and Platoon Sergeant courses, which contribute to the development of a non-commissioned officer corps -- a concept non-existent under the Saddam regime. Additionally, these RTCs are conducting the month-long Former Officer Course that provides human rights, ethics, and counter-insurgency training to officers who served in the former regime’s Army and have now been recruited back into the Iraqi Army. A year-long Basic Officer Commissioning Course is being conducted at the three Iraqi Military Academies, with a class of 180 recently graduating from Ar Rustamiyah. The first class of 73 cadets graduated from the Iraqi Military Academy in Ar Rustamiyah in January 2006. The newly commissioned officers completed 52 weeks of intensive military training, including 2,490 hours of lessons and 14 field training exercises in a Sandhurst-modeled curriculum.

The leadership courses are complemented and reinforced through the daily guidance provided by Coalition Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) embedded with every Iraqi battalion, brigade, and division, as well as partnership with Coalition units. The MiTTs and partnership program provide mentorship and expertise critical for development of both unit proficiency and leadership, contributing to increased operational effectiveness. Monthly transition readiness assessments are prepared as a tool to measure each unit’s progress and identify areas for improvement.

The role of the international community remained important in the leadership development effort as well, with the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) playing a key role in professionalizing the Iraqi armed forces. The focus remained on training and advisory support to mid- and senior-level leaders, with NTM-I serving as the lead agent to develop the Junior and Senior Staff Colleges. More than 500 Iraqis had completed out-of-country courses coordinated by NTM-I by early 2006. Host countries included Germany, Norway, Romania, and Turkey, among others.<sup>306</sup>

Figure 8 provides details on schooling for Iraqi Armed Forces personnel as of January 16, 2006.

**Figure 8**  
**Iraq Armed Forces Personnel Details -- Schools**

<b>RTC Schools</b>				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	78	24	1	31
NCOs	456	139	2	30
Enlisted	30	72	5	240
Totals	564	235	8	42
<b>ITB/Academy Schools</b>				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	345	153	0	44
NCOs	1391	802	12	58
Enlisted	586	484	3	83
Totals	2322	1439	15	62
<b>Branch Schools</b>				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	220	109	0	50
NCOs	336	236	3	70
Enlisted	129	193	0	150
Totals	685	538	3	79
<b>Schools Roll-Up</b>				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	643	286	1	44
NCOs	2183	1177	17	54
Enlisted	745	749	8	101
Totals	3571	2212	26	62

Source: Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, US Department of State, January 16, 2006

### ***Training and Progress In Military Transition Teams (MITTs)***

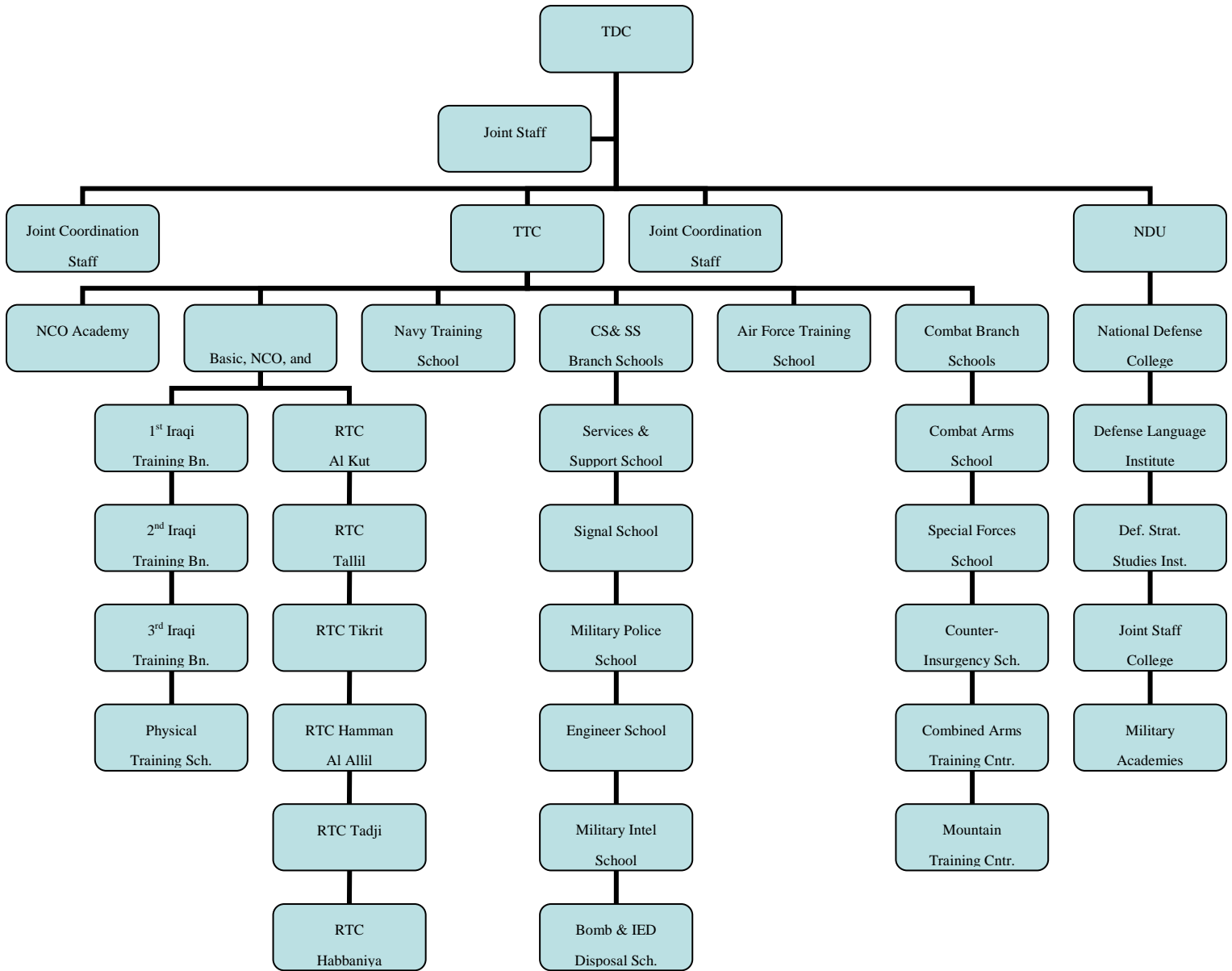
The Coalition and Ministry of Defense set the goal of training and equipping 195,000 personnel by spring 2006. MNSTC-I projected that this goal would be met by December 2006. The force generation plan for the Ministry of Defense forces would be completed by mid-2006, with an end-strength of approximately 131,000 soldiers.<sup>307</sup> It also announced that the Iraqi forces would create their own training command, as described in Figure 9.

This training effort was now reinforced systematically during action in the field. The US Army had begun fielding 11-man Military Training and Transition Teams (MITTs) in early 2005. Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated in January 2006 that Coalition forces had deployed over 200 transition teams -- military officers embedded with Iraqi forces for training purposes. He further stated that transition teams were operating at the battalion, brigade, and division levels in the Iraqi Army.

In March 2006, the Army announced that it had selected the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team to take over the training of the Army's MITTs at Fort Riley. The announcement meant that the Army had finally formalized the training process for these teams, and that instead of drawing troops with needed skills for temporary duty in Iraq, the Army would now begin permanently reassigning these selected trainers to Fort Riley. At the time of the announcement, the Army was looking for 2,300 trainers for 2007 in Iraq and Afghanistan, with a potential future need of 5,000.<sup>308</sup>

In addition to the MITTs, other types of small teams were working in Iraq, such as the similarly sized Special Police Transition Teams and Border Transition Teams. As of mid-January 2006, there were more than 2,000 officers and noncommissioned officers on more than 200 such teams in Iraq. Before soldiers, sailors, or airmen assume the role or mission of a team, they went through 75 days of training, the first 45 of which were at Fort Hood, Texas. About 500 soldiers were in training in early 2006, set to graduate in March. Training included instruction in Arabic language skills, close-quarter combat drills, staff operations, and basic soldiering.<sup>309</sup>

**Figure 9**  
**Proposed Iraqi Training Command Organization**



Source: MNSTC-I, April 2006.

## ***Transitioning Security Responsibility to the Iraqi Government and Criteria for Withdrawing Forces***

All of these efforts moved towards a common goal for both the Iraqi government and Coalition: The transition of responsibility for security from Coalition to Iraqi forces. While neither the Iraqi government nor Coalition as yet had a common timetable or plan, both Iraqi and US official agreed that this transition should be accomplished as soon as possible. The US also announced that its plans for security transition were broken down into four phases, which it described in its third report to Congress on “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” which it issued in May 2006.<sup>310</sup>

- Implement partnerships -- MNF-I and its major Subordinate Commands establish and maintain partnerships across the entire spectrum of Iraqi Security forces units, from battalion through to ministerial level.
- Iraqi Army Lead (IAL) -- Process during which Iraqi Army units progress through stages of capability from unit formation to the ability to conduct counter-insurgency operations.
- Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC) -- Iraqi civil authorities satisfy the conditions require to assume control and exercise responsibility for the security of their respective provinces.
- Iraqi Security Self-Reliance -- The Government of Iraq achieves PIC (or a combination of PIC and IAL) throughout Iraq; and the Government, through its security ministries, is capable of planning, conducting, and sustaining security operations and forces.

The first phase was already complete by May 2006, and the second phase, Iraqi Army lead, was reported to be well under way. The third phase was being implemented on an area-by-area basis, building ultimately to control entire governorates.

This area-by-area assessment was made by the Iraqi government, acting in concert with Coalition military and political officials. They assessed when conditions permitted handing over security responsibility for specific areas from Coalition forces to Iraqi civil authorities. This assessment was to be made by the Joint Committee to Transfer Security Responsibility (JCTSR) whose principals included the US Ambassador, the UK Ambassador, the Iraqi Ministers of Defense and Interior, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, and the Commanding General of MNF-I. Recommendations for transferring security responsibility included assessing conditions in four categories: threat assessment, Iraqi Security Forces, governance, and MNF-I Forces. For the most part, however, decisions to transfer security responsibility to Iraqi forces were made on a case-by-case basis.

Iraqi progress was still erratic and left gaps that made any effort to predict when real transfers could take place difficult. Administration officials noted that although turning over territory and day-to-day responsibilities to Iraqis was an important indicator of progress in Iraq, even those Iraqi units that had control of areas did not operate wholly independent of US support and assistance.<sup>311</sup> US forces were still needed for back up. They also provided the backbone for Iraqi logistics and supply chain.<sup>312</sup> In other words, just because the Iraqis were increasingly taking the lead, it did not mean that US troops could immediately come home, as they still served to facilitate important functions pertinent the operations of Iraqi forces.<sup>313</sup>

Lt. Gen. John Vines, who had served as commander of MNC-I, reaffirmed this when he said that although progress had been made in fielding effective Iraqi units, much more needed to be done “to bring up to speed the civilian defense bureaucracy needed to support the Iraqi military -- that is, civilian structures to do things like procurement, payroll, medical support, and housing.”<sup>314</sup>

Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner added a similar caveat when praising the progress in training Iraqi units in the north. “The major inhibitor to independent operations is a lack of equipment, manpower, their inability to sustain themselves [with food, fuel, ammunition, etc.] and a lack of systems or policies in place to manage the organization.”<sup>315</sup>

In an April 2006 report, retired four-star Army General Barry McCaffrey stated that the embedding program had been a “brilliant success story.” He also went on to state that the Iraqi military would need at least two to five more years of US partnership and combat backup before it would be able to stand on its own.<sup>316</sup>

The lack of an Iraqi logistic system meant that the US provided everything from food, to uniforms to weapons to Iraqi forces. Paychecks, which sometimes arrived as late as six months, were distributed by hand as cash after being transported in large sacs across the desert. A combination of a lack of pay and better opportunities elsewhere fueled desertion rates that were as high as 40% in some towns located in al-Anbar province. Of the 8,000 Iraqi soldiers in the province, 1,500 had deserted since the year prior.<sup>317</sup>

Although rare, there were reports of drug use among some Iraqi troops as well. For example, in Rawah, US soldiers discovered that some were taking hashish pills. “I’d hate to guess how many of them take that stuff. Now, whenever we step out on patrol, we give them a good look in the eye to make sure they’re all there,” said Major Anthony Marro.<sup>318</sup>

### ***A Success Rather than Calendar Driven Approach***

Once again, the increasing unpopularity of the Iraq war within the US put added pressure on administration and military officials to drawdown US troop levels as quickly and as efficiently as possible. It was clear that the National Guard would be “the first on the off-ramp” according to an anonymous official.<sup>319</sup> This drawdown was at odds, however, with the fact that Iraqi forces would still need US support for the foreseeable future. Beyond the issue of logistics, Iraqi security forces would still rely on the US for both air-reconnaissance and strike capability.

Nevertheless, the US could still act on the principle that, “As Iraqi forces stand up, the Coalition will stand down.” While US officials would not provide any timetables for a drawdown, Iraqi National Security Advisor Mowaffak al-Rubaie said in April that there was an agreement between Iraq and the US that “by the end of this year the number of multi-national forces of the coalition forces probably will be less than a hundred thousand, by the end of next year the overwhelming majority of the coalition will have left the country, and probably by middle of 2008 there will be no foreign soldiers in the country.”<sup>320</sup> Al-Rubaie said that this reduction of Coalition forces was “based [on] when our Iraqi security forces are ready to assume responsibility.” The goal, he said, was to have 80% of the Iraqi army capable of carrying out combat operations without US assistance.

By May of 2006, there were indications that US military planners were conducting initial preparations for restructuring the US air presence in the region for a time when few Coalition forces would remain on the ground in Iraq. These plans demonstrated both that the US intended to retain a significant flight capability in the region for some time, but that the aircraft would likely be housed in bases in Gulf countries outside of Iraq or Afghanistan.<sup>321</sup>

The US had already arranged agreements to use bases in Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The Air Force also maintained runway access and supplies in Oman and Saudi Arabia. Officials were also negotiating an extension of the current agreement with the Kyrgyz government to maintain forces at Manas Air Base used for operations in Afghanistan.<sup>322</sup>

The use of these bases in and around the Gulf, led some analysts to speculate that the US had concluded that constructing long-term US military bases in Iraq or Afghanistan is not a politically viable option and would be seen by many as verifying accusations that the US intends to “occupy” the Middle East. The alternative of basing aircraft in surrounding countries, while still operationally sufficient, does not necessarily obviate the problem of domestic opposition to US armed forces on Islamic territory. These countries are still Arab and Islamic nations, and are not immune to pressures from fundamentalist sectors of their societies.<sup>323</sup>

The broad transition plan, however, remained the same. As Iraqis took on more responsibility for security, Coalition forces were increasingly moved to supporting roles in many areas. As security conditions improve and as the Iraqi Security Forces became more capable of securing their own country, Coalition forces were to move out of the cities, provide transition teams, reduce the number of bases from which they operate, and conduct fewer visible missions, but remain postured to assist. Although the Coalition military presence would become less visible in the process, it would remain lethal and decisive, able to support Iraqi forces and confront the enemy wherever it might gather and organize.

### *The Effort to Create an Effective Support Apparatus*

One key to implementing this security transition plan was to create effective combat support, service support, and logistic capabilities. Serious concerns remained over the ability of Iraqi forces to operate independently, and over what some deemed to be inadequate “back-end” support networks. While Coalition money had been poured into creating combat capabilities, and to recruit and train significant numbers of personnel in combat roles, the adequacy of combat support, combat service support, logistical and other tactical enablers was still very much a work in progress.<sup>324</sup>

...while the US has done an admirable job of training Iraqi combat battalions, it has so far failed to build either combat support or combat service support structures to sustain the Iraqi armed forces in counterinsurgency and stability operations. As a result, the Iraqi armed forces lack a functional logistics system, command and control, communications, training, and other vital support elements. Instead, they are wholly reliant on the US military to provide such functions. Were the United States to withdraw its forces from Iraq under present circumstances, the newly-trained Iraqi combat battalions would quickly become incapacitated for want of support.

The DOD addressed efforts to create such enablers in its February 2006 report to Congress:<sup>325</sup>

Generating operational units is only part of the challenge facing the Iraqi MOD; it must also develop the ability to operate and sustain Iraqi forces independently. Efforts to build such capabilities within the MOD have been hampered by assassination or intimidation of employees, corruption, and the relative inexperience of key civilian leaders. In the face of such challenges, the MOD needs to strengthen its capabilities across the board -- in areas such as payroll, material readiness, contracting, and construction. Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq is now expanding upon previous efforts to help the MOD implement the processes that will allow the Ministry to sustain and support its fielded forces.

The DOD went on to outline its intention to focus on building out the support apparatuses necessary to support and enable the combat assets being created in the MOD and MOI:<sup>326</sup>

With the generation of regular line infantry battalions now largely complete, the focus of the train-and-equip program is shifting towards building combat support and combat service support units. These units will provide combat enablers such as logistics/transportation support; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and medical support that the Iraqi Army needs to sustain operations with minimal or no Coalition assistance. As these units become increasingly capable, more Iraqi units will be able to advance toward full independence, and more of them will be able to assume responsibility for their areas of operation.



In order to realize security self-reliance, the tactical and operational capabilities of Iraqi Army and National Police units and their support elements must be complemented with developed institutional capabilities within the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior. These ministries have continued to experience challenges with critical institutional functions, including administrative processes, programming and budgeting, finance, and life support and sustainment. The mission to build the ministerial capability required to manage and sustain the operating forces shifted on October 1, 2005, from the Department of State's Iraq Reconstruction Management Office to the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I). This realignment enables a unified and synchronized effort under the direction of MNSTC-I to ensure these pivotal ministerial functions develop commensurate with that of the Iraqi Security Forces.

As of May 2006, combat support and combat service support units continued to be generated to provide critical combat enablers. These included Operational Regional Support Units, Motor Transport Regiments, Logistics Support Battalions, and Headquarters and Service Companies. Strategic Infrastructure Battalions remain focused on securing critical oil pipelines. In the first quarter of 2006, the train-and-equip mission for these was increased from 4 to 11 battalions to reflect the adjusted Iraqi Army authorization.

While Coalition forces continued to provide materiel movement, life support, and other combat support to the Iraqi Armed Forces, the MOD made progress in building Iraqi logistical capabilities during the first yearly quarter of 2006.<sup>327</sup>

The National Depot at Taji, which is managed by the civilian component of the ministry, provides strategic and some operational-level supply and maintenance support through its military, civilian, and contractor staff. It provides warehouse facilities for the receipt, storage, and issue of the Iraqi Army and Air Force's national stockholding of most classes of supply and facilities for conducting vehicle overhauls and other 4<sup>th</sup>-line (i.e. national-level) maintenance support. The National Depot feeds five Regional Support Units (RSUs) that provide maintenance and supply support to nearby units. Four of these RSUs are currently operational, and the fifth is being formed. The national Maintenance Contract, which extends through March 2007, continues to provide a limited interim solution for organizational and intermediate maintenance requirements of the Iraqi Armed forces at ten different locations throughout the country. The capability to provide some routine maintenance is being developed within the support units.

As of May 2006, more than 65% of personnel in the Iraqi Army's support forces had been trained and equipped, according to the May 2006 DOD Report to Congress, and logistics units continued to increase their capabilities. Figure 7 shows:

- the disparity between combat capabilities and enabling assets
- the MOD's capabilities for major services and missions, with a comparison of capabilities between June 2005 and May 2006

### ***Equipment Deliveries and Challenges***

Another key was to properly equip Iraqi forces, particularly those in the MOD. Iraqi forces continued to make progress in acquiring the equipment they needed and creating suitable facilities. The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) Report to Congress issued in April 2006 covered Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund-funded (IRRF) activities, as well as information on Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF) activity. The following represent the highlights of the security and justice sector report:<sup>328</sup>

- More US funds have been devoted to security and justice than any other reconstruction sector. A total of \$11.6 billion has been allocated, combining funds from IRRF 2 and ISFF.
- By the end of this quarter, 82% of the \$6.35 billion IRRF allocation had been expended, and 31% of ISFF funds have been expended.
- Approximately 250,500 military and police personnel have reportedly been trained and equipped.

- More than 600 facilities have been completed -- police stations, fire stations, courts, border forts, and army facilities.

According to MNSTC-I, the Iraqi Army had received a number of war zone essentials from Coalition forces by the end of 2005:<sup>329</sup>

- more than 95,000 assault rifles
- 4,400 machine guns
- almost 95,000 sets of body armor
- more than 3,500 vehicles
- 83,000 batons
- more than 105,000 sets of handcuffs

However, the continuing focus on light equipment deliveries is shown by the deliveries to the MOD in the final quarter of FY2005:

- 9,000 AK-47 rifles
- almost 1,800 pistols
- more than 4,700 light and medium machine guns
- more than 750 light and medium vehicles
- almost 15,000 sets of body armor
- more than 9,000 Kevlar helmets

According to Coalition planners, the Iraqi Armed Forces received equally light equipment between January 2006 and May 2006:

- more than 25,000 AK-47s
- more than 6,200 9mm pistols
- nearly 1,300 light and medium machine guns
- nearly 1,000 light and medium vehicles.
- more than 17,000 sets of body armor
- more than 15,000 Kevlar helmets.
- 176 HMMWVs, which were distributed among the divisions and Motorized Transportation Regiments.

There were some exceptions. During the same time period, the Iraqi Army's 9<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Division received 77 Hungarian-donated T-72 tanks and 36 Greek-donated BMP-1 armored personnel carriers. These vehicles were integrated into the 2nd Brigade, which was comprised of two tank battalions and one mechanized battalion.<sup>330</sup>

As a result, equipment deliveries and plans became a growing issue with Iraqi commanders during 2006, with complaints that a lack of proper equipment precluded decisive advantage over relative well armed and equipped insurgent forces. One criticism was that corruption in the Iraqi Ministry of Defense was largely to blame for the problem. In 2005, the MOD "misplaced" \$1.3 billion that had been allocated to arm the troops. Another complaint from field commanders was

that US and Coalition equipment deliveries did not contain the types of heavy equipment necessary to definitely crush the insurgents.<sup>331</sup>

Outside experts expressed similar views. In a memo written in April 2006, Army General Barry McCaffrey said that Iraqi army units were “very badly equipped with only a few light vehicles, small arms, most with body armor and one or two uniforms. They [had] almost no mortars, heavy machine guns, decent communications equipment, artillery, armor, or [air force] transport, helicopter and strike support.”<sup>332</sup>

By the spring 2006, similar issues had arisen as to what types and how much heavy equipment would be left behind by the US military for use by the Iraqi Army. Because the bulk of Iraqi equipment at the time consisted of former Soviet and Warsaw Pact vehicles, doubts had arisen as to Iraq’s ability to afford maintenance of more advanced US vehicles. At a March 30, 2006 joint hearing of the House Armed Services readiness and tactical air and land forces subcommittees, Gen. John Vines, who had recently spent a year as joint forces commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq, spoke to the issue of equipping the Iraqi military: “I don’t advocate leaving large amounts of that equipment because it’s not compatible with their current force structure.”<sup>333</sup>

By late March 2006, the US plans for heavy equipment leave-behinds for the Iraqis had yet to solidify. Although no list of equipment had yet been produced, Lt. Den. David Melcher, US Army deputy chief of staff for programming, analysis, and material integration, testified to the House Armed Services Committee that “up-armored Humvees of some nature” would clearly be on that list. He went on to explain that the Humvees likely to be left would likely not be the Level 1 M1114 vehicles, those constructed with the most armor, but rather Level 2 vehicles, which had armor added.<sup>334</sup>

Yet, more than 80% of IRRF 2 funds for military and police forces had been expended, as of March 31, 2006 -- although only 30.5% of ISFF funding was expended (ISFF funds began to be expended later than IRRF funds). The Administration also submitted an FY2006 supplemental request that included \$3.7 billion to continue to train, equip, and build facilities for the Iraqi army and police, and \$962 million in foreign assistance funding to fulfill goals related to security.<sup>335</sup>

The end result was that neither the Iraqi government nor the MNF-I announced any meaningful program to give Iraqi forces the armor, artillery, combat aircraft, and ships they need to defeat the insurgents, much less deter and defend against foreign enemies. At a more immediate level, the focus on MOD forces left the police particularly vulnerable. At the same time, central and national facilities were generally better funded and more secure than facilities in the field and urban areas, presenting problems in deploying and protecting forces in the field.

## **Army**

In early 2005, only three Iraqi battalions had had lead responsibility for security in their respective areas. By October 2005, that number had grown to one division, four brigades, and 23 battalions. There were some 105,000 trained and equipped Iraqi army soldiers in early 2006, organized into 98 army and special forces battalions, with 37 battalions reportedly controlling their own battle space.

Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated in January 2006 that over 90 Iraqi battalions were conducting combat operations at the time, and that in December 2005, 50% of all military operations were joint missions between Coalition and Iraqi forces. Additionally, he noted that 30 Iraqi units maintained independent

security control over areas throughout the country. The US military was also training specialized Iraqi units to protect infrastructure and critical services, such as the electrical grid, and to carry out special tasks such as hostage search and rescue.<sup>336</sup>

By May 2006, the Iraqi Army included approximately 116,500 trained and equipped combat soldiers, including Strategic Infrastructure Battalion personnel and approximately 9,600 support forces. There were 111 Iraqi Army combat battalions “in the fight.” These included two Special Operations battalions and seven Strategic Infrastructure Battalions. There were also 28 National Police battalions “in the fight.” The number of Iraqi Army units that rated as having “assumed the lead” had doubled to two Iraqi Army divisions, 14 Iraqi brigades, and 57 Iraqi battalions

Figure 10 shows the increase in the number of Iraqi army battalions in combat from August 2004 to January 2006. The generation of all Iraqi army battalions in current plans was more than 89% complete, and the Army’s train-and-equip effort had shifted towards building combat support and combat service support forces.

### ***Increasing Combat Capability and Readiness***

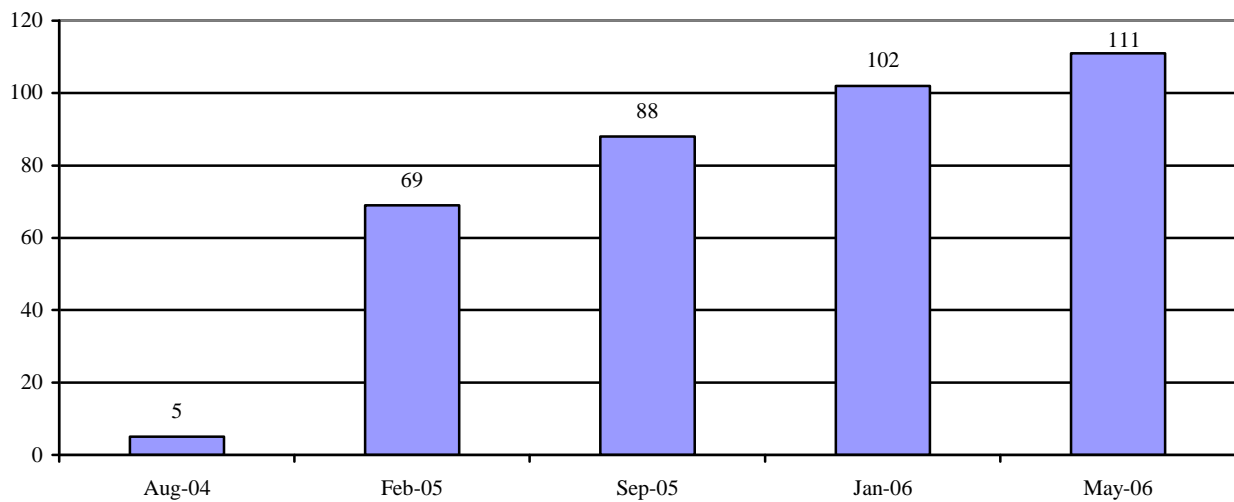
In May 2006, MNC-I assessed the readiness of Iraqi units at four different levels: “Units Being Formed”; “Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces Fighting Side-by-Side”; “Iraqi Lead with Coalition Support”; and “Independent Iraqi Operations.” This “Transition Readiness Assessment (TRA)” had been steadily refined to enable more accurate measurement of inputs from the advisory teams on the various criteria being assessed such as manning, command and control, training, sustainment/logistics, equipping, and leadership.

Iraqi units in all categories, save those classified as “Units Being Formed,” were operational and engaged in operations against the enemy. However, only units rated “Iraqi Lead with Coalition Support” and higher could “control” their own areas of responsibility. This did not mean they were as yet truly independent of Coalition support, but it did mean they had reached the point where such support was limited, and Coalition forces could focus elsewhere.

The highest rated units, designated “Independent Iraqi Operations,” were capable of planning, executing, and sustaining counter-insurgency operations. These units had considerably more capability than simply being able to fight and win at the small-unit level. Units rated as “Independent Iraqi Operations” had fully operational logistical elements, ministry capacity and capability, intelligence structures, and command and control.

As has been shown earlier, the number of counter-insurgency operations conducted independently by ISF as a percentage of total combat operations increased steadily from December 2005 through March 2006. Coalition forces intensified their own combat operations in April 2006, so the percentage of independent ISF operations declined somewhat. However, the total number of ISF and combined ISF/Coalition combat operations in April exceeded the number of independent and combined operations of the previous month. Moreover, MOI forces conducted many counter-insurgency operations that it did not report to Multi-National Corps-Iraq. MNC-I expected to include these MOI operations in future reports.

**Figure 10**  
**Iraqi Army Battalions in Combat**



Note: Includes Special Operations battalions and Strategic Infrastructure battalions, but does not include Combat Support and Combat Service Support units. Source: Adapted from “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” Report to Congress, May 2006, p. 53.

### *Trend in Army Support Forces*

While combat force generation unfolded largely on schedule, the creation of army logistical support and other enablers lagged, and became a growing priority for improving the effort in force development. Progress in creating a logistical, tactical, and materiel support apparatus for the Iraqi army stood as follows as of early 2006.<sup>337</sup>

- The National Depot at Taji, which is currently in operation, provides operational-level supply and maintenance support through its military, defense civilian, and contractor staff. It provides warehouse facilities for the receipt, storage, and issue of the Iraqi Armed Forces’ national stockholding of most classes of supply, as well as facilities for undertaking 4th-line maintenance support, including the ability to overhaul a range of vehicles and other equipment. The National Depot feeds five Regional Support Units (RSUs) that provide 3rd-level maintenance and supply support to nearby units. The RSUs, when fully operational, will also manage the provision of garrison and contract support for units located within their designated region. Garrison Support Units will be responsible for management and provision of garrison support to a designated base.
- Motorized Transport Regiments (MTRs) have been integrated into force generation plans to support each of the nine infantry divisions in order to provide improved mobility and sustainment capabilities for each division. Three MTRs are operational and are conducting critical logistical support missions for Iraqi Army units by moving personnel and materiel. The Coalition Corps Support Command is partnered with these units to mentor them and help develop their capabilities. A fourth MTR is being generated and will become operational in early 2006.
- In addition, each combat battalion will have a Headquarters and Service Company (HSC) to provide organic logistics and limited signal support; about half of these HSCs have been generated, and some are now operational.
- Vehicle maintenance is performed under a US Government-funded National Maintenance Contract in the absence of an organic MOD capability to provide depot-level maintenance. This capability will be built in

the future since the contract does not expire until 2007. The capability to provide some routine maintenance is, however, being developed within the support units.

- The Iraqi Armed Service and Supply Institute (IASSI) at Taji plays a critical role in training the officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers to fill combat service support positions throughout the Army. The IASSI is training the soldiers and supervisors for the Motorized Transport Regiments and Headquarters and Service Companies. Members of the Regional Support Units and Strategic Infrastructure Battalions will soon start to receive similar training. In this way, the IASSI is making a critical contribution to the development of capabilities that will be necessary for Iraqi forces to take over missions now being performed by the US and other Coalition forces. As the Iraqi Army's operational support system is completed and matures, its ability to provide logistics support to all echelons in the fight will emerge and reduce the need for US forces performing these functions.

In May, the army continued to focus on building combat enablers:<sup>338</sup>

Of the planned nine Motorized Transportation Regiments (MTRs) to support each of the nine Iraqi Army light infantry divisions, four are now at least initially operationally capable. These MTRs provide improved mobility and sustainment support for the Iraqi forces. The operational regiments are conducting critical logistical support missions in partnership with the Coalition Support Command. All nine MTRs are expected to reach initial operational capability by mid-2006. Under the Iraqi Armed Forces Logistics Concept, the 9<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Division will be supported by a total of five Logistics Support Battalions, of which two are currently operational. Generation of the remaining battalions will significantly increase the division's ability to sustain itself throughout its area of operations. In addition to these combat enablers, the structure of each combat battalion brigade, and division has been adjusted to include a Headquarters and Service Company (HSC), which provides organic support to these units. This support includes resident transportation, communications, medical, supply, and maintenance capabilities. To date, approximately 80% of the required HSCs have been formed, of which 41% are operational.

The Iraqi Armed Service and Supply Institute (IASSI) at Taji trained more than 5,000 officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) who were to be the soldiers and supervisors for the Motor Transport Regiments, Regional Support Units, and Headquarters and Service Companies. As consolidated under the Iraqi Training Brigade, the basic training system continued to develop. New recruits attended a five-week program at the Kirkush Military Training Base and An-Numiniyah. After graduating, recruits received additional specialty training that varied from three to seven weeks depending on the military occupational skill assignment.

Junior leadership development designed to help build a solid NCO Corps lay in a system of Regional Training Centers and in the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy. The NCO Professional Education System included a Sergeants Major Course and a Chief Warrant Officer Course. Iraqi Military Academies at Zahko, Qualachulon, and Rustimiyah continued to conduct new officer training. The one-month Former Officer Course (FOC) continued to focus on human rights, ethics, and counter-insurgency operations. To further press upon members of the Iraqi Armed Forces the importance of ethics, human rights, and leadership, planners also proposed the concept of the Center for Ethics and Leadership to provide institutional oversight for ethics, education, training, and assessment.

## **Iraqi Special Operations Forces**

By the winter of 2006, Iraqi special operations forces consisted of approximately 1,500 trained and equipped personnel organized into two battalion-sized combat forces -- the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Task Force (ICTF) and the Iraqi Commandos -- as well as one support battalion and a special reconnaissance unit. However, at this time, these forces were still reliant on Coalition enablers, such as ground and air mobility assets.<sup>339</sup>

As of May 2006, the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) were composed of approximately 1,600 trained and equipped personnel organized into the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Task Force

(ICTF), the Iraqi Commandos, a support battalion, and a special reconnaissance unit. The ISOF was to complete force generation by the summer of 2006, according to the DOD's May 2006 Quarterly Report to Congress. The ICTF and Commandos continued to conduct counter-insurgency operations throughout the nation. The ISOF primarily used US equipment, including the M4 carbine, M240 machine guns, M2 heavy machine guns, and up-armored HMMWVs.

## Navy

The organization of the Navy in early 2006 is shown in Figure 11. During the last quarter of 2005, the Iraqi Navy's Naval Support Unit assumed responsibility for the on-site management of all base support functions at the Umm Qasr Naval Base. The Iraqi Marines also assumed point defense responsibilities for the Khor Al-Amaya oil terminal and al-Basra oil terminal in December 2005.

In the first months of 2006, the Iraqi Navy had 800 trained and equipped sailors and marines organized into an operational headquarters, two afloat squadrons, and six marine platoons. No significant asset deliveries were made to the Iraqi Navy since early 2005. The Navy was operating five predator class patrol boats, 24 fast-aluminum boats, and 10 rigid hull inflatable boats. Force generation plans in early 2006 also called for a total of six Al-Faw class patrol boats by September 2006.

While the size of the Iraqi Navy did not grow significantly through spring 2006, there were reports of increased command and control capabilities at operational headquarters. However, as with the other services at this time, institutional capacity to execute acquisitions, logistics, and personnel policies remained underdeveloped.<sup>340</sup>

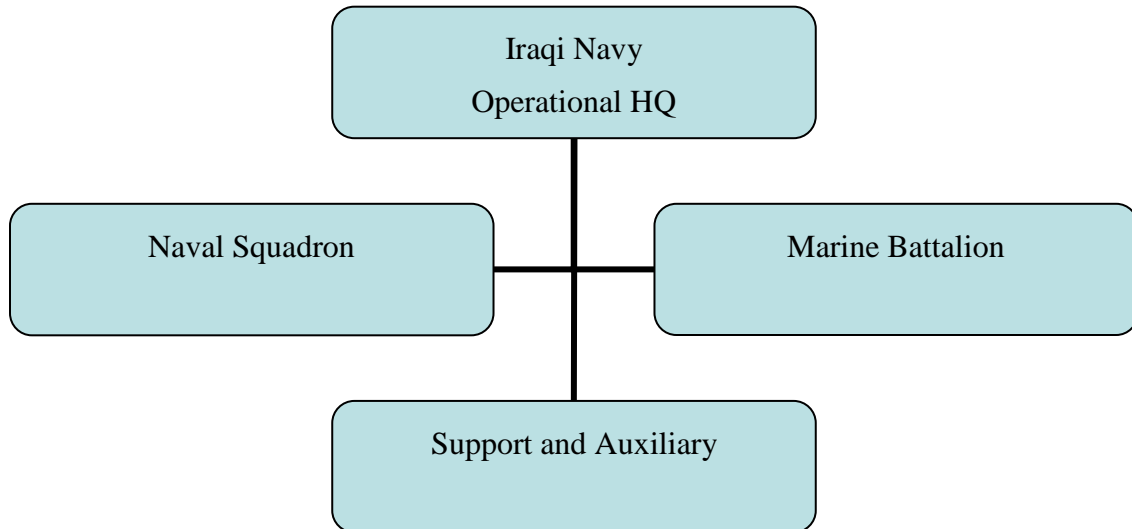
As of May 2006, the Iraqi Navy had 800 trained and equipped sailors and Marines organized into an Operational Headquarters, two afloat squadrons, and six Marine platoons. The following advancements were also reported:<sup>341</sup>

The Iraqi Navy continues to develop capabilities for surface surveillance, maritime interdiction, oil terminal protection, and support operations. The Navy has shown improvement in the command and control capability of the Operational Headquarters as well as the capability to mount a Quick Response Force for board-and-search missions, while maintaining communications with the head-quarters and operating forces.

At this time, the Iraqi Navy order of battle included the Patrol Boat Squadron, composed of 5 Predator Class boats; the Assault Boat Squadron, composed of 10 Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats; and 24 Fast Assault Boats. The delivery of three al-Faw patrol boats continued to be delayed. The procurement of two Off-Shore Support Vessels had also been delayed by the MOD until the formation of the new government. The following advancements in training were also reported:<sup>342</sup>

Training of the Iraqi Navy continues to be conducted by the Iraqi Navy Training Department, with the assistance of the Coalition's Navy Transition Team. Training remains focused on maintaining basic seamanship skills and conducting maritime operations. Afloat Forward Staging Base and visit board search and seizure training continues. Marine training continues to be supported by US Navy Mobile Security Detachments and includes regular marksmanship refresher training.

**Figure 11**  
**Iraqi Navy: April 2006**



### Ship Inventory

Patrol	4/5 <i>Predator</i> class; 1/6 <i>Al Faw</i> class
Offshore Support	0/2 Offshore Support Vessels
Small Craft	10/10 Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats; 24/24 Fast Aluminum Boats

Source: MNSTC-I, April 2006.

### **Air Force**

The organization of the Iraqi air force is shown in Figure 12. In early 2006, the Iraqi air force had nearly 500 trained and equipped personnel, and was developing three airpower capabilities: reconnaissance, battlefield mobility, and air transport. Major assets for these capabilities included the following:<sup>343</sup>

- Aerial Reconnaissance Fleet
  - 2 Seabird Seekers
  - 2 SAMA CH-2000s
  - 6 AeroComp Comp Air 7SLs
- Battlefield Mobility
  - 4 UH-1H helicopters
  - 5 Bell 206 Jet Ranger helicopters
- Air Transport Capability



- 3 C-130E aircraft

As of early 2006, the air force's UH-1 helicopters (from Jordan) were scheduled to be converted in the United States to Huey-II configuration.

Development of Air Force personnel capabilities was also underway, with the establishing of Coalition Advisory Support Teams. Progress into early 2006 was reported as thus:<sup>344</sup>

The coalition has established Advisory Support Teams to facilitate development of a capable Iraqi Air Force. Two teams are aiding in the reconnaissance mission, with one in Kirkuk and the other working at Basra. These teams have trained nearly 70 personnel, including 25 pilots, 41 aircraft maintenance engineers, and 3 administrators. Established basic, mission, and instructor upgrade syllabuses for Iraqi Air Force aerial reconnaissance pilots continue to be utilized. Training is being conducted both in the United States (pilot, navigator, maintenance officer, flight engineer, and loadmaster courses) and in Iraq (maintenance and aircrew personnel courses). Nearly 30 basic air-land qualified C-130 aircrew personnel have been trained, as well as the first complete mission-ready Iraqi crew.

The one Iraqi air base, Muthana, was located within the US military compound that encircled Baghdad International Airport. It was a minimal location that included one runway, a large hangar, and aircraft. The planes available for flight by the Iraqi 23 Squadron were three C-130 planes and 30 helicopters for transport or operations missions. The Air Force had no fighting ability. The 23 Squadron was one of five units, but the other four had not yet been assigned bases.<sup>345</sup>

The members of the Muthana division would not allow their names to be printed or photos taken for fear of their lives. "We are afraid for our families," one colonel said. "There is no one to protect them." Another added, "They kidnap our children, they are trying to kill us." Despite this and the relatively few aircraft at the base, these pilots, many of whom had served under Saddam, were anxious to fly.<sup>346</sup>

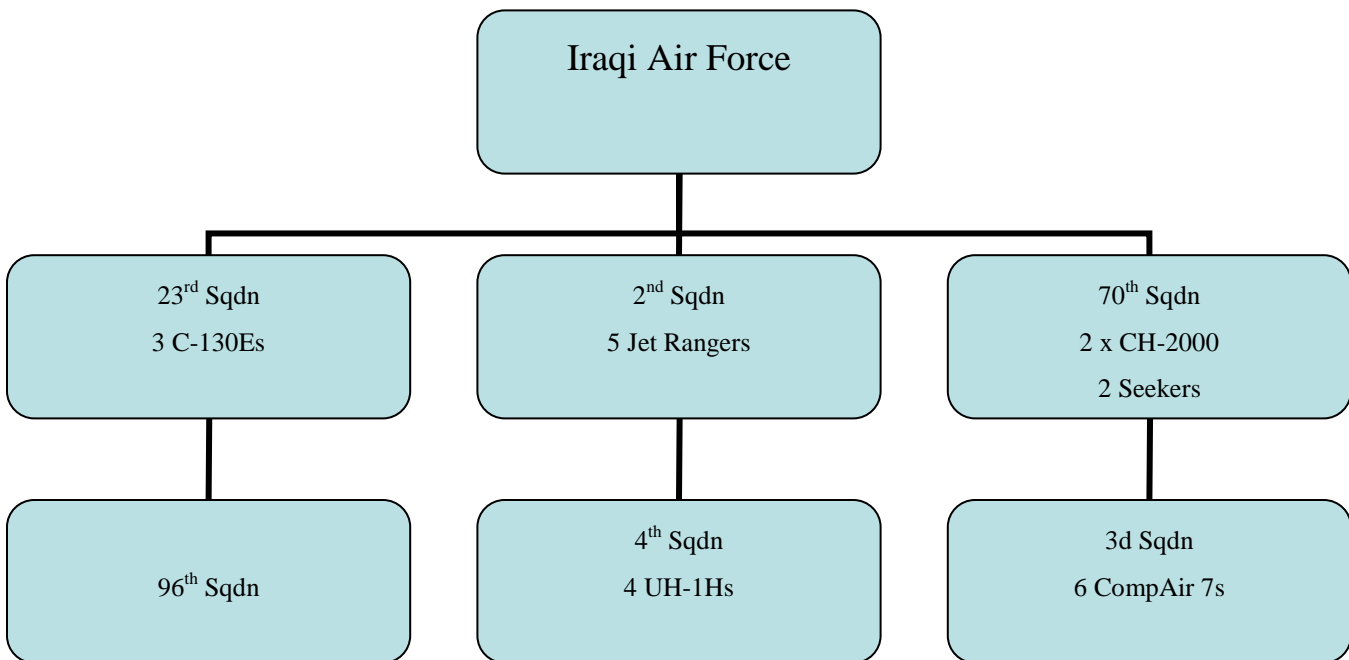
As of May 2006, the Air Force had approximately 600 trained and equipped personnel. The following advancements were also reported:<sup>347</sup>

Iraqi reconnaissance aircraft have a limited capability to perform oil infrastructure reconnaissance and surveillance support for nationwide counter-insurgency operations. The Iraqi Air Force (IAF) reconnaissance aircraft consist of single-engine airplanes used in civilian and commercial markets. One such IAF type, the CH-2000, has continued to experience issues with carbon monoxide presence, which has limited its effectiveness. A temporary fix has been designed, and full operational capability is expected by late May. Another IAF reconnaissance aircraft, the compare, awaits the arrival of a US Air Force team, scheduled to be in theater in may, to modify the fleet and return it to operational status.

The IAF has three squadrons of helicopters (2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, and 12 Squadron) in support battlefield mobility. Sixteen Uh-1H helicopters have returned to the United States for modifications and upgrades to the Huey II configuration. The first seven of these aircraft are scheduled to return to Iraq in January 2007, with the remainder following two to three months later. The 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron will initially operate 10 Mi-17s procured by the Iraqi MOD. Eight of these 10 have been delivered, but they are awaiting additional armor, weapons mounts, and pilot training and proficiency. These aircraft are expected to be operational by the end of 2006. The 12<sup>th</sup> Squadron operates five Bell 206 Jet Ranger helicopters, which are used for training purposes.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Transport Squadron, with its three C-130E aircraft, completed its move to the new al-Muthanna Air Base early this quarter. This squadron has continued to perform transport, mobility, and humanitarian missions this quarter.

**Figure 12**  
**Iraqi Air Force: April 2006**



Aircraft Inventory (22)

Recce	6 CompAir 7s; 2 Seekers; 2 CH-2000s
Battlefield Mobility	4 UH-1Hs; 5 jet Rangers; (Mi-17s)
Airlift	3 C-130Es
Search and Rescue	none
Air Defense	none
Light Attack	none

Source: MNSTC-I, April 2006.

## Ministry of Interior Forces

The ethnic, sectarian, and other problems that remained in the Iraq's Ministry of Interior and its forces in mid-2006 did not mean that they did not improve some aspects of their effectiveness. They also played an important role in supporting the regular military and in a wide range of security missions. Attacks on infrastructure declined by more than 60% between February and April 2006, and Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch claimed this was a direct result of the more than 250,000 Iraqi security forces conducting operations in the country.<sup>348</sup>

During the period before the new government took office, the force generation structure for MOI forces called for 195,000 trained and equipped personnel. Figure 13 summarizes manning levels and goals for MOI forces as of early 2006. Figure 14 provides more detail and compares goals against actual strength.

### *Real versus Authorized Strength*

Estimating the actual strength of MOI forces was, however, a major problem. US and Iraqi commanders had long criticized the policy whereby Iraqi soldiers could leave their units whenever they want to. The Iraqi army does not require its soldiers to sign contracts, so soldiers treat enlistments as temporary jobs. As Col. Alaa Kata al-Kafage said, "All the soldiers now, they don't care about the country. They care about the money...Under the military agreement, they can leave anytime. After (soldiers) get paid and save a little bit of money, they leave." This policy is at least partially responsible for draining Iraqi ranks to confront the insurgency by as much as 30% to 50%.<sup>349</sup>

This situation was far worse for the forces under MOI command than those under the MOD, and both MNF-I and Iraqi sources had to admit that in most cases there was no reliable reporting on the manpower actually present. In May 2006, the Iraqi police force was estimating that it lost several hundred recruits every month. One such recruit, a 23 year old named Alah, simply made a "career move" and left the Iraqi police shortly after graduation and joined the Mahdi Army. The reasons he noted were fairly simple: The pay was better and there was a smaller chance of getting killed.<sup>350</sup>

Active recruiting by the militias presented a growing problem, and many who chose the militias over the national army and police scarcely did so out of religious conviction. In violence prone areas where few jobs were available, young males often had reasons and incentives such as security, money and general wellbeing to join the militias over the state-run forces. As one such case summed up, the offer by the Mahdi Militia was "an attractive package." Not only did it offer a greater salary, but the organization also promised to take care of his family if something were to happen to him.

Yet, there were still fewer defections and personnel abandoning their positions than during the early efforts to train such Iraqi forces, and in fact when leaves were canceled after the bombing of the Golden Shrine, the vast majority of soldiers reported for duty. Still, soldiers are still contractually permitted to leave their units whenever they would like without punishment and the MOI dealt with many of its problems by turning a blind eye.

### ***Human Rights at the MOI***

By the late spring of 2006, the Iraqi government and its Coalition partners had taken a number of steps to promote respect for human rights within the MOI.<sup>351</sup>

Iraqi police recruits receive 32 hours of human rights and rule of law training during the 10-week police basic training program. At the 3-week-long Transition Integration Program, in-service personnel receive 20 hours of human rights and rule of law training. National Police Forces receive 9-15 hours of human rights training during their 6-week courses. Additionally, throughout the country there are numerous programs to train existing MOI security forces in human rights standards, such as embedding civilian advisors and military police into Iraqi police stations.

While the US government helped the Iraqi government establish an abuse complaint process system that involved the Inspector General, Internal Affairs, and the Public Affairs Office, the MOI still did not have the ability to police itself and eradicate human rights abuses. Human rights violations were particularly egregious at detention centers where there are no places to shower, pray, or prepare food and where plumbing and electrical systems are substandard. The Joint Iraqi Inspection Committee, comprised of Iraqi Inspectors General from various ministries with the support of the US Embassy and MNF-I, continued its investigation of these detention centers as of spring 2006.

The fact that many of the MOI forces had become associated with Shi'ite and Kurdish attacks on Sunnis during this period presented another kind of problem. On May 2006, Senior Iraqi leaders were preparing a major restructuring of Baghdad's security brigades that would place all police officers and paramilitary soldiers under a single commander and in one uniform. The move came as part of a wider effort to curtail the sectarian violence that was ravaging the city.<sup>352</sup> The one reassuring note was that Sunni Muslims continued to join the security forces in large numbers, a possible sign of success in the effort to include people of Iraq's various religious factions into the military.<sup>353</sup>

**Figure 13**

#### **Manpower: MOI Forces: January 4, 2006 vs. May 31, 2006**

<b>January 4, 2006</b>		<b>May 31, 2006</b>	
<b>COMPONENT</b>	<b>TRAINED &amp; EQUIPPED</b>	<b>COMPONENT</b>	<b>TRAINED &amp; EQUIPPED</b>
<b>POLCE</b>	<b>~ 77,500</b>	<b>POLCE</b>	<b>~103,400</b>
<b>HIGHWAY PATROL</b>		<b>HIGHWAY PATROL</b>	
<b>OTHER MOI FORCES</b>	<b>~40,500</b>	<b>OTHER MOI FORCES</b>	<b>~44,300</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>~118,000*</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>~145,500</b>

\* Unauthorized absence personnel are included in these numbers. Source: [Iraq Weekly Status Report](#), Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, US Department of State: January 4, 2006 and May 31, 2006 issues, p. 7.

**Figure 14**  
**Manning Realities vs. Goals February 2006**

<b>MOI Force</b>	<b>Manning as of Feb. 2006</b>	<b>Manning Goal as of Feb. 2006</b>
Iraqi Highway Patrol	1,800	6,200 (August 2007)
Police Commandos	9,000	11,800 (December 2006)
Mechanized Police	1,500	NA
Public Order Police	8,100	10,600 (May 2006)
Emergency Response Unit	400	700 (June 2006)
Border Police	18,500	28,000 (May 2006)
Dignitary Protection	600	NA

Source: Adapted from US Department of Defense, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, Report to Congress, February 2006, pp. 49-54.

### **Ministry of Interior “National Police”: Special Security Forces and Police Commandos**

Previous plans had authorized more than 11,800 commandos, which MNSTC-I had planned to have fielded by December 2006. Nearly 9,000 were trained and equipped as of early 2006. Training consisted of six weeks at the police commando academy in northern Baghdad, with instruction in the following topic areas:

- Urban patrolling
- Unarmed combat apprehension
- Use of force
- Human rights and ethics policing
- Introduction to Iraqi law
- Vehicle checkpoints
- IED characteristics and recognition
- Weapons qualification

#### ***Build-Up in 2006***

Figure 15 shows that the resulting build-up of MOI special security and commando forces and units continued to be significant in 2006. The *New York Times* reported on January 16, 2006 that

about 80,000 local police officers across Iraq were certified as trained and equipped, more than halfway toward the goal of 135,000 by early 2007.<sup>354</sup>

As of February 20, 2006, Multinational Forces spokesman Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch said that Iraq's growing security forces planned and carried out more than a quarter of all counterinsurgency operations in Iraq in January, a total of 490 Iraqi-run missions, nearly a 50% increase over the September 2005 figure.<sup>355</sup> The Coalition also worked with the Iraqi Public Order Special Police who served as a bridge between local police and the Iraqi army in handling terrorist and insurgency threats. Numbering about 9,000 as of February 2006, the public order police operated primarily as a light urban infantry.

As of May 2006, there were around 22,700 trained and equipped National Police (formerly known as "Special Forces" and Commandos") personnel, an increase of 4,000 since the previous DOD report to Congress in February 2006.<sup>356</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> National Police Divisions will reach 95% of equipping and authorized manning by June 2006 and will complete force generation by December 2006. The 1<sup>st</sup> National Police Mechanized Brigade continues to provide route security along Route Irish (from the International Zone to Baghdad International Airport), and is currently completing the fielding of 62 Armored Security Vehicles.

The problem with this build-up was that some of these forces were responsible for serious abuses, and became a de facto part of the problem rather than the solution. Colonel Gordon Davis stated in February 2006, the composition of these forces was about 20% Sunni, many of whom are officers, and claimed this made it unlikely that the group could be infiltrated by vigilantes who carry out ethnic-based attacks. "There are a heck of a lot of strongly willed patriots amongst that group, and if they believed one of their own may be an insurgent or terrorist, then they would pick them out right away because that puts their own lives on the lines, as well as those of their families."<sup>357</sup>

In an April 6, 2006 report to Congress, the DOD addressed the overall progress in the force structure of Iraq's Interior Ministry as follows:<sup>358</sup>

The end-strength force structure for all Ministry of Interior forces is 195,000 trained and equipped personnel manning two division headquarters, nine brigade headquarters, twelve Public Order battalions, twelve Commando battalions, three mechanized battalions, and one Emergency Response Unit. The force structure plan is designed to enable a stable civil-security environment in which a prosperous economy and a democratic and representative government that respects and promotes human rights can evolve. As of March 20, 130,700 Ministry of Interior security personnel, or 67 percent of the authorized end strength of 195,000, have been trained and equipped. This includes 89,000 IPS personnel, as described in the next section, and 41,700 other Ministry of Interior forces, such as 27 National Police Force battalions and one Emergency Response Unit conducting operations with ten of these units "in the lead." There is no specific threshold for the number of Iraqi special police units that must be judged capable of operating independently or in the lead before US force levels can be reduced.

The report went on to outline progress and the outlook for training and equipping the Iraqi police forces:<sup>359</sup>

The end-strength force structure of the IPS is 135,000 trained and equipped personnel. As of March 20, over 89,000 IPS, or 66 percent of the authorized end strength, have been trained and equipped, an increase of over 14,000 since the December 15, 2005 parliamentary election. These IPS personnel work alongside the 41,700 other Ministry of Interior forces described in the previous section.

The IPS is the primary civilian police organization in Iraq. Their mission is to enforce the law, safeguard the public, and provide internal security at the local level. The IPS is organized into patrol, station, and traffic sections in all major cities and provinces in Iraq and is responsible for providing security in more than 130 districts and at nearly 780 stations throughout Iraq. The scope of their responsibility demonstrates the critical need to ensure the development of professional, capable police forces that utilize modern policing techniques,

follow the rule of law, and respect human rights. The Civilian Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) works closely with the Ministry of Interior to improve the performance and professionalism of these forces. Police Transition Teams mentor and assist the IPS in a role similar to that of the Coalition Military Transition Teams, evaluating their progress and instituting the necessary procedures to continue development of a professional police force.

There is no specific threshold for the number of IPS that must be trained and equipped to maintain law and order and thereby enable US force levels to be reduced.

### ***Steps Toward Reform***

For all the reasons discussed earlier, however, it was clear that major reforms were still needed. As a result, the Ministry of Interior merged the Police Commandos, the Public Order and Mechanized Police, and the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) to form the Iraqi National Police on April 1, 2006. Under the National Police Headquarters fall the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> National Police Divisions, the 1<sup>st</sup> National Police Mechanized Brigade, and the Emergency Response Unit (ERU). The two police divisions were formed from the Commando Division and the Public Order Division.

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Police Mechanized Brigade remained a direct supporting unit, and the ERU, previously part of the MOI's Supporting Forces organization, was reassigned as a direct reporting unit to the National Police Headquarters. Two police academies -- Camp Solidarity and Camp Dublin -- also fell under the National Police Headquarters and provided specialized training and professional development. In addition, the Headquarters was formally recognized to provide command and control, manning, equipping, training, and sustainment for the National Police Forces.

The Emergency Response Unit (ERU) now reported directly to the National Police Force Headquarters and had more than 400 trained and equipped personnel assigned to it. The goal was for the ERU to become a highly trained, national-level unit similar to the hostage rescue team of the United States FBI. ERU training consisted of two four-week courses that included instruction in handling detainees, human rights, target reconnaissance, physical fitness, and mission planning. Selected personnel received training at the eight-week Explosive Ordnance Disposal course or the six-week Intelligence/Surveillance course.

**Figure 15****Estimated MOI National Police Force Capabilities Before the Spring 2006 Reorganization**

COMPONENT	IRAQI UNITS ACTIVELY CONDUCTING COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS	
	Units fighting side-by-side with Coalition Forces*	Units in the lead with Coalition enablers or fully independent
Public Order Battalions	7	5
Mechanized Battalions	2	1
Police Commando Battalions	9	3
Emergency Response Unit	0	1

\*The numbers in this column may decrease as units are assessed into higher levels (i.e., “in the lead” or “fully independent”). Source: *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Department of Defense report to Congress, February 2006, p. 37.

***Further Progress in Reform in the Spring 2006***

By early 2006, Ministry of Interior forces earned a black reputation among many in Iraq, particularly among Iraq’s Sunni population. So poor was the force’s reputation that after the bombing of the Askariya shrine in Samarra on February 22, many Sunnis claimed that the perpetrators of the act were MOI forces seeking a pretext for civil war.<sup>360</sup> Among the forces that had gained the mixed reputation as among the most effective, but also the most feared, were the MOI’s special security forces and police commandos.

In early 2006, the White House released a fact sheet highlighting the importance of revamping image and procedures of MOI forces and elite units:

The Interior Ministry’s Special Police are the most capable Iraqi police force...Many are professional and diverse, but recently some have been accused of committing abuses against Iraqi civilians. To stop abuses and increase professionalism, the Coalition is working with the Iraqi government to make adjustments in the way these forces are trained. Human rights and rule of law training is being increased. A new Police Ethics and Leadership Institute is being established in Baghdad. To improve capabilities, Iraqi Special Police battalions will be partnered with Coalition battalions so that American forces can work with and train their Iraqi counterparts.

Indeed, much attention in spring 2006 was placed on re-orienting the special MOI forces toward being a more positive force, and reducing divisive behaviour and the interloping influences of sectarian actors. Some of the actions taken were largely cosmetic. The elite “Wolf Brigade,” for example, was renamed the “Freedom Brigade.” Meanwhile, MOI special forces and commandos were collectively renamed, simply, the “National Police.”



Other steps taken by American commanders in Iraq were more significant. To allay fears of mistreatment by MOI elite forces in the Iraqi population, for example, in April 2006 US soldiers handed out thousands of cards to encourage residents to call the authorities if they saw commandos, or fighters posing as commandos, on suspicious missions without US troops.<sup>361</sup> By early summer, however, the future of the MOI remained uncertain, with militia loyalties and Badr Organization involvement still concerns.

## **The Regular Police**

The primary organization for local civilian policing in the MOI was the Iraqi Police Service (IPS). MNSTC-I's Civilian Police Assistance Training Team was working with the IPS to improve performance and professionalism, and Police Transition Teams were providing mentorship and development roles.

By early 2006, over 80,000 IPS personnel had been trained and equipped, an increase of 13,000 since October 2005. As of early 2006, MNSTC-I was projecting to complete force generation by February 2007.<sup>362</sup>

### ***Increases in Police Strength***

As of spring 2006, MOI forces included the IPS and National Forces. The IPS consisted of patrol, traffic, station, and highway police assigned throughout Iraq's 18 provinces. National Forces consisted of the National Police, the Department of Border Enforcement, and the Center for Dignitary Protection.

As of March 2006, the MOI had integrated the former Iraqi Highway Patrol into the respective provincial police departments. This decreased the authorization of MOI forces to 188,000 trained and equipped personnel. The National Police had 28 battalions in the fight with 6 battalions having the security lead for their areas of responsibility.

The end result was that the Coalition Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) had trained and equipped approximately 101,200 IPS personnel as of May 2006, an increase of 18,800 since the previous report. As of May 2006, the CPATT anticipated that it would train and equip the total authorization of 135,000 personnel by December 2006. More than 225 Iraqi Police stations had been constructed and refurbished, 80 more than in February 2006. The CPATT projected that another 225 police stations would be completed by December 2006.

### ***The "Year of the Police"***

All of this progress, however, did not affect the fact that problems in the police and other MOI forces were so severe that the Iraqi government and MNF-I not only agreed to the reorganization discussed earlier, but that a comprehensive new approach to training was needed. All elements of the MOI forces needed better training and organization, but the regular police were so large that retraining them was a key challenge to the MOI, the Iraqi government, and MNF-I.

The fact that the training and overall readiness of the Iraqi National Police remained behind the Iraqi army, as well as the presence of militia members or "death squads" operating within or in association with the forces caused the US to elevate its efforts to make the police an effective fighting force, and to unofficially dub 2006 the "Year of the Police."

President Bush identified these problems in a March speech, he proposed three solutions.<sup>363</sup>

- First, to increase partnerships between US and Iraqi battalions in order that Iraqi units cannot only learn tactical lessons but also that the US forces can “teach them about the role of a professional police force in a democratic system” so that they can conduct their operations “without discrimination.”<sup>364</sup>
- Second, he called for further efforts by Iraqi officials in conjunction with their US partners to identify and remove leaders within the police ranks who demonstrate loyalty to a militia. He claimed one success story in this area already. In December 2005, after receiving reports of abuses, the MOI dismissed the Brigade commander of the Second Public Order Brigade. His replacement subsequently removed more than 100 men with ties to militias.<sup>365</sup>
- Third, to recruit a greater number of Sunni Arabs into what is seen by many as a predominately Shi’ite police force. President Bush noted that a basic training class that graduated in October 2005 was less than 1% Sunni. Although it is unclear how much progress has been made in diluting the Shi’ite majority within the ranks, Bush subsequently remarked that the class graduating in April 2006 “will include many more Sunni Arabs.”

More than 200 police transition teams were established at the national, provincial, district, and local levels that provided Coalition oversight, mentorship, and training to the police forces.

### ***Reform of the Police***

The initiative led to the deployment of Coalition Police Assistance Training Teams (CPATTs), under MNSTC-I, to lead the MNF-I “Year of the Police” initiative, and partnering with MOI to plan, coordinate, and execute the necessary measures to develop the ministry. Training increasingly focused on leadership development. The MOI also improved its internal investigative capability with the Internal Affairs section graduating another group of students, bringing the total number of trained Internal Affairs specialists to 25 as of May 2006.

Following the April 1, 2006 reorganization, National Police recruits were to finish basic training programs at the National Police Force Training Academies. Training focused on leadership development and “train the trainer” courses to facilitate the transition to an Iraqi lead in all areas. The training academy in northern Baghdad accommodated 300-500 students for six weeks of intense training in weapons qualification, urban patrolling techniques, unarmed combat apprehension, use of force, human rights and ethics in policing, introduction to Iraqi law, vehicle checkpoints, and improvised explosive device characteristics and recognition.

Also effective April 1, 2006, National Police Transition Teams (NPTTs) were reassigned to MNC-I to ensure an integrated approach to command and control for the transition teams. This was meant to help ensure a more synchronized effort between Iraqi forces and operational Coalition units. NPTTs provided daily mentorship to the National Police forces in the field to help develop leadership, plan and execute operations, and otherwise professionalize the force, while emphasizing the importance of human rights and the rule of law.

### ***Equipment and Training***

The Iraqi Police Service (IPS) was equipped with AK-47s, PKCs, Glock pistols, individual body armor, high frequency radios, small pick-ups, mid-size SUVs, and medium pick-ups. The IPS’s logistics capabilities, especially in regard to vehicle maintenance, continued to be a concern, although progress had been made in the effective distribution and improved accountability of supplies and equipment. Forces in the nine key cities approached 80% of their authorized key pacing items.

Deliveries, however, were even lighter than for the regular forces. Equipment deliveries for all MOI forces in the final quarter of 2005 included the following:<sup>366</sup>

- More than 10,000 AK-47 rifles
- 16,000 pistols
- 800 light and medium machine guns
- 4,000 sets of individual body armor
- 700 Kevlar helmets
- More than 65,000 cold weather jackets

Iraqi police training continued at the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC) and at the Baghdad Police College (BPC) while smaller regional academies complemented these training initiatives. The JIPTC accommodated around 1,500 students per class while the BPC accommodated around 1,000. The 10-week basic course covered the rule of law, human rights, and policing skills in a high threat environment. Since the previous DOD Report to Congress in February, more than 20,000 police personnel had received specialized training by May 2006 on diverse subjects, including interrogation procedures and counter-terrorism investigations. Leadership development remained on track to meet the December 2006 goal of having all required officers and NCOs trained.

### *Dealing With Divided Loyalties*

Reorganization and retraining still left open the question of divided loyalties. By the spring of 2006, a background check by Iraqi police investigators found more than 5,000 police officers with records of crimes that included attacks on American troops. The results raised questions over the initial vetting process for creating the force, as well as continuing problems of quality. A 2006 internal police survey conducted northeast of Baghdad found that 75% of respondents did not trust the police enough to tip them off to insurgent activity.

In response to these concerns, the Pentagon announced it was sending 3,000 police trainers across the country in 2006 in an attempt to remake the force, and to have a competent, functional force of 190,000 police officers by early 2007.<sup>367</sup> According to Army Col. Rob Barham, this goal was to follow on a shorter-term goal of 135,000 officers patrolling in all 18 Iraqi provinces by the end of 2006.<sup>368</sup>

### *Facility Construction*

As of spring 2006, work on the Baghdad Police College (formerly the Baghdad Public Safety Training Academy) continued. The project was 80% complete and was expected to be finished by July 2006. Renovations on the Al-Zab Courthouse in Kirkuk, which began in October 2005, were 52% complete by April, with an estimated completion date of mid-August 2006.

Progress on the Nassriya correctional facility was 28% complete, and had been hampered due to inadequate workforce levels and security concerns at the site. The facility was expected to be completed in August 2006, and was slated to have a capacity of at least 800 beds, with the possibility of an additional 400 beds.

By April, construction was also completed on the following military facilities:<sup>369</sup>

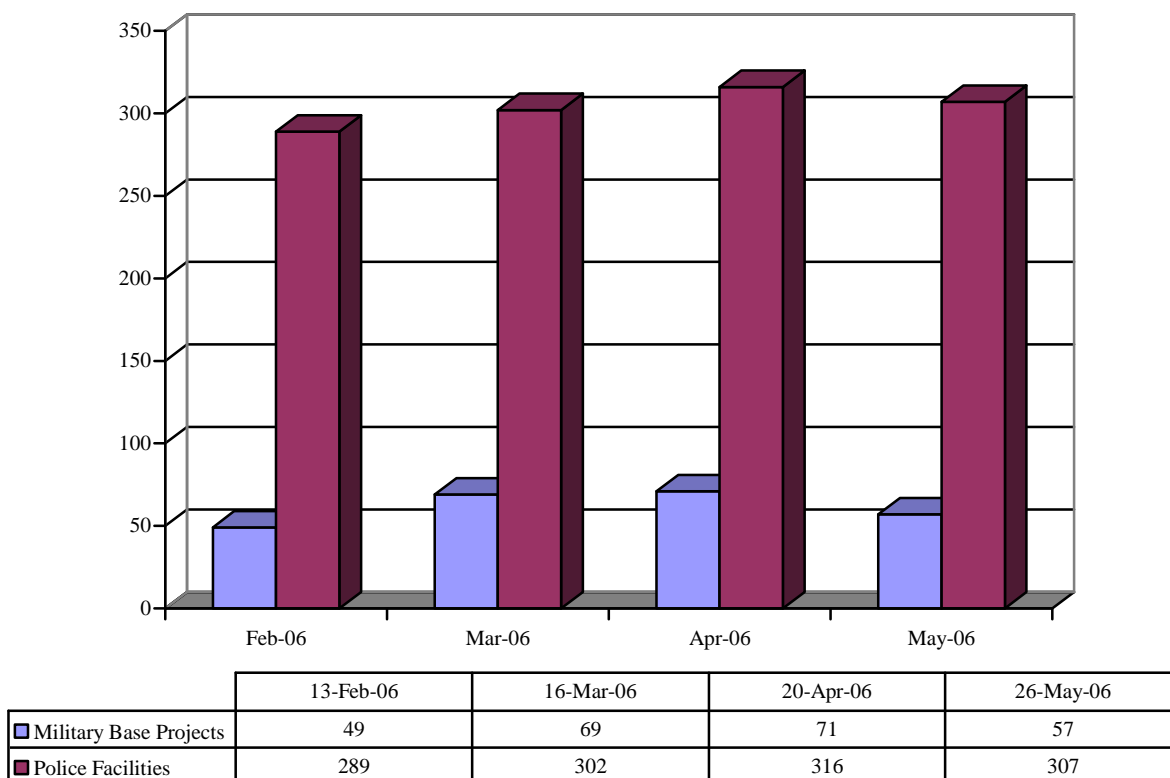
- Camp India Base, which will support 2,500 Iraqi soldiers in the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division
- Samawah, which will support 750 Iraqi soldiers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of the 10<sup>th</sup> Division
- Naiad, which will support 250 Iraqi soldiers in the 1st Brigade Headquarters of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division

Figure 16 shows the status of IRRF 2-funded projects by subsector as of April 2006. Figure 17 shows military base projects and police facilities constructed from Feb. 13, 2006 through May 26, 2006.

**Figure 16**  
**Status of IRRF 2-Funded Projects by Subsector**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Funds</b>	<b>Number of Projects</b>
Military Facilities (173)	\$962M	80
Police Stations (390)	\$181M	294
Police Training (27)	\$139M	5
Border Enforcement (261)	\$135M	151
Prisons (3)	\$124M	N/A
Courts (36)	\$80M	20
Security Communications (3)	\$59M	1
Fire Facilities (81)	\$27M	63
Points of Entry (11)	\$22M	9
Witness Protection (5)	\$14M	N/A
Investigations of Crimes Against Humanity (28)	\$4M	27
Miscellaneous (1)	\$3M	N/A
Construction & Repair (1)	\$0.5M	N/A
Emergency Force Protection (1)	\$0.2M	N/A

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, April 2006 Report to Congress, p. 23.

**Figure 17****Iraqi Military and Police Facilities Constructed Feb. 13, 2006 - May 26, 2006**

Note: Project numbers include projects funded by the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) and the Development Fund Iraq (DFI) and managed by GRD/PCO. Source: *Iraq Reconstruction Update*, Weekly Publication of the US Department of the Army: Issues 02/13/06, 03/16/06, 04/20/06, 05/26/06.

## Department of Border Enforcement

Progress also occurred in creating an effective Border Police, a step that was hoped to help stem the infiltration of foreign fighters, smugglers, and Iranian agents. By early 2006, more than 18,500 border police had been trained and equipped, up by 1,500 since the last yearly quarter of 2005, but lagging the goal of 24,000 by the December 15 election. While three border force academies were operation, delays in construction at the Department of Border Enforcement was blamed for the slow progress of bringing forces online. Construction had been delayed due to weather, remote location, restricted movement, and contractor delays.

By May 2006, the Department of Border Enforcement (DBE) numbered approximately 21,000 trained and equipped personnel, an increase of 2,300 since February 2006. These forces were organized into five regions, 12 brigades, and 38 battalions.

### *Coalition Border Transition Teams (BTTs)*

Members of the 10- to 11-man Coalition Border Transition Teams (BTTs) were trained in various specialties, including logistics and communications, and provided valuable mentorship and support for border force commanders in the areas of personnel management, intelligence, operations, budgeting equipment accountability, and maintenance. The number of BTTs was increased from 15 to more than 25 as part of the “Year of the Police” initiative.

These Coalition Border Transition Teams served as mentors for the border security units, assisting in areas such as personnel management, intelligence, operations, budgeting, and equipment accountability/maintenance. Three academies with a capacity of 800 students each were operational, as well, with instruction in the following:

- Law enforcement
- Weapons qualification
- Combat life-saving
- Vehicle searches
- Iraqi border law
- Human rights
- Arrest and detainee procedures
- Small unit patrolling
- Human relations

Such efforts had limits, however. Although the lack of border control helped allow the passage foreign fighters and supplies, many came through legal border crossings and the insurgency was not dependent on smuggling or foreign volunteers. In fact, Iranian pilgrims were the most frequently intercepted trespassers.

“There is still a lot going over the border,” Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli said. “I don’t know if you can ever stop it completely.”<sup>370</sup> For example, border patrols at Ft. Tarik captured several suspected Iranian intelligence agents crossing into Iraq and have also discovered supplies being smuggled in for roadside bombs.<sup>371</sup>

During a tour of two of the 258 border posts established by Coalition forces, Chiarelli said that Iraqi border forces were getting “better and better every single day.” Yet he noted that these forces needed better pay and equipment. Some forts lacked radios and other standard communication equipment and a few do not even have enough gas on hand to conduct patrols.<sup>372</sup>

In a typical case, Ft. Tarik -- a border outpost so close to Iran that it could see its counterpart -- 60 Iraqi security forces had been recruited from local a local Shi’ite tribe and were being trained by US and Ukrainian forces. Ironically, US Maj. Vic Lindenmeyer pointed out, the same security forces manning the outpost and watching for trespassers were often related to those on the other side performing the same duty.<sup>373</sup>

### ***Border Forces Equipment and Training***

Equipping the DBE and Point of Entry forces was an ongoing process with a force generation and distribution plan calling for the delivery of 85% of the key equipment by summer 2006. Standard organization equipment included small and medium pick-up trucks; mid-size SUVs, generators; and mobile, base, and hand-held radios. Border forces also required personal equipment such as AK-47s, medium machine guns, and individual body armor.

Three DBE academies in al-Kut, Basra, and Sulamaniyah, each with a capacity of approximately 800, were utilized for training border patrol students. Students in the Iraqi Border Patrol (IBP) Basic Training Course received instruction in law enforcement, human relations, human rights, weapons qualification, combat life saving, vehicle searches, Iraqi border law, arrest and detainee procedures, and small unit patrolling. The curriculum was to be updated to include specialized

instruction in first aid, communications, maintenance, and food preparation. After completing the three week core curriculum, recruits were then tracked according to these four specialties.

The DBE continued to make progress in designating standard organizations, delineating responsibilities, and developing detailed policies and procedures for land Points of Entry (POE). As of May 2006, there were 14 land POEs, and 13 of these were functional. Making significant changes in the operation of POEs is difficult because multiple ministries are involved.

### ***Uncertain Progress in Facilities***

The border forces were to man 258 border forts. As of May 2006, 244 border posts and forts had been completed, an increase of 74 since February 2006. Layered security efforts included border patrols by DBE units, Iraqi Army checkpoints, and Coalition forces.

This progress was, however, sometimes more apparent than real. In spring 2006, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) conducted ground project surveys of 22 border forts located along the Iraq-Iran border. Progress on the completion of these projects was described as thus:<sup>374</sup>

At the time of the ground survey, 17 were complete or near complete and functional. However, only 7 of the 17 border forts had perimeter security systems, gates, berms, or walls installed. Concrete quality was sometimes poor, and inconsistent surfaces in concrete and plaster finishing were common in the buildings and other structures. Numerous sites lacked retaining walls to prevent degradation of the embankments created by site leveling.

Based on discussions with local personnel at the border forts at the time of the site visits, SIGIR found that the day-to-day users -- the border police -- were unaware of a plan for maintenance and logistical support for the border posts, and received little if any training in maintaining the generator and septic systems. Logistical needs, such as fuel and water delivery, were lacking at some border posts. The generators lacked protection from drifting snow, and some outdoor electrical fixtures lacked proper insulation against rainwater. SIGIR requested copies of contract documents for the remaining five border forts included in our surveys; however, the MNSTC-I was unable to identify or locate the contract(s) for these projects. As a result, SIGIR was unable to determine the project objectives, SOW, or design specifications.

All five of these border forts were of poor quality construction and showed no signs of any recent maintenance. Although small generators were located at the five border forts, fuel storage was not available. Electrical and water systems were consistently either inoperable or needed repair.

### ***Other Developments in Border Enforcement***

On May 27, 2006, on the second day of his visit to Iraq, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said that Iran and Iraq had agreed to form a joint commission to oversee border issues, and that its primary task would be to "block saboteurs" crossing the 700-mile border. Mottaki went on to say that improved border controls would be part of a wider effort to build close ties between the countries, including \$1 billion in Iranian economic assistance to Shi'ite and Kurdish areas of Iraq.<sup>375</sup>

## **Facilities Protection Forces, Private Security Personnel and "Ministry Armies"**

Iraq and the MNF-I also had problems with a wide range of lighter forces, many of which were corrupt, ineffective, and had elements that either supported the insurgency or rogue Shi'ite operations

### ***The Facilities Protection Services***

L. Paul Bremer, former head of the CPA, established the FPS in September 2003 to free US troops from guarding Iraqi government property and to prevent the kind of looting that erupted with the entry of US forces and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Bremer's order put the FPS under the command and pay of the ministries they protected, not of the interior and defense ministries, which handle the rest of Iraq's security forces. The order also allowed private security firms to handle the contracting of FPS guards for the ministries.<sup>376</sup>

US and MOI officials increasingly described the FPS units as militias that answer only to the ministry or private security firm that employs it. US officials acknowledged that they have no more control over the FPS than the Interior Ministry does. "Negative. None. Zero," said Lt. Col. Michael J. Negard, a spokesman for the US training of Iraqi forces. Even Interior Ministry Bayan Jabr said in April 2006 that the FPS was "out of control."<sup>377</sup>

On May 14, 2006, Ellen Knickmeyer reported in the *Washington Post* that Iraq's Interior Ministry had begun negotiations to bring central authority to the Facilities Protection Service, a unit originally numbering no more than 4,000 building guards, but which US officials say has become the new government's largest paramilitary force, with 145,000 armed men and no central command, oversight or paymaster.

On May 6, the private security companies that employed the FPS members agreed to several Interior Ministry proposals intended to bring some measure of central control and oversight to the paramilitary units. The ministry was to issue badges and distinctive seals for FPS vehicles and supervise FPS weapons. Agents of the security companies and the ministry clarified that FPS members were liable for prosecution for any crimes. The security companies also agreed to bring the FPS under ministry supervision, but General Raad al-Tamimi of the Interior Ministry did not disclose any details.<sup>378</sup>

### ***The Infrastructure Protection Forces***

The various infrastructure protection forces were placed under the MOD, but were much lower quality forces than the regular military, the MOI security forces, and many of the police. In many cases, they were corrupt, subject to insurgent penetration, and tied to various sects, ethnic groups, and tribes.

While Prime Minister Maliki referred to such forces as having some 150,000 men in May 2006, many were phantom employees, deserters, or virtually inactive. Such units also often sold their uniforms, weapons, and equipment. They also generally reported in de facto terms to another ministry, even when they were formally under the control of the Ministry of Defense.

The two key entities responsible for the security of Iraq's oil infrastructure in spring 2006 were the Strategic Infrastructure Battalions (SIBs) and the Oil Protection Force (OPF). The electric infrastructure was protected by the Electric Power Security Service (EPSS).

- The SIBs fielded more than 3,400 trained personnel to guard Iraq's critical oil infrastructure, particularly the vast network of pipelines, as of April.
- The OPF, managed by the Ministry of Oil, was responsible for guarding all other Iraqi oil industry assets and facilities.

As reported in SIGIR's April 2006 Report to Congress, the government formed the SIBs to improve infrastructure security. The SIBs were part of the Ministry of Defense, and four had completed basic training at the time of the report. They were currently conducting security



operations to protect oil pipelines and facilities critical to the domestic market and export industry. MNSTC-I equipped the SIBs and helped the Ministry of Defense develop institutional expertise and tradecraft. Developments reported by SIGIR included the following:

More than 3,400 soldiers have completed training in this area, and training for a second group has already begun. Attacks on Iraq's infrastructure account for only a small portion of total attacks. According to DOD, attacks on infrastructure during this quarter are down by 60%. But, combined with other variables, attacks on critical infrastructure are still expected to have a significant impact on:

- oil and fuel production
- revenues derived from crude exports

Additionally, although the number of infrastructure attacks has recently decreased, the complexity of the attacks has increased: insurgents have become more proficient at targeting critical infrastructure nodes, as well as intimidating personnel who deliver essential services.

These forces had serious problems, however, and were generally ineffective and could not be trusted. In early March 2006, DOS reported that Iraqi police had arrested several SIB guards on suspicion of aiding insurgents in targeting the oil pipeline system. This was the second recent incident in which SIB personnel were arrested in connection with insurgent plots against the oil pipeline infrastructure.<sup>379</sup>

In April 2006, Interior Minister Byan Jabr accused the Facilities Protection Service (FPS) of carrying out some of the killings largely attributed to death squads operating within MOI forces.<sup>380</sup> That same month, oversight of expansion and training of these forces raised further uncertainty. An inspector general was assigned to audit the \$147 million US-overseen FPS program. The report reflected a lack of transparency:<sup>381</sup>

...the auditors were never able to determine basic facts like how many Iraqis were trained, how many weapons were purchased and where much of the equipment ended up.

Of 21,000 guards who were supposed to be trained to protect oil equipment, for example, probably only about 11,000 received the training, the report said. And of 9,792 automatic rifles purchased for those guards, auditors were able to track just 3,015.

The Americans exercise no oversight over the F.P.S., nor does any central authority in the Iraqi government.

## Conclusions

Iraqi force development faced the challenge of an insurgency that continued to show it could strike at the sectarian and ethnic fault lines in Iraq, and could exploit the lack of an effective Iraqi government and leadership to push the country towards civil war. At the same time, sectarian and ethnic militias and security forces became a steadily more serious problem, rivaling the insurgency as a threat to Iraqi security.

During these developments, the Iraqi regular military forces under the Ministry of Defense steadily expanded in size and capability, and expanded their military role. They remained largely unified and "national" in character. The lack of an Iraqi government did, however, allow a continuing drift in setting clear Iraqi force goals, and in creating plans that would create forces that could both sustain themselves in combat and eventually acquire enough major weapons and combat equipment to deter foreign threats and defend the country.

The situation was far more difficult in the case of the forces under the Ministry of Interior, including the special security units and police. Some elements of these forces became tied to

Shi'ite militias, attacks on Sunnis, and other abuses. This forced the reorganization of all of the forces under the MOI, and it is still unclear how successful this reorganization will be.

MNF-I and the Iraqi government seem to be committed to giving Iraq effective internal and security police forces that will serve the nation, not given sects and ethnic groups. There has been no in-depth reporting about progress in this effort, and it faces major challenges in the form of militias, police, and other security forces that are effectively under the control of regional or local leaders, most with ties to given sects and factions.

The "Year of the Police" that MNF-I and a number of Iraqi leaders called for in late 2005 has to some extent been delayed by political instability. The broader issue affecting Iraqi progress, however, is that Iraqi force development can only succeed if Iraqi political leaders can create effective and lasting political compromises that bring Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, Kurd, and other Iraqi minorities together in a coalition government and create the political forces necessary to engender political unity.

Equally important, Iraq must make progress in two other critical areas that are not directly related to Iraqi force development, but are critical to giving it meaning. One is to show that the Iraqi government can establish a lasting presence throughout Iraq, provide government services, and support its security efforts to deal with the insurgency with equal efforts to deal with militias, private and local security forces, and crime. One key to such success is to deploy both effective police forces and a working criminal justice system.

The second factor is that the government must be able to create a climate where economic progress can and does take place, where real jobs are created, where investment is made and new businesses actually start to operate, and where the government maintains effective services and infrastructure.

Without these steps, the new government will lose momentum and credibility, the country will drift back into increasing sectarian and ethnic violence, Iraqi forces will increasingly divide along sectarian and ethnic lines, and the nation may well devolve into civil conflict or sectarian and ethnic "federalism."

Finally, the creation of a full Iraqi government raises two other issues. One is the future status of US and Coalition forces relative to Iraq forces in terms of command, status of forces arrangements, and operational planning. The second is the need for far more concrete plans to create Iraqi forces balanced and heavy enough to allow the departure of most MNF-I forces by some period in 2008, or as soon as feasible.

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