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Iraqi Force Development and the Challenge of Civil War:

*The Critical Problems
The US Must Address if Iraqi
Forces Are to Do the Job*

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Executive Summary

Iraq has moved far beyond a Sunni Islamist or Ba'ath-driven insurgency. It is already in a state of limited civil war, and may well be escalating to the level of a major civil conflict. What began as a small resistance movement centered on loyalists to the Ba'ath and Saddam Hussein has expanded to include neo-Salafi Sunni terrorism, a broadly based Sunni insurgency, and now a series of broader sectarian and ethnic conflicts.

The current combination of Sunni Neo-Salafi extremist insurgency, Sunni Arab versus Shi'ite Arab sectarian conflict, Shi'ite versus Shi'ite power struggles, and Arab versus Kurdish ethnic conflict could easily cause the collapse of the current political structure. In the best case, it could lead to a Shi'ite or Shi'ite-Kurdish dominated government, with strong local centers of power, and an ongoing fight with Iraq's Sunnis. In the worst case, it could escalate to the break up of the country, far more serious ethnic and sectarian conflict, or violent paralysis. It has already led to widespread ethnic cleansing in urban areas by militias and death squads of all three major ethnic and religious groups.

If Iraq is to avoid a split and full-blown civil war, it must do far more than create effective Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). No such effort can succeed without an integrated strategy to forge a lasting political compromise between its key factions: Arab-Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, and Kurd – while protecting other minorities. Political conciliation must also address such critical issues as federalism and the relative powers of the central and regional governments, the role of religion in politics and law, control over petroleum resources and export revenues, the definition of human rights, and a host of other issues.

Anticipate, Learn and Change versus Persist, React and Be Defeated

From the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 to the present, the US has failed to implement a realistic and properly self-critical approach to policies and actions in Iraq. It is unclear that it could have succeeded under the best of circumstance, but one of its most critical failures has been to consistently deny the fact it was pursuing a high-risk effort in nation building and stability operations that could easily fail.

In practice, the US neither did an adequate job of anticipating the problems it had to solve nor rapidly adapted to the emerging realities in Iraq. Its national security leadership became a self-inflicted wound, and the US lurched from delayed response to response, always reacting too slowly and in a state of quasi-denial. One key problem was the failure to properly estimate the nature of the violence in Iraq; its steadily more complex nature, and the rate at which it would grow more intense.

These broad problems in the US conceptual approach to Iraq, and in the strategy and practice of nation building and stability operations, have had a major impact on the development of Iraqi forces. The Multinational Security Transition Command- Iraq (MNSTC-I) has had to make at least three major adaptations to its plans to develop Iraqi Security Forces during 2004-2007. Most notably, the assumption that the ISF would face a declining level of violence over time had to be changed to assume that they would have to overmatch their enemies at a constant level of violence. As of the spring of 2007, MNSTC-I was actively in the process of conducting "In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces" to determine what adaptations must be made in the second half of 2007 and beyond. A similar assessment in 2006 led directly to Prime Minister Maliki's decision to increase the size of the Iraqi Army and to fund it through Foreign Military

Sales. That funding has been incorporated in the current FMS account and is being used to grow the force.

Nevertheless, the US never developed an effective overall strategy for dealing with political conciliation, the development of all elements of Iraqi forces, improving the quality of Iraqi governance, and economic aid and development.

The end result was to increase security problems, and the pressure on Iraqi forces, in ways that help bring Iraq to the edge of large-scale civil war. The new strategy to stabilize Iraq that the US announced in the fall of 2005 was no more credible than its predecessors. It was based on an exaggerated estimate of political success, an almost deliberately false exaggeration of the success of the economic aid effort, unrealistic estimates of progress in developing the ISF, and inadequate efforts to develop effective governance and the rule of law.

As a result, the US government, its national security decision makers, and its intelligence community underestimated the threat Iraqi Army forces would face, underestimated the problems in developing effective Iraqi police forces, and called for an unrealistically rapid transfer of responsibility to Iraqi Security Forces. Real progress was being made in developing the ISF, but a combination of political pressure in Washington and failure to admit the growing level of violence in Iraq called for more progress than was possible as well as inadequate resources.

This situation was further complicated by Iraqi political problems and decisions. The MNF-I and MNSTC-I had to deal with two interim governments and elected government after 2005 that forced US and other Coalition advisors to try to temper efforts by senior Iraqi civilian and military leaders to take even great responsibility and control over the development of the ISF before it was ready. The US military has operated under pressure from both Washington and Baghdad, and one senior MNSTC-I officer described US efforts in dealing with the Iraqi Army as follows in late April 2007:

We have never strayed from the principle of a standardized training curriculum for both new Iraqi units and individual replacements despite great pressure to do so from our Iraqi counterparts. Nor have we rushed Iraqi units into battle. In fact, the addition of transition teams to tactical units in March 2005 was intended to ensure we had a valid, reasonable understanding of their capabilities...

It is worth noting that more than 3,500 Iraqi soldiers and 4,500 Iraqi Policemen have been killed in action in the past two years. Another 18,000 have been wounded in action. Iraq's security ministries as well as military and police leaders are taking "ownership" of their country's security problems to the extent we have thus far allowed them to."

The twin impact of the pressures from the US and Iraqi governments were all too clear in the efforts to improve security in Baghdad in 2006. Iraq forces were not ready for the task, and the Iraqi government proved unable or unwilling to deal effectively with the Shi'ite militias that had become as serious a problem as the Sunni insurgents. Later efforts to strengthen the Iraqi effort with more US advisors and limited numbers of US troops proved equally ineffective.

The US and ISF found themselves fighting battles in Baghdad, and in other areas with a high level of Sunni insurgent activity, where they could "win" at the tactical level, but not defeat or eliminate any armed faction, could not "hold" areas in ways that provided lasting security, and could not "build" in providing either effective government services or conditions that allowed economic progress and development.

The Need for Comprehensive Action and Strategy

The new “surge” strategy to secure Baghdad that President Bush announced in January 2007 will provide a much larger US military contingent, more Iraqi forces, and a new approach to strengthening the role of the Iraqi police. Real success, however, depends on providing a far higher degree of security for a city with well over five million people and much broader political conciliation among Iraq’s warring factions. It is far from clear whether it will prove possible to secure the greater Baghdad area, and the ring cities around it, with the US and Iraqi resources available.

Success may also require a level of patience and persistence that the US political climate could make impossible, particularly if a sustained effort is needed well into 2008. Iraqi progress in conciliation is uncertain at best, and may also move too slowly to be acceptable to the Congress and American people. Once again, the US may be demanding too much, too soon, and trying to force the pace in ways which increase the already serious risk of failure.

What is clear is that the US cannot secure either Baghdad or Iraq without effective Iraqi security forces and this includes both the Army and Police. At the same time, no strategy that hinges solely on the successful development of the ISF can succeed. Iraq must establish both effective governance and a rule of law; not simply deploy effective military, security, and police forces. Legitimacy does not consist of determining how governments are chosen, but in how well they serve the day-to-day needs of their peoples. Security cannot come through force alone. It must have the checks and balances that can only come when governments and courts are active in the field.

Iraq must also address its economic and demographic challenges if its people are to support its government and reject sectarian and ethnic violence. Iraq cannot achieve stability, however, unless its people have a reasonable degree of both physical and economic security. A nation cannot convert from a corrupt, state-controlled “command kleptocracy” in mid-war. It cannot achieve lasting peace unless it makes such a conversion over time and puts an end to a hopelessly skewed and unfair distribution of income, ends unemployment and underemployment levels of 30-60%, and becomes competitive on a regional and global level.

Progress in Iraq is still slow or faltering in each of the other areas necessary to make Iraqi force development successful:

- **Politics:** The election in late 2005 effectively divided Iraqis by sect and ethnic group, with only a small minority voting for truly national parties. No clear national party structure has emerged since that time. The Shi’ite parties increasingly demonstrate the rivalry between the three main Shi’ite parties, while seeking to dominate the nation at the expense of the Sunnis. The Kurds reflect more unity but conflicts exist over “independence,” dealing with the PKK, and past tensions between the PUK and KDP. Sunnis are just beginning to acquire a true political identity and the two main Sunni parties are divided and divisive.
- **The Role of the Constitution:** The creation of a new constitution has done nothing to establish consensus and has done much to divide the nation. It leaves more than 50 areas to be clarified, all of which involve potentially divisive debates between sectarian and ethnic groups, and most of which could lead to added tensions over the role of religion in the state.
- **Political conciliation:** Iraq’s leaders still seek national unity and compromise, but talk has not been followed by substance. Prime Minister Maliki’s conciliation plans have not taken hold, and the new government has not shown it can implement such plans or bring Arab Sunnis back into an effective political structure. While Moqtada Sadr has not reacted to the new US strategy by encouraging armed resistance, he appears to be losing control over the more radical parts of the

Mahdi Army. Progress in key areas like the revision of the constitution and implementation of an “oil law” has been grindingly slow. ReBa’athification and local elections have not occurred. The status of Kurdish autonomy, and federalism remain unresolved.

- **Governance:** The national government cannot even spend its development budget; much less demonstrate that it now has an effective ministerial structure or the ability to actually govern in many areas. Actual governance continues to default to regional and local authorities and factions, and cannot follow up effectively on Coalition and ISF victories even in Baghdad.
- **Security.** Most Iraqis either lack day-to-day security or depend on local militias and security forces. The Iraqi Army continues to have real-world priority over the development of the Iraqi police, and the much-heralded “year of the police” in 2006 produced only slow progress at the local level
- **Legal system and rule of law:** There is no real nation-wide consensus on what legal system to use, courts do not exist in many areas and are corrupt and ineffective in many others. Legal authority, like governance, is devolving down to the local level.
- **Economic Development:** Increases in macroeconomic figures like the total GDP disguise massive problems with corruption, the distribution of income, and employment, particularly in troubled Sunni areas and the poorer parts of Iraq’s major towns and cities. Young men are often forced to choose between the ISF, insurgency, and militias for purely economic reasons. The real-world economy of Sunni areas continues to deteriorate, and investment in even secure Shi’ite areas is limited by the fear of crime and insurgency. Only the Kurdish area is making real progress towards development.
- **Aid:** Iraq has largely spent the flood of US and other aid provided after the fall of Saddam as well as its oil food money. Large portions of this aid have been spent on corruption, outside contractors and imports, security, and projects with poor planning and execution, which now are unsustainable. Iraq will, however, desperately need major future aid to construct and develop if it can achieve political conciliation and security. The US committed \$20.8 billion of \$20.9 billion in aid funds as of February 13, 2007. It had obligated \$20.2 billion, and spent \$17.1 billion. The US continues to be unable to properly staff its PRTs or any aspect of its aid effort with adequate numbers of civilian experts, and security and transport are lacking for effective aid operations in many areas.
- **Energy and Oil:** Iraq continued to produce less than 2.5 million barrels of oil per day and exported well under 2 million barrels a day.¹ It was dependent on imported fuel and gasoline for more than 50% of its total needs. No major rehabilitation of Iraq’s oil fields and facilities has taken place. Waterflooding and heavy oil injection continued to be major problems, and the ability to recover oil from producing fields average less than two-thirds of the world average.

Many Iraqis still have hope for the future in spite of these problems, and still have a strong sense of national identity. The pressures that divide Iraqis, however, continue to increase and civil strife and tension continue to grow.

The Pace of Iraqi Force Development and the Impact of Civil War

Progress in the development of Iraqi security forces is difficult to gauge. Far too much of the unclassified US government and MNF-I public affairs reporting on the ISF exaggerates progress, ignores or understates real-world problems, and promises unrealistic timelines. Much of the media reporting, however, focuses on the cases where Iraqi forces fail – often in cases where they come under the greatest stress and where new units have not yet had time to gain experience and “shake out” their leadership and personnel.

There are very real success, and positive trends in the regular Iraqi Army. Some units do fight well, and many units can perform important security roles with US support. At the same time, the sheer lack of transparency in the unclassified US government reporting on

the war has made it almost impossible to distinguish success from failure and reality from spin.

The US Defense Department has stopped releasing detailed unclassified material about Iraqi Army, Police, and Border Enforcement readiness and manning levels, only giving information about how many units are “ready and equipped” and “in the lead.” These are vague, if not almost meaningless categories. “In the lead” does not indicate the level of independence from US support.

Similarly, Administration political leaders have constantly emphasized the number of regular military and police that have been trained and equipped as a key measure of success although the Department of Defense reporting stated in its March 2007 report on “Measuring Stability and Security” in Iraq that the MNF-I and Iraqi commands have never known not how many “ready and equipped” soldiers quit or deserted the force.² MNF-I does believe that approximately 50,000 soldiers and policemen have been lost to attrition (killed, wounded, separated, and deserted) over the past two years, but notes that reporting by Iraqi ministries remains inconsistent, particularly on all elements of the police.

US military personnel who train or operate with Iraqi units give mixed anecdotal assessments of their quality. There are numerous stories of abuse, corruption, and mixed loyalties, just as well as of individual courage, commitment, and success.

Some individual units said to be “in the lead” are described as highly capable and politically neutral, while others were blatantly partisan, ineffective, burnt out, tied to local missions and loyalties, or had high desertion rates that effectively disbanded the unit. There seemed to be a consensus among trainers that several years of a continued US security force training effort was vital in order to achieve some semblance of stability in Iraq, but also that it would still take years to succeed with a meaningful political compromise between sects and factions.

Some Iraqis are truly motivated. Many are not, but are asked to fight as if they were truly motivated to support the national government rather than signed up to earn a living and survive. There are problems in the US embed and advisory efforts as well. As was the case with the ARVN in Vietnam, their advisors often are not trained and lack the language skills to monitor pay, equity in promotion, conditions in quarters, food supply, and the other material conditions critical to real world morale and motivation. Some advisors choose to ignore the reality of sectarian and ethnic differences and motivation, do not track why Iraqi personnel actually go on leave, and do not monitor family conditions or attitudes towards military personnel in their home areas.

Serious problems in producing an adequate number of officers and noncommissioned officers are being addressed by both security ministries, but enduring solutions to the growth of leaders will take years not months to overcome. In many cases, Iraqi combat troops are asked to take on an unfamiliar concept of maintenance and support at the same time. They lack the experience to maintain their weapons and equipment, and lack the in unit capability and outside support to do so, A flood forward and replacement oriented military culture is asked to sustain its equipment as if it were Western or American.

From the US viewpoint, the problem is in teaching Iraqi leaders to be responsible stewards of resources. From an Iraqi viewpoint, there is a need to change the previous military culture, and give maintenance, logistics, and sustainability a priority that Iraqi forces never previously seen as necessary even during the Iran-Iraq and Gulf Wars.

MNSTC-I does feel that, “the Iraqi Army and police are self-reliant in matters of life support, The Coalition provides limited support in fuel and repair parts but most other support is Iraqi controlled and executed.”

MNSTC-I experts note that,

The training base which supports the recruitment and initial entry training for both individual replacements and new unit growth has been transitioned to Iraqi control and is effectively functioning...We have assisted both the MoD and the MoI to develop a contract-supported logistics architecture as an interim step until they can perform most logistic functions themselves. This architecture is in place, and the Ministries have a budget adequate to the task of sustaining it. Both Ministries have adopted a “Concept of Support” with milestones and metrics for performance. Measurable progress toward logistic self-reliance exists in all classes of supply and across all logistics functions.

Reporting at the unit and Ministry level, however, indicates that progress may be significantly slower than MNSTC-I hopes, and Iraqi officials and officers may be both slow to adapt and suffer from significant levels of corruption. Iraqi Governmental pay problems, corruption, a lack of adequate facilities and equipment, a lack of proper medical care, a lack of proper support for families, and problems with death and disability payments, often result in the poverty and unemployment of Iraqi young men. The ISF has major effectiveness, desertion, morale, motivation, and future retention problems.

The end result is sometimes to use up unready or over-committed units in spite of adding US embeds and partner units. Men who did not volunteer for demanding combat missions, particularly in complex sectarian or ethnic environments or outside their home areas are, being pushed into combat. They often have poor facilities, equipment and weapons that are sharply inferior to their US counterparts, and are at least partly excluded from the command and intelligence loops to preserve security. They are sometimes treated as second best or unreliable partners.

Ethnic and sectarian issues remain a serious problem. MNSTC-I experts reported in April 2007 that,

The Minister of Interior has accepted revised MNSTC-I transformation programs for both the National and Provincial Police and has acted to replace ineffective leaders as they are identified. In the past six months, 5 of 9 National Police Brigade Commanders have been relieved of their duties.

Shi'ite militia infiltration does continue throughout the ISF, especially in the National Police and regular police force. Militias also intimidate individual members of the security forces to secure their cooperation or at least forestall action against them.

Mixed loyalties not only exist at the level of individual policemen or officers, but also inside the relevant ministries. Iraqi policemen have complained that whenever they moved against militias, they would receive phone calls from top politicians telling them to allow these militias to operate. Political interference in ISF matters comes from the highest levels of the Iraqi government. The office of the prime minister itself has been accused of firing or arresting Iraqi Army and National Police commanders who are willing to confront Shi'ite militias.³ If such sectarian interference continues unabated from the highest levels of Iraq's government, it will be extremely difficult for the ISF to remain a cohesive force that represents the interests of Iraq as a whole.

Iraq's intelligence agencies have also been tainted by the sectarian conflict. Iraq's main intelligence agency, the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) has been hampered by

distrust among the government's Shi'ite elite of its aggressive actions against Iranian influence and its close ties to America. A second, quasi-legal intelligence agency began to operate under the auspices of the Shi'ite minister for national security affairs. This agency has repeatedly been accused of favoring Shi'ite interests.⁴

As one senior MNSTC-I officer notes, however, these problems are the symptom of much more serious issues:

The has been an erosion of trust both within the government and within the population at large over the past year, and it manifests itself in everyone believing the worst about everyone else. To be sure, there has been infiltration. It should be noted, however, the Government of Iraq has encouraged young men to disavow their allegiance to sectarian militias and – if qualified – to enter the security forces as individuals and not as groups.

The more important issue in assessing the cohesion and loyalty of Iraqi Security Forces is the presence of sectarian influence. This influence plays out in two ways: actively and passively. Active sectarian influence is criminal conduct. Passive sectarian influence is sympathy for those conducting criminal acts on the basis of sect.

We assess that incidents of active sectarian influence in the Army are minimal, in the National Police are moderate, and in the local police are significant – notably in Baghdad and Basra. We assess that incidents of passive sectarian influence in the Army are low and in all the police forces are high. Reducing active sectarian influences requires transparent investigations and actual prosecutions by courageous leaders. Reducing passive sectarian influence will depend upon further political progress towards reconciliation.

The problems affecting the overall development of the ISF have grown worse since late 2006. Statements by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki, and the impact of the US election, seem to have accelerated US and allied scheduling for withdrawal. Expanding Iraqi forces has become a political necessity, as it seems to be the only way for the US to stay for a significant period, and the only way to make an Iraqi takeover seem credible.

Little about Iraqi performance in the field, however, indicates that the army, security forces, and police are “75% complete” as some US spokesmen claimed in talking about an 18-24 month time period for a full scale shift of responsibility to Iraqi forces in 2006, and the ISF will require a very substantial aid and advisory effort, and significant if diminishing support from US combat forces, far beyond the start of 2008. A realistic timeframe is closer to 3 to 5 years.

In short, the number and quality of Iraqi security forces have increased. Both US and Iraqi government plans must still, however, deal with critical problems in terms of manpower, troop quality, discipline, and equipment that will take at least three to five more years to solve. Most importantly, the improvement in Iraqi forces has not yet led to increased security, and the current effort cannot be accelerated or surged in ways that allow the US to make a rapid and successful withdrawal of its forces.

Reacting to American Failures and Self-Inflicted Wounds

US politicians and commanders are being forced to rethink their entire course of action for securing the country. President Bush announced a new strategy for Iraq on January 10th, 2007, centering on a short-term “surge” of American troops to Baghdad and Anbar province.

This “surge” strategy, combined with the new “Gated Communities” counterinsurgency operational plan for Baghdad employed by General Petraeus, may bring a temporary drop in violence. However, without a much more intense and realistic ISF development effort, combined with political conciliation among Iraq's major powers, the “surge” may fail.

The same is true is Iraqi force development is pushed too fast. “Pace” is a key issue that must shape the intensity of the development effort; Iraqi forces must be able to absorb what the MNF-I is providing for them and have enough time to work with embeds and Coalition partner units so they become truly effective and self-sustaining.

The latest strategy, however, focuses so much on Baghdad that even “victory” leaves open the question of what strategy – if any – the US has for dealing with Iraq as a nation or for taking effective action even if its “surge” strategy wins in Baghdad

More money, manpower, and patience will not be enough to pull Iraq back from the brink without a new and more realistic strategy for shaping and integrating US, allied, and Iraqi efforts. The US mid-term elections are simply a confirmation of this need to make major changes in US policy towards Iraq that has been acknowledged by the replacement of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld with Robert Gates.

The wrong kind of change, however, can simply make defeat a certainty, increase risk, and force events to spiral out of control The demand by some Democrats to pressure the Iraqi government into fostering compromise and conciliation by drawing down troop levels is gathering momentum, but the ISF simply is not ready to take such missions and it is far easier to force Iraq’s leaders to divide along sectarian and ethnic lines that force compromise on a fractured political structure and society. Encouraging federation and separation may well have the same effect. The key issue is balance. If the US and its allies transition to Iraqi control too fast, they will falter and perhaps fragment. If the US and its allies transition too slowly, Iraqi forces will become dependent upon the Coalition and fail to progress]

Setting realistic goals for the ISF development effort means understanding the need to make today’s forces effective before any major expansion, to correct drastic past mistakes in developing the police and rushing Iraqi army forces into the field. More time is needed, not less. Moreover, no form of US military action and Iraqi force development can succeed without Iraqi political success and some major new approach to providing economic aid, helping Iraq develop effective governance, and creating a rule of law and criminal justice system.

The end result is growing tension between three at least partly conflicting imperatives: the wish to draw down US troop levels rather quickly, the need to exert political pressure on the main political players in Iraq, and the need for continuing high force levels to provide security so the slow political process and force training effort can take place. How these conflicting forces will play out remains to be seen.

Honestly Addressing the Present State of Iraqi Security Forces

The effort to create effective Iraqi military, national security and police forces has been marginally more successful than Iraq political and economic efforts, but scarcely the level of success the US planned even at the beginning of 2006. It is also far less successful than the Department of Defense has claimed, and as it has been presented in recent testimony to Congress. It is never clear whether the problem is “spin,” the search for political advantage, the desire to avoid seeing the US accept defeat, or self-deception. The reality is, however, that virtually nothing the US officially says about Iraqi force development can now be taken at face value, and the lack of integrity in virtually every aspect of MNF-I reporting on ISF force development has become a tragic disgrace.

The US has reported Iraqi manning levels based on the number of men it has trained and equipped that bear no resemblance to the actual manning levels of men that are still in service. It has claimed that Iraqi units are in the lead that in fact have little or no real operational capability or activity, mixing units that reflect very real mission capability with ones that are failed force elements that should actually be assigned the lowest levels of readiness. It has mixed real transfers of responsibility to effective Iraqi forces with cosmetic, politically motivated transfers to Iraqi commands and units that cannot perform such missions and often are dependent on US armor, artillery, airpower, logistics and service support, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R).

While over 320,000 men have been trained and equipped since the fall of Saddam Hussein, a large percentage has since left and deserted, substantial numbers have been killed and wounded. As has been noted earlier, MNF-I experts put the total at least 50,000. Such experts also feel, however, that such figures are predictable based on historical analysis. Attrition rates are expected to be around 15%. They feel by that standard, Iraq may actually lost fewer than to desertion than might have been predicted, and that the total of killed, wounded, and deserted is at historical level

Some 10-20% of those who remain are also absent at any given time because they leave to take care of their families and transfer their pay in a country where there is no meaningful banking system. The Iraqi regular forces and National Police may only be about 20-25% short of the totals reported for trained and equipped manpower, but the percentages could be much higher. There certainly are many battalion elements with manning levels well under 50%, and many units with critical shortages of officers and NCOs. This leave problem remains a challenge for Iraqi leaders. A "proof of principle" banking system internal to the MoD has only been marginally successful, and no similar program exists for the police.

The shortfalls in actual strength versus "trained and equipped" figures for the regular police and Facilities Protection Force are much larger. They are probably well in excess of 30% of the total of men reported as trained and equipped and possibly on the order of 50% -- although so many phantom men, absentees, and inert but manned units exist that any precise estimates are difficult to impossible. Many units are clearly so badly manned that they are phantom or hollow forces, but the Department of Defense has reported that there is no accurate way to track the total, and anecdotal data are far less reliable than for the regular forces.

The March 2007 quarterly report by the Department of Defense on Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq notes that,⁵

The actual number of present-for-duty soldiers is about one-half to two-thirds of the total due to scheduled leave, absence without leave, and attrition. The police have also experienced significant attrition of personnel who have been through Coalition training, but provincial and local governments have hired additional police outside the train-and-equip program.

Furthermore, manpower totals for the entire Iraqi ISF, or even individual Iraq services, would be highly misleading even if they reflected anything approaching reality.. Some units actually have excess manpower, while many have far more serious shortfalls than the average. Units may have adequate total manpower, but be critically short of officers and/or NCOs. Without a break out of manpower that also shows officers and NCOs on hand, total manning data provides little insight into force capability, the time needed to make Iraqi forces effective, or if and when ISF units can replace US and other MNF-I forces. These data are generally more misleading than useful.

The challenges Iraq faces are further complicated by the fact that some Iraqi forces, including those in the army, were recruited and equipped to serve locally in limited defensive roles, not to act as mobile active combat units deployable throughout the country to deal with insurgency and civil conflict. Five Iraqi Army divisions were recruited from a national pool and trained with the expectation that they would deploy as needed throughout Iraq. The other five were integrated from the former Iraqi National Guard on the basis of regional deployment. It is also far from clear that many of those recruited for the “national” divisions understood that they would serve outside their area or volunteered for any reason other than economic desperation – a motive that ties them far closer to their families and dependents than any concept of national service.

It was only in the spring of 2006, that the MNF-I and MNSTC-I began to develop deployability as a core competency of the entire Army. As a result, and the MNF-I made several major procurements, including added armor protected mobility and route clearance capability, to give the Iraqi Army better deployability. The MNF-I and Iraqi government are now seeking to improve the recruiting base, improve pay (Since January 2007, the Iraqi Army has had a deployment bonus for those units serving outside their assigned sectors), and to make other arrangements to create a nationally deployable force. The fact remains, however, and new equipment and facilities will be needed for the deployable units thrust into more serious combat.

The Iraqi MOD forces (Iraqi Army, Air Force, Navy, Special Operations, and Support forces) have performed better than MOI forces, on the whole. Partially in response to this development, the Defense Department announced in 2007 that, “Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MoI) forces will be trained and equipped like MoD forces.”⁶

In an effort to better tailor the ISF to fight the insurgency, on October 10, 2006, the Prime Minister approved the implementation of the national counter-terrorism capability concept. This concept is scheduled to reach “Full Operational Capability” by December 2007. According to the DoD, “Full Operational Capability” consists of:

Development of a national Bureau of Counter-Terrorism, separate from the ministries, that serves as the principal advisor to the prime minister on counterterrorism matters

Establishment of a coherent, nonsectarian, counter-terrorism “tiering” strategy that determines the level of the terrorist threat, assigns appropriate responsibility for action, and defines approval authority for execution; this strategy was established as part of the overall counter-terrorism concept

Establishment of a separate major command, equivalent to the ground, air, and naval forces commands, that provides support to the Bureau of Counter-Terrorism in intelligence and targeting areas.⁷

There is a broad recognition that progress in creating effective National Police, regular police, and facilities protection forces falls far short of the required minimum. For all of the variations on “win,” “hold,” and “build,” it is brutally clear that a combination of US, allied, and Iraqi Army troops can still “win,” but the various police and security forces are too weak, corrupt, and factional to “hold” and cannot provide the continuing security in even moderate risk areas to allow Iraqi government officials and aid workers to “build.” The Iraqi government and US still have only one-third of the security capabilities they need to implement an effective strategy and these problems are compounded by crime, corruption, a lack of effective courts and the instruments that create a rule of law.

Even the Iraqi Army, however, is still a comparatively weak tool being put under far too much pressure. The US command may feel that it is moving more slowly than Iraqi

leaders want. In at least some cases, however, the US has rushed Iraqi battalions and force elements into being and then into combat before they are ready, effectively undercutting the Iraqi force development process and sometimes gravely weakening fledgling Iraqi units. The US has often used advisors and embedded training teams that also are not ready for the missions they are supposed to perform, compounding the problems inherent in creating new units.

One case study of the precipitous effect of premature handover to less-than-able forces took place in Haditha in the fall of 2004, when US troops withdrew from the city to retake Fallujah. Michael Gordon, chief military correspondent of the New York Times, also notes the important psychological effects of such premature responsibility shifts on future ISF recruiting:

What followed was a devastating setback for the American effort to carry out counter-insurgency operations in the violent al-Anbar province. While the Americans were securing Fallujah the Iraqi police in Haditha were accosted by insurgents and executed. The episode left the town without a police force that could check the operations of the insurgents and taught the Iraqis there that the Americans could not be counted on to protect their nascent institutions, whatever their good intentions.

It also made the task of recruiting a new police force all but impossible. When follow-on marine units were deployed to Haditha their efforts to mount a police recruitment drive failed, forcing the marines to think about seeking police recruits from other parts of the country.⁸

Other problems come from trying to use force elements built for local defense missions on a national level and in far more demanding forms of counterinsurgency warfare and civil conflict missions than they were recruited for and designed to fight. There are additional problems with corruption, nepotism, creating sufficient junior officers and NCOs, and providing the levels of firepower, mobility, and communications Iraqi forces really need. Hollow units do not learn by being thrust prematurely into combat; they are crippled or wasted.

At the level of officers and NCOs, the options are ultimately political conciliation and compromise, division by sect or ethnicity with a strong risk of creating separate Shi'ite or Sunni force, or a coup or strong man. The same is true of other ranks in both the regular forces and police. All desperately need an effective pay system and enough income to resist corruption and infiltration. All need family support and adequate means of getting pay to their families. Medical services are critical; so are real-world death and disability benefits. No effort that is not founded on pay and benefits, rather than leadership and motivation, can possibly succeed.

Similarly, it is impossible to treat all Iraqi forces as if they are or can be truly national and could be deployed on a national level. Some units do behave in this manner, and many more can be created over time. The fact is, however, that most Iraqi regulars were recruited for local defense and far less demanding missions. Most police are local, and will be driven by local interests and political conditions. The local role of militias and various non-“national” security forces cannot be ignored, and must somehow be integrated into the ISF structure or given incentives to disband. No ISF effort can succeed that does not explicitly recognized these realities.

A Lack of Proper Equipment

The MOD has begun to increase its armored forces, but its efforts fall far behind need – a fact made all too clear by the constant increases in the US army and Marine Corps efforts

to uparmor US forces. These problems have been made worse by mismanagement and corruption.

In June 2005, for example, the MoD ordered 98 BTR-80UP armored personnel carriers (APC) from Poland. The deal was delayed a year, and the first of the vehicles began to arrive in September 2006. Most of the BTR-80UP's will be delivered in a basic APC configuration. Iraq will also receive some specially modified BTR-80UP's, including: command vehicles for battalion commander (BTR-80UP-KB), command vehicles for company commander (BTR-80UP-KR), staff vehicles (BTR-80UP-S), armored ambulances (BTR-80UP-A), reconnaissance vehicles (BTR-80UP_R), cargo vehicles (BTR-80UP-T), and armored maintenance/recovery vehicles (BTR-80UP-BREM).⁹

Compounding this problem is the extensive corruption endemic in Iraqi government, which has forced Iraq to expand the use of "total package" military procurements.¹⁰ A large \$400 million deal to procure Russian helicopters from a Polish contractor in 2004 and 2005 turned out to be corrupt. Many of the helicopters that did arrive were more than 25 years old and not air-worthy. The Iraqi government then renegotiated the deal, to bring in 28 new MI-17 Russian helicopters. The Four MI-17's that had arrived by February 2007, however, were missing key onboard systems that allowed the helicopters to perform combat missions. They were restricted to training missions in friendly airspace only.

MNF-I experts indicates that this particular sale was an direct commercial sale organized by the Ministry of Defense and that it subsequently made the necessary changes in procurements to correct this. The fact remains, however, that reports of under-equipped Iraqi soldiers are common. One reporter noted in February 2007, that Iraqi soldiers manning checkpoints in Baghdad wore plastic shower sandals instead of army boots.¹¹ Iraqi officers have even been accused of selling the very uniforms their men were supposed to be issued.

What may be even more serious -- as the US considers efforts to accelerate Iraqi force development -- is the lack of any clear plan and program to provide heavier forces.

MNF-I experts note that the issue, however, is not the lack of a clear plan per se. Plans cannot be agreed to and implemented without building consensus among Iraq's senior leaders on the future of their military forces and getting them to make a commitment to make the necessary financial commitments.

Success is also dependent on the willingness of the US government to enter into a long-term security relationship with the Government of Iraq, and the honest recognition that the US will almost certainly have to fund this effort initially and for some years to come. This does not mean that the Iraqi government cannot do more, and it plans to. The Iraqi budget for 2007 calls for Iraq to spend more on Iraqi forces than the US government for the first time since the fall of Saddam Hussein. If these Iraqi plans are actually and honestly implemented, the Iraqi budget for 2007 funds the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior at \$7.3 billion. In addition, Iraqi is investing \$1.7 billion in end of the year 2006 funds in equipment purchases through the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. Total funding authority for the MoD and MoI is \$9.0 billion. The US government program in the Iraqi Security Forces Fund over 18 months is approximately \$5 billion, roughly 50% of planned Iraqi expenditures.

If the US wants out of Iraq in a way that produces lasting regional stability, however, then armor, artillery, mobility, IS&R, close air support, and a large range of support

assets must come in. Despite assurances from General Casey that Iraq's security forces will be equipped by the end of 2007, the Iraqi government is not yet ready to manage such efforts, and Iraq cannot fund them. A long-range strategy, plan, and aid funds are critical. If they exist, they exist in remarkable silence.

Sectarian and Ethnic Problems in the Regular Forces

Mixed loyalties are a way of life not only in Iraq but also throughout the region. They do, however, take on steadily growing importance when a nation begins to violently fragment along sectarian, ethnic, and tribal lines. Sectarian issues are less serious in the regular military forces under MoD control than in the MOI forces, but still presented a broad set of problems. According to the Director of National Intelligence's February 2006 report, many elements of the Iraqi security forces remain loyal to sectarian and party interests.¹²

Sectarian divisions within the armed forces reflect the fact that many units were created along geographic lines. Sunnis, Shi'ites and Kurds mostly served in geographic areas familiar to their groups. These divisions were even more notable at the battalion level, where battalion commanders tended to command only soldiers of their own sectarian or regional backgrounds.

According to the Brookings Institution's Iraq Index, Sunnis made up less than 10 percent of the existing forces in 2006. Ed O'Connell, a senior analyst with the Rand Corp., said that the Iraqi military was chiefly built along sectarian lines. He added: "There have been recent efforts to recruit the Sunni, but no one wants to die, so that has been largely unsuccessful."¹³

Sunnis and Kurds are over-represented in senior leadership positions. Shi'ites were adequately represented at the battalion level, but less so at higher echelons. The reason was primarily the military experience required for higher levels of command, which a greater number of Sunnis and Kurds had earned in the old regime's army and the *Peshmerga*, respectively.

While the nationally recruited divisions are more representative of Iraq's ethno-religious composition, the even-numbered divisions were originally formed as National Guard units, to be deployed in their respective local regions. These units continued to be more ethnically and religiously representative of their region, not of Iraq as a whole.¹⁴

More broadly, the Army has shown little overall willingness to become actively involved in halting Iraq's civil fighting through early 2007, although a few force elements performed well in such missions in Baghdad during the summer and fall of 2006. Like all Iraqi forces, the Army was never recruited, trained, or equipped to fight sectarian and ethnic forces in civil conflict, or intervene in civil war and local civil clashes. If a major civil war does occur, or the country divides along sectarian and ethnic lines, Iraqi regular forces could divide as well. They could fragment even further if the Shi'ite coalition divides, or the Shi'ites and Kurds divide.

A battalion commander with the 1st brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, Maj. Hussein al-Qaisi, said government officials often called him when he tried to arrest suspected high-ranking militia leaders, Sunni as well as Shi'ite. Al-Qaisi, stationed in Baghdad, said: "Sometimes they'll back them up no matter what. We have to let them go."¹⁵

Iraqis are not alone in detecting mixed loyalties in Shi'ite Iraqi army units. Lt. Col Edward Taylor, embedded with the Iraqi Army's 6th Division in Baghdad, reported that: "I have to operate under the assumption that within this unit there are people loyal to

Jaish al-Mahdi [known in the US as the Mahdi Army]. I have to make that assumption so I have the proper security measures in place to protect my soldiers.”¹⁶

There were reports of US soldiers complaining about their Iraqi counterparts as being “among the worst they’ve ever seen” during combined US and Iraqi army operations in Baghdad in the summer and fall of 2006. Their loyalties appeared unclear as they let militiamen pass checkpoints unhindered during raids and allowed barriers and concertina wire meant to bolster defensive positions to be dragged away. Even the notification of the senior officer at the checkpoint by US troops did not help. US military advisor Lt. Col. Greg Watt attributed this behavior to sectarian loyalties:

From my perspective, you can’t make a distinction between Iraq army Shi’ites and the religious militias. You have a lot of soldiers and family members swayed and persuaded by the religious leadership. (...) There’s no doubt in my mind that (an Iraqi division commander in Baghdad) has soldiers who are followers of religious leaders. Are they loyal to the division commander? Yes. But they may be loyal to both.

He added that another problem was violence against Iraqi soldiers when they were off duty, and threats against their families.¹⁷

At the same time, many Shi’ite leaders clearly believed by mid 2006 that the violence in Baghdad was rooted in the Sunni attempt to regain power through violence, and that Shi’ite militias and revenge killings were an inevitable response. These beliefs raise doubts about the loyalties of the Shi’ite dominated ISF. Sunnis, on the other hand, often believed that the Shi’ite-dominated ISF serves only Shi’ite interests. According to one Sunni resident of violence plagued Sunni neighborhood in Baghdad: “People were disgusted and were enraged by the activity of the security forces.”¹⁸

Recent polls have shown that the level of confidence in the Iraqi Army and police varies sharply according to ethnic group. Sunnis had far less confidence in the ISF than Shi’ites or Kurds. These results are illustrated in Figure one, and the sharp differences in confidence by sect and ethnicity show the impact of the widespread perception that the ISF is composed of, and sympathetic to, the interests of Shi’ites and Kurds.

Figure One

Iraqi Confidence in the Army and Police

Percentage who have:	Sunni	Shi'ite	Kurd	Total
A great deal of confidence in the Army	9%	31%	33%	24%
A lot of confidence in the Army	16	49	47	37
Not very much confidence in the Army	35	2	19	25
No confidence in the Army	40	0	20	14

	Sunni	Shi'ite	Kurd	Total
A great deal of confidence in the Army	9%	31%	33%	24%
A lot of confidence in the Army	16	49	47	37
Not very much confidence in the Army	35	20	19	25
No confidence in the Army	40	0	2	14

Source: ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll. March 19, 2007. Pg. 24

Popular Perceptions of Iraqi Force Development

These sectarian and ethnic divisions also provide an important perspective on Iraqi force development. The MNF-I and US are seeking to develop effective forces. The battle in Iraq, however, is as much one to end civil conflict as it is to defeat the insurgency, and Iraq popular attitudes towards both Iraq and US forces become very different when they are related to the violence that shapes day-to-day life in Iraq. The MNF-I, US and Iraqi government statistics on violence in Iraq fail to make a serious effort to estimate threats, kidnappings, woundings, intimidation, or sectarian and ethnic crimes. These 'lower' forms of violence have become far more common in Iraq than killings, and represent the bulk of the real-world challenge to the ISF.

An ABC News poll conducted in February and March 2007 found:¹⁹

Widespread violence, torn lives, displaced families, emotional damage, collapsing services, an ever-starker sectarian chasm – and a draining away of the underlying optimism that once prevailed. Violence is the cause, its reach vast. Eighty percent of Iraqis report attacks nearby – car bombs, snipers, kidnappings, and armed forces fighting each other or abusing civilians. It's worst by far in the capital, Baghdad, but by no means confined there. The personal toll is enormous. More than half of Iraqis, 53 percent, have a close friend or relative who's been hurt or killed in the current violence. One in six says someone in his or her own household has been harmed. Eighty-six percent worry about a loved one being hurt; two-thirds worry deeply. Huge numbers limit their daily activities to minimize risk. Seven in 10 report multiple signs of traumatic stress.

The poll found that while 63 percent of Iraqis said they felt very safe in their neighborhoods in 2005, only 26 percent had said this in early 2007. One in three did not feel safe at all. In Baghdad, home to a fifth of the country's population, eighty-four percent feel entirely unsafe. Even outside of Baghdad, just 32 percent of Iraqis felt "very safe" where they lived compared with 60 percent a year and a half ago.²⁰

Nationally, 12 percent of all Iraqis surveyed reported that ethnic cleansing – the forced separation of Sunnis and Shiites – has occurred in their neighborhoods. In mixed-population Baghdad, it's 31 percent. This is not desired: In rare agreement, 97 percent of Sunni Arabs and Shiites alike oppose the separation of Iraqis on sectarian lines. Nonetheless, one in seven Iraqis overall – rising to a quarter of Sunni Arabs, and more

than a third of Baghdad residents – said they themselves have moved homes in the last year to avoid violence or religious persecution.

As security conditions have worsened, so have expectations for future improvement in the conditions of life – an especially troubling result, since hopes for a better future can be the glue that holds a struggling society together. In 2004 and 2005 alike, for example, three-quarters of Iraqis expected improvements in the coming year in their security, schools, availability of jobs, medical care, crime protection, clean water and power supply. Today only about 30 to 45 percent still expect any of these to get any better.

The ABC poll asked about nine kinds of violence that broke the security problems Iraqis and ISF forces faced into far more detail than the Coalition and US have ever publicly reported (car bombs, snipers or crossfire, kidnappings, fighting among opposing groups or abuse of civilians by various armed forces). These results are reflected in **Figure Two**.²¹

Most Iraqis in Baghdad said at least one of these had occurred nearby; half reported four or more of them. Some 53 percent of Iraqis said a close friend or immediate family member had been hurt in the current violence. That ranged from three in 10 in the Kurdish provinces to nearly eight in 10 in Baghdad. Even outside Baghdad, 74 percent reported at least one form of violence, and 25 percent reported four or more (34 percent excluding the Kurdish area, which was far more peaceful than the country overall.)

What is equally striking, however, is what Figure Three reveals about Iraqi perceptions of US, Iraqi Army, and police forces. It is clear that with the exception of the people in the Kurdish zone many Iraqis see all of the forces deployed as guilty of unnecessary violence, and this is especially true in Baghdad. The source data for the poll also show a strong correlation between force activity and the perception of unnecessary violence. These same trends emerge when Iraqis are asked what they try to avoid to improve their security. While the US and Iraqi government may focus on force development to defeat the insurgency and control civil violence, Iraqis see such forces as a major civil-military problem and a serious threat to their daily security.

Figure Two
**Kinds of Violence Iraqis Reported as Occurring Nearby and the Civil-Military
 Reaction in Early 2007**

(In percent)

	All	Baghdad	Kurdistan	Rest of Iraq	
Type of Violence Encountered (Percent reporting)					
Kidnappings for ransom		40%	58%	4%	41%
Gov't/anti-gov't fighting		34	57	1	33
Car bombs, suicide attacks		32	52	3	31
Snipers, crossfire		30	56	*	27
Sectarian fighting		25	49	1	22
Perceive Unnecessary Violence by: (Percent reporting)					
U.S./coalition forces		44	59	9	47
Local militia		31	44	2	32
Iraqi police		24	44	1	22
Iraqi Army		24	44	0	22
Any of these		80	100	12	86
Four or more of these		37	70	1	34
Friend/family member harmed		53	77	29	49
Focus of Efforts to Avoid Violence: (Percent who try to avoid)					
	All	Sunni	Shiite	Kurdish	
U.S./coalition forces		81%	95%	85%	40%
Passing through checkpoints		66	92	64	17
Passing by police stations/ Public buildings		55	91	45	10
Markets/crowds		54	74	53	17
Travel		53	71	54	18
Leaving home		51	77	48	5
Going to/applying for work		43	63	40	7
Sending children to school		39	66	32	3

Source: ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007, pp. 5-6.

Real and False Progress in Assuming Leadership in Field Operations

As the number of Iraqi units has grown, they have taken a larger role in field operations, but with far less real world success and independence than the Department of Defense has claimed in its unclassified reports and testimony to Congress. Far too many of such claims have been more cosmetic than real. Many units “in the lead” have demonstrated little or no real mission responsibility or capability, and were extremely dependent on MNF-I command, planning, and support. In practice, they could only act under the leadership of embedded advisors and/or in cooperation with partner units. Moreover, the US ceased to report on the readiness of the units involved in any way that related to their actual mission readiness and performance. The good were lumped together with the mediocre, bad, and inactive.

The MNF-I’s refusal to tie its reporting to real-world unit effectiveness has led it to report that a total of 5 Iraqi Army divisions, 25 brigades, and 85 battalions and 2 National Police

battalions had assumed the lead responsibility for their respective areas of operation by August 7, 2006. By this time the Iraqi Army was said to have a total strength 106 combat battalions. There were eight Strategic Infrastructure Battalions (SIBs) at varying levels of capability with another three combat battalions in the process of forming. The SIBs and other enabling units were seen to be critical for improving the overall quality and independence of the Iraqi forces.

The Department of Defense reported in March 2007 that,²²

As of February 13, 2007, 8 Division Headquarters, 31 Brigade Headquarters, and 93 Iraqi Army battalions had assumed the lead for counter-insurgency operations within their assigned areas of operations, and Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) had assumed command and control of 6 of 10 Iraqi Army divisions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 8th, and 10th). Although these units lead security in their respective areas of operations, most still require substantial logistics and sustainment support from Coalition forces.

Given the fact, outside experts were reported that as few as 10 battalions were effective in late November 2006, such reports presented major credibility problems.²³ Assuming responsibility is also highly relative when, as that same report noted, “The Coalition is focusing on improving the proficiency of all military and police units, primarily through the efforts of Transition Teams. These teams, composed of 6,000 advisors in more than 480 teams, are embedded at all levels of Iraqi units in all major subordinate commands.”²⁴ It is even more relative when most of the forces involved have no meaningful armor or artillery, and depend on Coalition air support, ongoing or back up support from US and British partner units, and need Coalition aid with logistics, sustainability, mobility, and supply.

Figure Three shows a US/MNF-I comparison of the growth of assessed MOD and MOI National Police force capabilities at the unit level from June 2005 to February, 2007 in terms of units not yet ready, units fighting side by side with Coalition force, and units in the lead with Coalition enablers or fully independent. The problem is that DoD has defined the term “in the lead” as being “with Coalition enablers or fully independent,” and neither shows how many of these units are really “fully independent” or defines this term in ways that have any relation to actual combat units.²⁵

In fact, the units counted in **Figure Three** range from highly ineffective to virtually passive and incapable of any kind of meaningful mission on their own. Meaningful readiness data would require unit-by-unit data that contained readiness assessments in several sub-categories (personnel, command and control, training, sustainment/logistics, equipment, leadership) as well as a narrative assessment of key shortfalls and impediments of the unit to assume the lead for operations. They would also estimate the time needed for the unit to assume the lead.

Meaningful combat capability data would have to be based on actual unit performance in given types of missions, not readiness data or estimates devoid of combat experience. It is one of the odd tragedies of current intelligence and force assessment reporting that it generally is far less meaningful than the World War One era assessments that focused more on unit history in combat than efforts to find directly comparable statistic indicators or assessments by category.

Moreover, “fully independent” is almost meaningless if the units cannot engage in any form of demanding combat operation without support from US airpower, artillery, and/or logistics; if they lack the armor to operate in demanding missions; and require emergency back up from Coalition forces if anything goes wrong. Even the best forces cannot use

weapons they do not have, or perform missions for which they are not equipped. This is particularly true when Iraqi forces have very limited IS&R capabilities, which are grossly inferior to those of US forces, and security considerations restrict how much data many “in the lead” units can be given.

These failures to honestly tie claims that Iraqi forces are “in the lead” to real-world effectiveness cast doubt on the most critical aspects of public MNF-I and US reporting. In fact, the GAO has listed three key reasons why an accurate assessment of ISF readiness and progress can only come from the unit-by-unit reports:²⁶

- The usefulness of TRA [Transition Readiness Assessments] reports as an instrument to measure combat readiness could have been tested.
- The aggregate data could have been verified.
- Shortfalls in specific areas, such as personnel, equipment, logistics, training, and leadership, could have been identified.²⁷

The GAO also stated that ultimate goal of continuing to strengthen ISF combat forces and the support units was to eventually eliminate the Iraqi force’s dependence on coalition forces.²⁸

Figure Three
Iraqi Forces Assessed Capabilities

Force Component	Units in the Lead With Coalition Enablers or Fully Independent		Units Fighting Side by Side with Coalition Forces		Units Not Ready	
	Jun 05	Feb 07	Jun 05	Feb 07	Jun 05	Feb 07
	MOD Forces					
Iraqi Army, Special Operations Combat Forces and Strategic Infrastructure Brigades	24	92	55	27	34	36
Logistic Enablers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Air Force						
Navy	-	-	-	-	-	-
MOD Forces						
National Police Combat Battalions	2	6	12	21	1	3
National Police Brigade Headquarters	0	2	0	7	1	1
National Police Division Headquarters	0	0	0	0	1	2

Adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2007 Report to Congress, p. 26; Note: +/- 5% margin of error

Uncertain progress has been made in providing more objective reports. For example, Gen. George Casey reported in mid-October 2006 that six of the 10 Iraqi divisions – 30 of the 36 brigades and almost 90 of the 112 battalions were then “in the lead.” He described the task as training and equipping units, then “putting them in the lead,” to finally make them independent.²⁹

Virtually all independent reporting by major media, however, has presented a very different picture of readiness, as have many officers returning from Iraq. For example, an LA Times article in early December 2006 described an operation in Baghdad with Iraqi units supposedly “in the lead,” that showed some of the difficulties Iraqi Army units had under the stress of combat. While this evidence is at best anecdotal, it is still significant because the unit in question was Iraq’s 9th Mechanized Division; one of Iraq’s best trained and equipped divisions. US Army Col. Douglass S. Heckman recalls how “In August, when we started Operation Together Forward to secure Baghdad, we called on a bunch of units to assist. This division was the only one that moved into the operation. The others balked.”

The problems even this unit had in performing against insurgents in Baghdad did not bode well for the state of Iraqi security forces and suggested that Iraqi force development would take patience. The operation’s objective in Baghdad’s Fadhil neighborhood was to capture 70 high-value targets. In the end, 43 insurgents, including three foreign nationals,

were captured, and an estimated 100 killed, with only one Iraqi soldier killed and six wounded, albeit with significant collateral damage.

However, the course of the 11-hour operation revealed several weaknesses of the 9th mechanized division. After the unit had walked into an ambush and were stopped by a coordinated rocket, grenade, and mortar attack, “fear took over” among the Iraqis, according to Staff Sgt. Michael Baxter. “They refused to move. We were yelling at them to move.” While the Iraqis were supposed to take the lead in the operation, “it started out that way,” Baxter said. “But five minutes into it, we had to take over.”

The LA Times article recounted how

[...] confusion swiftly reigned as insurgents in Fadhil pummeled dismounted Iraqi troops and their American advisors. U.S. radio jammers seeking to hinder communications between insurgents ended up blocking the Iraqi soldiers’ walkie-talkies, forcing them to use unreliable cell phone signals to stay in contact. Voice commands were lost [...]

The US advisers witnessed poor of weapons discipline: at times, the overwhelmed Iraqi soldiers fired wildly, sweeping their machine-gun barrels across friendly and insurgent targets alike, witnesses said. “I had to throw bullet casings at them to get their attention,” said Sgt. 1st Class Agustin Mendoza, another U.S. trainer who manned a Humvee gut turret during the battle. “They had no weapons discipline.” [...] Such incidents show just how important it is to have MiTTs are embedded with Iraqi units, and phase them out only when such units are really ready to assume responsibility for independent action.

Similar reporting on ISF operations inside and outside of Baghdad in the first months of 2007 from independent media casts equally serious doubt on the value of the kind of reporting provided in the Department of Defense Quarterly report for March 2007. This report provided a map showing that Iraqi Army units were in the lead in counterinsurgency operations in Iraq in every area in Iraq except Al Anbar, roughly half of Baghdad, a Kurdish area, and the Basra area in the far southeast. This same map also claimed that the Iraqi Army had experienced the rapid development from May 2006 to February 2007 reflected in **Figure Four**:

Figure Four

Iraqi Army and National Police with Lead Responsibility for Counter Insurgency Operations in Their Areas

	<u>Division HQs</u>		<u>Brigade HQs</u>		<u>Battalions</u>	
	May 06	Feb 07	May 06	Feb 07	May 06	Feb 07
Iraqi Army	2	8	14	31	57	93
National Police	0	0	2	0	6	0
Total	2	8	16	31	63	93

The data in **Figure Four** do show how unclassified Department of Defense reporting and testimony has downplayed the grave problems in MOI forces. DoD reported that all 27 National Police battalions conducted counter-insurgency operations, and six battalions had the security lead in their areas of responsibility in May 2006. Additionally, 10 Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) were transferred to the Government of Iraq between May and August, bringing the total to 52 of a total 110 FOBs under Iraqi control. Three more FOBs were scheduled to be transferred to Iraq by January 2007.³⁰ These exaggerated and rushed transfers did nothing to help the ISF develop real capabilities.

ISF Motivation Problems

Both the force development problems and perceptual problems are further compounded by the ISF's problems in leadership and unit cohesion. Human beings do not live in the dawn of tomorrow; they live in the noon of today. Most Iraqi officers and NCOs are inevitably caught up in the pressures of Iraq's sectarian and ethnic differences. Most Iraqi enlisted men volunteer because they need the money, because their dependents are desperately in need of their support.

Success and Failure by Force Element

The tendency of US unclassified reporting to exaggerate real successes has deprived such reporting of most of its credibility – with the Congress, the media, the American people, and many Iraqis. No one can trust any aspect of the official reporting on progress in ISF force development or the related progress in economic aid or development. There are no public metrics, no credible plans, and no credible estimates of time and resources that can be trusted among the Congress, the American people, the media, and the result of the world. .

MNF-I experts do report that there are detailed metrics both at the tactical and institutional level. They also indicate, however, that many of these are classified and their most important use is in allowing the Iraqis to see themselves as their trainers and advisors seem them. The problem is that such reporting may help in training and shaping Iraqi forces, but does not create realistic expectations or build lasting support when the development of the ISF occurs at real world pace.

These problems have been compounded by similar efforts to exaggerate success at the level of the Iraqi central government. Iraq has a major leadership and unit cohesion problem, most of its ministries are ineffective and/or corrupt, and there often is little or no real central government presence at the regional or local level. Most Iraqis do not see a combination of central government and ISF that can effectively provide security, government services, and the rule of law. If one looks at the real readiness of the Iraqi defense effort, it may be summarized as follows:

- **Ministry of Defense:** Still very much a work in progress. Poorly organized, divided along sectarian and ethnic lines, poor planning and fiscal control capability, problems with corruption. The Ministry remains divided. Disagreements among senior leaders in the MoD are about how the Military should be developed—as in former times or in imitation of western countries].
- **The regular army, air force, and navy (132,856 claimed to be operational; real number unknown, but full time active strength probably below 100,000) as of March 3, 2007:** Some battalion sized elements of the Army (132,856 men trained and equipped) are emerging as a real force at the infantry battalion level with some light mechanized and armored elements. Real divisions and brigades are beginning to emerge, although many headquarters, command and control, combat and service support, logistic and intelligence elements are missing or having little capability. The regular Iraqi military still cannot operate without massive MNF-I support, embedded US and other coalition advisory teams, and largely US mechanized infantry, armor, artillery, fixed and rotary wing air support, air mobility, and logistic and service support,

Air Force (929 men) is at best a small cadre of forces with token reconnaissance and air transport capability. Navy (1,135 men) is slowly emerging as capable of carrying out patrol missions, but is severely limited in operational capability with little real support capability.

The MNF-I reported that as by the end of 2006, 100% of the authorized Iraqi Army battalions had been created, and that force building efforts to train and equip forces now focused on combat support forces.³¹ Such reports are misleading to the point of being actively dishonest. There are severe problems in much of the reporting on Iraqi forces, and no clear distinction is made between

the number of men who went through the training process and the number still on service. The rising manpower and combat unit totals conceal many critical problems in given elements of the ISF order of battle. Gross numbers grossly exaggerate capability.

Even more serious problems exist with reports that say the regular Iraqi forces are taking the lead, and the MNF-I has been successful in transferring responsibility to Iraqi forces and command. The regular military and some paramilitary National Police units are making real progress – but most units are severely undermanned, have critical problems in officer and NCO quality and leadership, are too lightly equipped and poorly facilitated, and many are Shi'ite or Kurdish dominated.

While progress is occurring in the army, discussions with MNF-I experts indicate that major manning and equipment shortfalls exist in many battalions and units, and that substantial numbers of combat battalions said to be “in the lead” had less than 60% of their authorized manning actually present in the unit on a day-to-day basis.

The Department of Defense reported as of March, 2007, 14 Strategic Infrastructure Battalions, 2 Special Forces battalions, and 103 regular battalions were in combat,³² but it is unlikely that even one-third of these totals had serious independent warfighting capability and there is no way to assess their willingness to engage as truly national forces in civil conflict.

The MNF-I claimed that, “in mid-October 2006 that six of the 10 Iraqi divisions – 30 of the 36 brigades and almost 90 of the 112 battalions were ‘in the lead.’”. One respected journalist stated on November 28, 2006, however, that “The Iraqi army has about 134,000 men (trained and equipped), but about half are doing only stationary guard duty...of the half that conduct operations, only about 10 battalions are effective – well under 10,000 men.”³³

There is no way to resolve these radically different pictures of Iraqi forces, but it is clear that Iraqi forces will be highly dependent on US and other MNF-I support well into 2008, and probably through 2010. Only a truly radical improvement in political conciliation could reduce this dependence, and the present drift towards added civil conflict could sharply increase it.

- **Ministry of Interior:** Still very much a work in progress and lags behind the MoD in capability. Poorly organized, with elements more loyal to Shi'ite and Kurdish parties than nation. Poor planning and fiscal control capability, serious problems with corruption. Minister Boulani did embark on a Ministry Reform Program in October 2006, but so far the Department of Defense has not reported that such efforts have made significant progress.
- **The National Police (24,400 claimed to be trained and equipped as of March 5, 2007; real number of actives unknown, but closer to 20,000):** Some elements have been properly reorganized and are as effective as regular army units. Most still present problems in terms of both loyalty and effectiveness. Still are some ties to Shi'ite and Kurdish militias. A number of units have critical problems in officer and NCO quality and leadership, are too lightly equipped and poorly facilitated
- **Other MOI Forces (28,860 claimed to be trained and equipped as of March 5, 2007; real number of full time actives unknown, but closer to 22,000):** Most elements, like the Border Police, are just acquiring proper training and have only light equipment and poor facilities. Some elements are capable in undemanding missions. Most are underpaid, under equipped, badly led, and corrupt. Many are poorly facilitated.
- **The Regular Police (135,000 claimed to be trained and equipped as of March 5, 2007; real number of full time actives probably under 85,000):** Underpaid, under equipped, badly led, and corrupt. Many will not fight or act if faced with a local threat. Desertion and absence rates high. Generally only function where security exists for other reasons, or the police have strong ties to sectarian, ethnic, and tribal forces. Many are poorly facilitated

The problems in the “trained and equipped police” forces are compounded by large number of locally recruited “police” and security forces loyal to local leaders and sectarian and ethnic factions. Various sectarian and ethnic militias are the real “police” in many areas.

- **Facilities Protection Force, Pipeline Protection Force, and other limited security forces:** Reported to have an authorized level approaching 145,000. Actual day –to-day forces actively performing their mission may be less than half that total. Even more so than the regular police,

these forces are underpaid, under equipped, badly led, and corrupt. Generally only function where security exists for other reasons, or are tied to sectarian, ethnic, and tribal forces. Prime Minister Maliki has made a commitment to consolidate the FPS under the MoI, but until such efforts prove fully successful, the problems remain.

The US and MNF-I plans that called for transfers of responsibility to newly-trained Iraqi military forces to allow significant Coalition troop reductions in 2006 have failed. Worse, the effort to develop the Iraqi police and security forces remained badly out of balance with the effort to develop regular forces and still lags more than a year behind the level needed to meet even the most urgent needs. The so-called “year of the police” has barely begun and will at best gather momentum in 2007. Real-world Iraqi dependence on the present scale of US and allied military support and advisory efforts will continue well into 2008 at the earliest and probably to 2010. Major US and allied troop reductions need to be put on hold indefinitely.

Iraqi forces simply are not ready to assume the burden of national defense. Moreover, even if more effective and realistic force development plans are implemented and given the proper resources, they will still fail unless Iraqi military progress is matched by Iraqi political progress. The only way to avoid this continuing dependence on the US and other outside powers without greatly increasing the risk of a major civil war and a collapse of the Iraqi force development effort, is still to reach a level of political conciliation so great as to fundamentally undermine the insurgency and end the drift towards civil war.

The “Surge” and Plans to Increase Iraqi Forces

The fact that the fighting intensified, while the US lost domestic political support for the war, are increasing the pressure to rush the development of ISF forces. The US wants out, and Iraq’s Shi’ite-led government wants the largest possible force as soon as possible. Then Defense Secretary Rumsfeld endorsed a proposal on October 31, 2006 to spend at least \$1 billion as part of an add-on to the 2007 budget to expand the size of Iraqi security forces beyond the goal of 325,000 and accelerate their training and equipment process.³⁴ The US had already spent about \$10 billion on developing Iraqi forces. Gen. George Casey also recommended expanding Iraqi forces.

In March, 2007, the DoD announced that More than 60,000 ISF personnel were being added in 2007.³⁵ This expansion includes:

- **Replenishment of 30,000.** MNSTC-I is funding the training and equipping of 30,000 soldiers to replace personnel losses and to increase the manning of combat units to 110% to improve present-for-duty strength. This expansion was 44% complete as of February 2007.
- **Prime Minister’s Army Expansion Initiative.** In consultation with the U.S. Government, the Government of Iraq decided to increase the size of the Army by approximately 24,000 soldiers. The additional forces will increase the MOD’s ability to command and control its forces, enhance its operational and tactical flexibility, and allow battle-weary units to be pulled off-line to retrain and refit. This Government of Iraq initiative also came with fiscal resources from the MOD budget totaling \$800 million. The Prime Minister’s Initiative called for the following new Iraqi forces and force elements, only some of which had specific unit designations and missions:

Three (3) Division Headquarters:

Add 11th Division headquarters, which will split the span of control for battalions in Baghdad between Karkh and Rusafa

Add two (2) Strategic Infrastructure Division headquarters to improve command and control of the SIBs

Five (5) Brigade Headquarters and 20 more Battalions

Add 4th Bde to the 9th IA Div to provide the division to serve as the Operational Reserve for the IA with four total brigades.

Add 4th Bde to the 5th IA Div, which will allow a brigade for Diyala.

Add 6th Bde to the 6th IA Div, which will provide three brigades to each IA division in Baghdad.

Add 4th Bde to the 7th IA Div, which will add a brigade to western Al Anbar province.

Add 5th Bde to 10th IA Div.

Add one battalion to the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Bde of the 8th IA Div, which will add a brigade-equivalent to Diwaniya.

Add one battalion to the 2nd and 3rd Bde of the 10th IA Div, which will add nearly two brigade equivalents to Basra (with the additional 5th Brigade addition noted above)

Add one (1) Special Forces Battalion to ISOF

• **Replenishment of National Police Brigades.** The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team (CPATT) is working to replenish all National Police units with personnel and key pacing items of equipment in support of the Baghdad Security Plan and Phase II training at Numaniyah.

• **Expansion of National Police to 10 Brigades.** The CPATT is supporting the prime minister's initiative to build a multicomponent (Iraqi Army and National Police) division-sized force to protect the Samarra Shrine reconstruction project. The team is generating a 10th National Police Brigade in support of this effort.³⁶

It was not explained where the money to fund all of this would come from, how this requirement was shaped, and where the figures for increased manpower came from or whether it would come close to dealing with even the existing manpower shortfalls in the regular army. Iraqi force building continued to have high priority during the summer and fall of 2006. The total cost US financial assistance for Iraqi security grew from \$3.24 billion in January 2004 to about \$13.7 billion in June 2006.³⁷ Most of these funds for rebuilding the military and security forces came from US sources although plans called for the new Iraqi government was expected to begin playing a greater role in the budgeting and equipment procurement process.³⁸

Pushing Iraqi Force Development at an Unrealistic Pace

It is far from clear that such a rate of progress can successfully be rushed forward without doing at least as much harm as good. It is extremely difficult to judge the quality of the Iraqi forces development effort at any level of detail using unclassified data. The Pentagon has reported that it was now using three sets of factors to measure progress in developing Iraqi security forces capabilities and responsibilities:

- The number of trained and equipped forces.
- The number of Iraqi army units and provincial governments that had assumed responsibility for security in specific geographic areas. In February 2007, 93 Iraqi army units had assumed the lead for counterinsurgency operations in specific areas, and 3 provinces had assumed security control.
- The capabilities of operational units, as reported in unit-level and aggregate Transition Readiness Assessments (TRA). As of March 2007, the General Accounting Office had still not obtained the unit-level TRA reports.³⁹

The resulting assessments remain classified, however, and the Department of Defense no longer reports on even overall force building in terms of Level I-IV readiness. It is hard

to avoid the conclusion, however, that the pace of Iraqi force development is partly being dictated by political necessity without due regard to what can really be accomplished and the inevitable loss of life to Iraqi forces that are pushed too hard, too soon.

At best, currently planned efforts will take several more years to be effective. They are also taking place at a time the political demands on Iraqi force development are becoming steadily less realistic, and Iraqi forces continue to be pushed into service before they are ready and with US embedded training teams that often have readiness and qualification problems of their own

The Challenge of Force Transformation

Executing a real-world handover and expansion of Iraqi forces requires a major force transformation from a static, local defense force. It means creating large numbers of nationally deployable forces with different training, pay, equipment, mobility and support, and facilities.

This makes it highly questionable as to whether Iraqi force development can be effective in replacing US and allied forces in 12 to 18 months, and that Iraqi forces can credibly expand some 36,000 to 48,000 actual men in place beyond their current size. Without Iraqi success in reaching a political compromise that sharply reduces the demands for Iraqi effectiveness and the unity of the Iraqi security forces (ISF) in dealing with insurgents, militias, and death squads, this accelerated security transfer will be all but impossible.

The challenge is also made more difficult by the fact that threat levels have continued to rise. It is meaningless to keep claiming that the security problems are limited to small areas, and ignore intra-Shi'ite fighting and Arab-Kurdish tensions. For example, General Casey stated in a press conference on October 26th that, "...we are in a tough fight here in the center of the country and in Anbar province. But I think it's important to remind people that 90 percent of the sectarian violence in Iraq takes place in about a 30-mile radius from the center of Baghdad; and that secondly, 90 percent of all violence takes place in five provinces. This is not a country that is awash in sectarian violence. The situation is hard, but it's not a country that's awash in sectarian violence."

This statement is more than self contradictory, it clashes with previous claims in the Department of Defense quarterly status report in August that 81% of the violence took place in these provinces, and that statement ignored all of the softer forms of sectarian and ethnic "cleansing" and intra-Shi'ite fighting and Arab-Kurdish tensions.

This does not mean that real progress is not being made in ISF force development, and there are many reports of individual Iraqi units carrying out local missions, taking risks, and taking casualties. The fact remains, however, that far too many Iraqi army units are being credited with taking the lead or being effective in the field. Effective units are also being lumped together with units that will not perform their missions, which are tied to sects and factions, and which often have only 50-60% of their manning.

Iraqi Force Development if Things Go Well

Time and resources have been wasted that the US and Iraq did not have. The odds of success are less than even, and may be less than one in four. At best, the development of effective Iraqi forces is only one of the steps necessary to bring stability and security, and rollback the forces that can lead Iraq towards more violent forms of civil war. It is, however, one of the critical elements of success.

There is no way to predict Iraq's future or the exact role Iraqi forces will play over the coming months and years. All that can be predicated is that the US and Iraq must honestly and systematically address each of the current failures in Iraqi force development identified in this report, and do so at a pace that can produce an effective and meaningful result. At a minimum, this means reconfiguring the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of the Interior (MoI), creating Iraqi regular forces designed to fight serious counterinsurgency battles and end civil fighting on a national level, and giving the Iraqi police the aid and advisory resources necessary to make them effective and far less divided and corrupt.

This will take major new amounts of money and more capable US advisors and embeds. It will take 3-5 years, not 18-24 months – although this does not mean enough success to allow major US and allied troop withdrawals cannot come far earlier. In any case, the rate of the ISF's progress or failure will depend at least a much on Iraqi political compromise and conciliation. If that succeeds, much of the pressure on ISF development will ease; if it fails, ISF development will fail regardless.

If things go well, Iraqi forces will steadily improve with time and play a critical role in bring the level of security Iraq needs to make political compromise and conciliation work.

Iraqi forces will largely replace Coalition and other foreign forces, at most seeking aid and limited assistance. Iraq's military will shift its mission from counterinsurgency to defense of the nation against foreign enemies, Iraq's National Police will defend the nation's internal security interests and not those of given ethnic and sectarian groups, deal with counterterrorism rather than counterinsurgency, and focus on crime and corruption. Iraq's other police and security forces will act like the police and security forces of other nations, focusing on crime, local security issues, and providing border security against smuggling and low-level infiltration.

Things can only go well, however, if Iraq can create a working compromise between its sects and ethnic groups, and if US and other outside powers will have the patience and will to support Iraq as it develops into such a state for at least two to three more years of active fighting. Iraq will also need massive additional economic aid to help Iraq unify and develop. Major assistance and advisory programs will be in place until at least 2010, and probably 2015.

Iraqi Force Development if Things Go Badly

The present odds of such success are less than even. In fact, Iraq is more likely to have one of three far less positive futures:

- ***Years of turmoil: No side truly wins.*** The nation does not devolve into all out civil war or open forms of division or separation. The result will be an agonizing extension of the status quo in which real political conciliation fail and every new compromise will be the source of new tensions and fighting. Warring sectarian and ethnic groups struggle for local control and dominance, dividing the country internally by city and governorate.

The Iraqi people lose faith and hope, struggling only to survive. The military, National Police, regular police and other instruments of government become an awkward mix of sectarian and

ethnic enclaves and struggles for power and control. The economy will splinter, with a few secure ethnic and sectarian enclaves, but largely dominated by internal tension, insecurity and crime.

The US and other outside powers keep some form of presence in Iraq and seek to maintain a partial state of order, but every effort to produce lasting solutions and true national unity will collapse.

- ***Internal separation, ethnic cleansing, and the façade of unity:*** Civil conflict lead to the de facto separation of the nation into Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, and Kurdish enclaves on either a regional or local basis. The nation maintains the appearance of unity, but the reality is a level of soft and hard ethnic cleansing that divides most governorates on sectarian and ethnic lines, and most cities into sectarian and ethnic neighborhoods.

Most governorates and major cities are dominated by Shi'ite or Kurdish control. An impoverished Sunni enclave will exist in the West, continuing to present at least low-level security challenges. Every "national" decision will be an awkward and unstable compromise. Compromises over key issues like development and modernizing Iraq's energy industry and infrastructure are sectarian and ethnic nightmares with Shi'ite, Sunni, and Kurd all seeking their own advantage and that of their respective enclaves.

The Iraqi people are forced into clear sectarian and ethnic divisions, each tending to aid the extremist elements in each group. The military, National Police, regular police and other instruments of government are divided into clearly defined sectarian and ethnic enclaves. The US and other outside powers withdraw all or virtually all forces, and reduce aid to token levels. Iraq becomes the scene of constant outside struggles for influence between Turkey, Iran, and the Arab Sunni states.

- ***Outright division with at least continuing sectarian and ethnic fighting:*** The central government diminishes to total impotence and/or collapses under the pressure of civil conflict. The softer forms of sectarian and ethnic cleansing that take place in the previous scenario are replaced by vicious fighting for control of given governorates and cities, mass killings, mass forced relocations and migrations, and the ruthless control of remaining minorities.

Iraq has openly split into three parts, dominated by Shi'ite and Kurdish control in most areas, Shi'ite domination of the central government and most of the country, or a Shi'ite-Kurdish federation of convenience whose reality are the same. An impoverished Sunni enclave exist in the West, struggling to survive, continuing to present at least low-level security challenges and dependent on outside aid from Sunni states. Economic development and efforts to modernize Iraq's energy industry and infrastructure are divided on sectarian and ethnic lines, with the possible exception of pipelines and some limited infrastructure that crosses Shi'ite, Sunni, and Kurdish zones. Export capabilities, ports, and water will all be continuing sources of contention.

The Iraqi people will be forced into clear sectarian and ethnic divisions, each tending to aid the extremist elements in each group. The military, National Police, regular police and other instruments of government will divide along clearly defined and possibly warring sectarian and ethnic lines. The economy steadily declines if it does not implode. The US and other outside powers withdraw all or virtually all forces, and reduce aid to token levels. Iraq becomes the "sick man" of the Gulf, and the scene of constant outside struggles for influence between Turkey, Iran, and the Arab Sunni states.

Looking Ahead

There is no way to summarize Iraqi force development in simple terms, particularly because so much depends in the near term on whether Iraqi efforts at political conciliation, effective governance, and a government presence in the field, do or do not succeed. The ISF development effort cannot succeed without major progress in all of these areas, any more than they can succeed without the creation of effective Iraqi forces and Iraqi popular belief that MNF-I forces will leave as soon as possible and Iraq will be truly sovereign.

It also seems very unlikely that Iraqi force development can ever be truly successful a mutually acceptable long-term security arrangement that can provide for the interests of both countries, and one that prepares the ISF to deal with external as well as internal threats.

If Iraq is to avoid split-up and full-blown civil war, it must do far more than create effective Security Forces. No such effort can succeed without an integrated strategy to forge a lasting political compromise between its key factions: Arab-Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, and Kurd – while protecting other minorities. Political conciliation must also address such critical issues as federalism and the relative powers of the central and regional governments, the role of religion in politics and law, control over petroleum resources and export revenues, the definition of human rights, and a host of other issues. Security cannot come through force alone. The creation of a strong and capable ISF may even do more harm than good if it is used to further narrow, Sectarian goals.

This means that the most important developments in making Iraqi forces effective have nothing to do with the forces themselves, or the nature of the US support and advisory effort. They are rather the ability to create levels of political compromise and conciliation that deprive the insurgency and Iraq's civil conflicts of their popular base. This means actually implementing:

An oil law and technical annexes that assure all major Iraqi factions of an equitable share of today's oil revenues and the future development of Iraq's oil and gas resources.

Giving the Sunnis real participation in the national government at every level, and creating ministries and government structures that fairly mix Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, Kurd, and other minorities.

ReBaathification and giving a clean slate or amnesty to all who served under the Ba'ath not guilty of violent crimes.

Amending the constitution to create a structure that protects the rights of all Iraqis, and which creates viable compromises, or clearly defers or omits, areas of critical sectarian and ethnic division.

As part of this, working out an approach to federation that will avoid civil conflict.

Creating and implementing local election laws, particularly at the provincial level.

Disbanding or assimilating militias, or creating retraining centers and funding programs to deal with members.

At the same time, US, allied, and Iraqi government policy can only succeed if it recognizes that there is no near term prospect that Iraqi force development will allow major reductions in MNF-I forces without serious risk, and that ISF force development can only succeed if the MNF-I provides active combat support well into 2008 and major advisory and aid support through 2010. The goal must be to diminish the active combat role of US and other Coalition forces as soon as practical, and to refocus US efforts on reinforcing ministerial and institutional development, and on enhancing the role of transition teams. It must not be rushing US forces out as soon as possible without regard to the realities of Iraqi force development and the political conditions and levels of civil violence under which the ISF must develop and operate.

The January 2007 NIE on Iraq stated, without reservation, that a rapid withdrawal of US forces in the next 12-18 months "almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the

scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq.”⁴⁰ Every element of ISF development still requires years of effort and support, and any successful policy towards Iraq that offers serious hope of avoiding massive increases in sectarian and ethnic violence, and continued insurgency, requires an honest recognition of this fact.

The Bush Administration can only do more harm to Iraqi force development if it continues to exaggerate Iraqi capability, attempts to expand Iraqi forces even more quickly in response to American domestic political, and actually transfers responsibility before Iraqi forces can do the job. As in Afghanistan, the US can only win in Iraq if it is willing to fight a "long war." Rushing Iraqi forces in, and American forces out, is a strategy where "exit" is given far higher priority than success. It may provide a cosmetic rationale to disguise failure and defeat, but it will not prevent it and may well make them happen.

To put it bluntly, this means that US government must stop exaggerating about the true nature of Iraqi readiness and the Iraqi force development, and seek bipartisan agreement on a longer-term program based on patience, persistence, actual progress, and adequate resources. As this report describes in detail, there are many very real successes in ISF development, and the ISF has great potential if the Iraqi political system can achieve the level of conciliation that makes a military effort both feasible and effective.

Partisanship and spin, however, can make the all too real possibility of failure a certainty. The nearly meaningless unclassified metrics and reports of success the Administration has presented have done far more to discredit the ISF development effort than build support. Credibility, transparency are the price of any realistic change of victory. Without them, the twilight of this Administration will end with the US choosing the wrong options in Iraq, failing to provide adequate time and resources, and US and allied withdrawals because of political decisions made for the wrong reasons. Like all elements of a successful US strategy, Iraqi force development needs to be based on honesty and realism, and not "spin," unrealistic claims, and political expediency.

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I. Introduction

There is no place for false optimism and illusions in creating effective Iraqi forces. “The situation in Iraq remains difficult and complex,” stated Gen. George Casey, the former commander of the MNF-I. According to Casey, the conflict has evolved from an insurgency focused against Coalition troops to “a struggle for the division of political and economic power among the Iraqis.” He described a threefold threat of Sunni extremists and al Qaeda, Shi’ite extremists, death squads and “the more militant militias,” and the Sunni insurgency. Of these groups, he evaluated Shi’ite groups to be the gravest current threat to stability. Casey emphasized that “violence and progress coexist in Iraq,” saying that 90 percent of the violence occurred in five provinces, which represented less than half of the population.⁴¹

The Reality of Civil War

Reports from several different US agencies still avoided using the term “civil war” to describe the violence in Iraq through the end of 2006, but did not minimize the severity of the situation. The Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR) reported that the levels and nature of the violence in Iraq “continue to pose a serious challenge to the reconstruction effort. Further, DoD sees conditions in Iraq that could potentially lead to civil war.”⁴²

Iraqi force development has increasingly had to take place in an extraordinarily complex environment. The unclassified summary of a January, 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq, titled: “Prospects for Iraq’s Stability: A Challenging Road Ahead” stated:

The Intelligence Community judges that the term “civil war” does not adequately capture the complexity of the conflict in Iraq, which includes extensive Shia-on-Shia violence, al-Qaeda and Sunni insurgent attacks on Coalition forces, and widespread criminally motivated violence. Nonetheless, the term “civil war” accurately describes key elements of the Iraqi conflict, including the hardening of ethno-sectarian identities, a sea change in the character of the violence, ethno-sectarian mobilization, and population displacements.⁴³

The Department of Defense Quarterly Report on the situation in Iraq, issued in March 2007, still stopped short of calling the conflict in Iraq a civil war. It did state, however, that: “Some elements of the situation in Iraq are properly descriptive of a ‘civil war,’ including the hardening of ethno-sectarian identities and mobilization, the changing character of the violence, and population displacements.”⁴⁴ This statement continued a two-year trend in DoD quarterly reports where the reports moved closer and closer to calling the conflict an outright civil war.

The newly appointed US Secretary Defense, Robert Gates, stated in February 2007 that, “I think that the words “civil war” oversimplify a very complex situation in Iraq. I believe that there are essentially four wars going on in Iraq. One is Shi’a on Shi’a, principally in the south; the second is sectarian conflict, principally in Baghdad, but not solely; third is the insurgency; and fourth is al Qaeda, and al Qaeda is attacking, at times, all of those targets.”⁴⁵

While one can always argue semantics, the fact is that Iraq is both the scene of a serious insurgency and a complex state of national civil war fought by a diverse mix of local sectarian and ethnic forces than by clearly defined national factions or “sides.” What

began as a small resistance movement centered on loyalists to the Ba'ath and Saddam Hussein has expanded to include neo-Salafi Sunni terrorism, become a broadly based Sunni insurgency, and now a broader sectarian and ethnic conflict involve struggle between and within every major faction in Iraq.

The Danger of False Deadlines and Benchmarks

In spite of the steadily rising tide of civil violence in Iraq, there a serious risk that both the US and Iraq will rely on false optimism and illusions for very different political reasons. The US increasingly wants out; the Iraqi government increasingly wants the US presence altered and reduced to support its own internal political objectives.

This has already led to fundamentally false time scales for action, unrealistic expectations, and growing pressure for withdrawal when impossible promises are not kept. For example, Gen. Casey speculated in August 2006 about Iraqi forces achieving self-sufficiency within 18 months, while staying committed to event-driven US force reductions:

“I don’t have a date, but I can see over the next 12 to 18 months the Iraqi security forces progressing to a point where they can take on the security responsibilities for the country with very little coalition support. (...) The future coalition presence, 12 to 18 months from now, is going to be decided by the Iraqi government”⁴⁶

In September 2006, President Talibani suggested a similar schedule, saying that the Iraqi Army would be ready to face its challenges on its own “within two years”.⁴⁷ Two months after the original statement, Casey said at the end of October that 2006 it would be “another 12 to 18 months or so till, I believe, the Iraqi security forces are completely capable of taking over responsibility for their own security, still probably with some level of support from us (...).”⁴⁸

On January 18, 2007, Prime minister Nouri al-Maliki stated that the need for American troops would “dramatically go down” in 3 to 6 months if the United States accelerated the process of equipping and arming Iraq’s security forces.⁴⁹ On January 19, 2007, General Casey even suggested that US troops could begin withdrawing by “late summer” [2007].⁵⁰ These sunny predictions were made despite the constantly increasing levels of violence.

Overly optimistic conceptions of ISF development have done much to breed a climate of distrust and fuel the pressure to withdraw. Money has become a growing an issue. Iraq cannot afford to create and sustain the forces it needs and meet its other objectives for government services and economic develop. The cost of creating Iraqi forces has, however, risen with the level of violence they must deal with.

Total US financial assistance for Iraqi security grew from \$3.24 billion in January 2004 to about \$13.7 billion by through the end of 2006.⁵¹ Although most of the funds for rebuilding the military and security forces had come from US sources and had been administered by international forces or contractors, the new Iraqi government was expected to begin playing a greater role in the budgeting and equipment procurement process.⁵²

The Bush administration’s 2008 budget request for FY 2008 envisions a 64% drop in funding for the ISF, from \$5.5 billion to \$2.0. The need for this drastic funding cut is presumably the current (and future) success in the development of the ISF. The FY 2008

budget request also optimistically states that, “by FY 2008, the Government of Iraq will have taken on the primary financial responsibility for sustaining the ISF.”⁵³

Some MNF-I experts do believe that it is entirely feasible that the Government of Iraq will be able to sustain the existing force structure of the ISF by 2008. Such experts do note, however, that Iraq will not be able to modernize their force or add additional capabilities without other or US outside financial support. US analysts of the Iraqi government as a whole, its budget, and its financial management are also far less optimistic – particularly about its ability to manage the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior, and manage any aspect of large-scale expenditures with efficiency and without massive corruption. Moreover, many military experts – including some of the most senior US officers on the scene – believe that Iraqi force modernization and the need for additional ISF capabilities will grow steadily unless Iraq makes major progress in political conciliation and in sharply reducing the level of even existing civil conflict.

If Iraq is to avoid split-up and full-blown civil war, it must do far more than create effective Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). No such effort can succeed without an integrated strategy to forge a lasting political compromise between its key factions: Arab-Shi’ite, Arab Sunni, and Kurd – while protecting other minorities. Political conciliation must also address such critical issues as federalism and the relative powers of the central and regional governments, the role of religion in politics and law, control over petroleum resources and export revenues, the definition of human rights, and a host of other issues.

It is all too possible that neither US nor Iraqi government plans may dominate Iraq’s future. The current combination of insurgency, Sunni Arab versus Shi’ite Arab sectarian conflict, and Arab versus Kurdish ethnic conflict could easily cause the collapse of the current political structure, leading to a Shi’ite or Shi’ite-Kurdish dominated government, with strong local centers of power, and an ongoing fight with Iraq’s Sunnis. It could escalate to the break up of the country, far more serious ethnic and sectarian conflict, or violent paralysis. It has already led to widespread ethnic cleansing in urban areas by militias and death squads of all three major ethnic and religious groups.

Anticipate, Learn and Change versus Persist, React and Be Defeated

From the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 to the present, the US has failed to implement a realistic and properly self-critical approach to policies and actions in Iraq. It is unclear that it could have succeeded under the best of circumstance, but one of its most critical failures has been to consistently deny the fact it was pursuing a high-risk effort in nation building and stability operations that could easily fail.

In practice, the US neither did an adequate job of anticipating the problems it had to solve nor rapidly adapted to the emerging realities in Iraq. Its national security leadership became a self-inflicted wound, and the US lurched from delayed response to response, always reacting too slowly and in a state of quasi-denial. One key problem was the failure to properly estimate the nature of the violence in Iraq; its steadily more complex nature, and the rate at which it would grow more intense.

These broad problems in the US conceptual approach to Iraq, and in the strategy and practice of nation building and stability operations, have had a major impact on the development of Iraqi forces. The Multinational Security Transition Command- Iraq

(MNSTC-I) has had to make at least three major adaptations to its plans to develop Iraqi Security Forces during 2004-2007. Most notably, the assumption that the ISF would face a declining level of violence over time had to be changed to assume that they would have to overmatch their enemies at a constant level of violence. As of the spring of 2007, MNSTC-I was actively in the process of conducting "In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces" to determine what adaptations must be made in the second half of 2007 and beyond. A similar assessment in 2006 led directly to Prime Minister Maliki's decision to increase the size of the Iraqi Army and to fund it through Foreign Military Sales. That funding has been incorporated in the current FMS account and is being used to grow the force.

Nevertheless, the US never developed an effective overall strategy for dealing with political conciliation, the development of all elements of Iraqi forces, improving the quality of Iraqi governance, and economic aid and development.

The end result was to increase security problems, and the pressure on Iraqi forces, in ways that help bring Iraq to the edge of large-scale civil war. The new strategy to stabilize Iraq that the US announced in the fall of 2005 was no more credible than its predecessors.. It was based on an exaggerated estimate of political success, an almost deliberately false exaggeration of the success of the economic aid effort, unrealistic estimates of progress in developing the ISF, and inadequate efforts to develop effective governance and the rule of law.

As a result, the US government, its national security decision makers, and its intelligence community underestimated the threat Iraqi Army forces would face, underestimated the problems in developing effective Iraqi police forces, and called for an unrealistically rapid transfer of responsibility to Iraqi Security Forces. Real progress was being made in developing the ISF, but a combination of political pressure in Washington and failure to admit the growing level of violence in Iraq called for more progress than was possible as well as inadequate resources.

This situation was further complicated by Iraqi political problems and decisions. The MNF-I and MNSTC-I had to deal with two interim governments and elected government after 2005 that forced US and other Coalition advisors to try to temper efforts by senior Iraqi civilian and military leaders to take even great responsibility and control over the development of the ISF before it was ready. The US military has operated under pressure from both Washington and Baghdad, and one senior MNSTC-I officer described US efforts in dealing with the Iraqi Army as follows in late April 2007:

We have never strayed from the principle of a standardized training curriculum for both new Iraqi units and individual replacements despite great pressure to do so from our Iraqi counterparts. Nor have we rushed Iraqi units into battle. In fact, the addition of transition teams to tactical units in March 2005 was intended to ensure we had a valid, reasonable understanding of their capabilities...

It is worth noting that more than 3,500 Iraqi soldiers and 4,500 Iraqi Policemen have been killed in action in the past two years. Another 18,000 have been wounded in action. Iraq's security ministries as well as military and police leaders are taking "ownership" of their country's security problems to the extent we have thus far allowed them to."

The twin impact of the pressures from the US and Iraqi governments were all too clear in the efforts to improve security in Baghdad in 2006. Iraq forces were not ready for the task, and the Iraqi government proved unable or unwilling to deal effectively with the

Shi'ite militias that had become as serious a problem as the Sunni insurgents. Later efforts to strengthen the Iraqi effort with more US advisors and limited numbers of US troops proved equally ineffective.

The US and ISF found themselves fighting battles in Baghdad, and in other areas with a high level of Sunni insurgent activity, where they could “win” at the tactical level, but not defeat or eliminate any armed faction, could not “hold” areas in ways that provided lasting security, and could not “build” in providing either effective government services or conditions that allowed economic progress and development.

The Need for A Comprehensive Action and Operational Plan

The new “surge” strategy to secure Baghdad that President Bush announced in January 2007 will provide a much larger US military contingent, more Iraqi forces, and a new approach to strengthening the role of the Iraqi police. Real success, however, depends on providing a far higher degree of security for a city with well over five million people and much broader political conciliation among Iraq’s warring factions. It is far from clear whether it will prove possible to secure the greater Baghdad area, and the ring cities around it, with the US and Iraqi resources available.

Success may also require a level of patience and persistence that the US political climate could make impossible, particularly if a sustained effort is needed well into 2008. Iraqi progress in conciliation is uncertain at best, and may also move too slowly to be acceptable to the Congress and American people. Once again, the US may be demanding too much, too soon, and trying to force the pace in ways which increase the already serious risk of failure.

What is clear is that the US cannot secure either Baghdad or Iraq without effective Iraqi security forces and this includes both the Army and Police. At the same time, no

strategy that hinges solely on the successful development of the ISF can succeed. Iraq must establish both effective governance and a rule of law; not simply deploy effective military, security, and police forces. Legitimacy does not consist of determining how governments are chosen, but in how well they serve the day-to-day needs of their peoples. Security cannot come through force alone. It must have the checks and balances that can only come when governments and courts are active in the field.

Iraq must also address its economic and demographic challenges if its people are to support its government and reject sectarian and ethnic violence. Iraq cannot achieve stability, however, unless its people have a reasonable degree of both physical and economic security. A nation cannot convert from a corrupt, state-controlled “command kleptocracy” in mid-war. It cannot achieve lasting peace unless it makes such a conversion over time and puts an end to a hopelessly skewed and unfair distribution of income, ends unemployment and underemployment levels of 30-60%, and becomes competitive on a regional and global level.

Progress in Iraq is still slow or faltering in each of the other areas necessary to make Iraqi force development successful:

- **Politics:** The election in late 2005 effectively divided Iraqis by sect and ethnic group, with only a small minority voting for truly national parties. No clear national party structure has emerged

- since that time. The Shi'ite parties increasingly demonstrate the rivalry between the three main Shi'ite parties, while seeking to dominate the nation at the expense of the Sunnis. The Kurds reflect more unity but conflicts exist over "independence," dealing with the PKK, and past tensions between the PUK and KDP. Sunnis are just beginning to acquire a true political identity and the two main Sunni parties are divided and divisive.
- ***The Role of the Constitution:*** The creation of a new constitution has done nothing to establish consensus and has done much to divide the nation. It leaves more than 50 areas to be clarified, all of which involve potentially divisive debates between sectarian and ethnic groups, and most of which could lead to added tensions over the role of religion in the state.
 - ***Political conciliation:*** Iraq's leaders still seek national unity and compromise, but talk has not been followed by substance. Prime Minister Maliki's conciliation plans have not taken hold, and the new government has not shown it can implement such plans or bring Arab Sunnis back into an effective political structure. While Moqtada Sadr has not reacted to the new US strategy by encouraging armed resistance, he appears to be losing control over the more radical parts of the Mahdi Army. Progress in key areas like the revision of the constitution and implementation of an "oil law" has been grindingly slow. ReBa'athification and local elections have not occurred. The status of Kurdish autonomy, and federalism remain unresolved.
 - ***Governance:*** The national government cannot even spend its development budget; much less demonstrate that it now has an effective ministerial structure or the ability to actually govern in many areas. Actual governance continues to default to regional and local authorities and factions, and cannot follow up effectively on Coalition and ISF victories even in Baghdad.
 - ***Security.*** Most Iraqis either lack day-to-day security or depend on local militias and security forces. The Iraqi Army continues to have real-world priority over the development of the Iraqi police, and the much-heralded "year of the police" in 2006 produced only slow progress at the local level
 - ***Legal system and rule of law:*** There is no real nation-wide consensus on what legal system to use, courts do not exist in many areas and are corrupt and ineffective in many others. Legal authority, like governance, is devolving down to the local level.
 - ***Economic Development:*** Increases in macroeconomic figures like the total GDP disguise massive problems with corruption, the distribution of income, and employment, particularly in troubled Sunni areas and the poorer parts of Iraq's major towns and cities. Young men are often forced to choose between the ISF, insurgency, and militias for purely economic reasons. The real-world economy of Sunni areas continues to deteriorate, and investment in even secure Shi'ite areas is limited by the fear of crime and insurgency. Only the Kurdish area is making real progress towards development.
 - ***Aid:*** Iraq has largely spent the flood of US and other aid provided after the fall of Saddam as well as its oil food money. Large portions of this aid have been spent on corruption, outside contractors and imports, security, and projects with poor planning and execution, which now are unsustainable. Iraq will, however, desperately need major future aid to construct and develop if it can achieve political conciliation and security. The US committed \$20.8 billion of \$20.9 billion in aid funds as of February 13, 2007. It had obligated \$20.2 billion, and spent \$17.1 billion. The US continues to be unable to properly staff its PRTs or any aspect of its aid effort with adequate numbers of civilian experts, and security and transport are lacking for effective aid operations in many areas.
 - ***Energy and Oil:*** Iraq continued to produce less than 2.5 million barrels of oil per day and exported well under 2 million barrels a day.⁵⁴ It was dependent on imported fuel and gasoline for more than 50% of its total needs. No major rehabilitation of Iraq's oil fields and facilities has taken place. Waterflooding and heavy oil injection continued to be major problems, and the ability to recover oil from producing fields average less than two-thirds of the world average.

Many Iraqis still have hope for the future in spite of these problems, and still have a strong sense of national identity. The pressures that divide Iraqis, however, continue to increase and civil strife and tension continue to grow.

The Pace of Iraqi Force Development and the Drift Towards All-Out Civil War

Progress in the development of Iraqi security forces is difficult to gauge.. Far too much of the unclassified US government and MNF-I public affairs reporting on the ISF exaggerates progress, ignores or understates real-world problems, and promises unrealistic timelines. Much of the media reporting, however, focuses on the cases where Iraqi forces fail – often in cases where they come under the greatest stress and where new units have not yet had time to gain experience and “shake out” their leadership and personnel.

There are very real success, and positive trends in the regular Iraqi Army. Some units do fight well, and many units can perform important security roles with US support. At the same time, the sheer lack of transparency in the unclassified US government reporting on the war has made it almost impossible to distinguish success from failure and reality from spin.

The US Defense Department has stopped releasing detailed unclassified material about Iraqi Army, Police, and Border Enforcement readiness and manning levels, only giving information about how many units are “ready and equipped” and “in the lead.” These are vague, if not almost meaningless categories. “In the lead” does not indicate the level of independence from US support.

Similarly, Administration political leaders have constantly emphasized the number of regular military and police that have been trained and equipped as a key measure of success although the Department of Defense reporting stated in its March 2007 report on “Measuring Stability and Security” in Iraq that that the MNF-I and Iraqi commands have never known not how many “ready and equipped” soldiers quit or deserted the force.⁵⁵ MNF-I does believe that approximately 50,000 soldiers and policemen have been lost to attrition (killed, wounded, separated, and deserted) over the past two years, but notes that reporting by Iraqi ministries remains inconsistent, particularly on all elements of the police.

US military personnel who train or operate with Iraqi units give mixed anecdotal assessments of their quality. There are numerous stories of abuse, corruption, and mixed loyalties, just as well as of individual courage, commitment, and success.

Some individual units said to be “in the lead” are described as highly capable and politically neutral, while others were blatantly partisan, ineffective, burnt out, tied to local missions and loyalties, or had high desertion rates that effectively disbanded the unit. There seemed to be a consensus among trainers that several years of a continued US security force training effort was vital in order to achieve some semblance of stability in Iraq, but also that it would still take years to succeed with a meaningful political compromise between sects and factions.

Some Iraqis are truly motivated. Many are not, but are asked to fight as if they were truly motivated to support the national government rather than signed up to earn a living and

survive. There are problems in the US embed and advisory efforts as well. As was the case with the ARVN in Vietnam, their advisors often are not trained and lack the language skills to monitor pay, equity in promotion, conditions in quarters, food supply, and the other material conditions critical to real world morale and motivation. Some advisors choose to ignore the reality of sectarian and ethnic differences and motivation, do not track why Iraqi personnel actually go on leave, and do not monitor family conditions or attitudes towards military personnel in their home areas.

Serious problems in producing an adequate number of officers and noncommissioned officers are being addressed by both security ministries, but enduring solutions to the growth of leaders will take years not months to overcome. In many cases, Iraqi combat troops are asked to take on an unfamiliar concept of maintenance and support at the same time. They lack the experience to maintain their weapons and equipment, and lack the in unit capability and outside support to do so, A flood forward and replacement oriented military culture is asked to sustain its equipment as if it were Western or American.

From the US viewpoint, the problem is in teaching Iraqi leaders to be responsible stewards of resources. From an Iraqi viewpoint, there is a need to change the previous military culture, and give maintenance, logistics, and sustainability a priority that Iraqi forces never previously seen as necessary even during the Iran-Iraq and Gulf Wars. MNSTC-I does feel that, "the Iraqi Army and police are self-reliant in matters of life support, The Coalition provides limited support in fuel and repair parts but most other support is Iraqi controlled and executed."

MNSTC-I experts note that,

The training base which supports the recruitment and initial entry training for both individual replacements and new unit growth has been transitioned to Iraqi control and is effectively functioning...We have assisted both the MoD and the MoI to develop a contract-supported logistics architecture as an interim step until they can perform most logistic functions themselves. This architecture is in place, and the Ministries have a budget adequate to the task of sustaining it. Both Ministries have adopted a "Concept of Support" with milestones and metrics for performance. Measurable progress toward logistic self-reliance exists in all classes of supply and across all logistics functions.

Reporting at the unit and Ministry level, however, indicates that progress may be significantly slower than MNSTC-I hopes, and Iraqi officials and officers may be both slow to adapt and suffer from significant levels of corruption. Ongoing pay problems, corruption, a lack of adequate facilities and equipment, a lack of proper medical care, a lack of proper support for families, and problems with death and disability payments, often result in the poverty and unemployment of Iraqi young men. The ISF has major effectiveness, desertion, morale, motivation, and future retention problems.

The end result is sometimes to use up unready or over-committed units in spite of adding US embeds and partner units. Men who did not volunteer for demanding combat missions, particularly in complex sectarian or ethnic environments or outside their home areas are, being pushed into combat. They often have poor facilities, equipment and weapons that are sharply inferior to their US counterparts, and are at least partly excluded from the command and intelligence loops to preserve security. They are sometimes treated as second best or unreliable partners.

Ethnic and sectarian issues remain a serious problem. MNSTC-I experts reported in April 2007 that,

The Minister of Interior has accepted revised MNSTC-I transformation programs for both the National and Provincial Police and has acted to replace ineffective leaders as they are identified. In the past six months, 5 of 9 National Police Brigade Commanders have been relieved of their duties.

Shi'ite militia infiltration does continue throughout the ISF, especially in the National Police and regular police force. Militias also intimidate individual members of the security forces to secure their cooperation or at least forestall action against them. Mixed loyalties not only exist at the level of individual policemen or officers, but also inside the relevant ministries.

As one senior MNSTC-I officer notes, however, these problems are the symptom of much more serious issues:

The has been an erosion of trust both within the government and within the population at large over the past year, and it manifests itself in everyone believing the worst about everyone else. To be sure, there has been infiltration. It should be noted, however, the Government of Iraq has encouraged young men to disavow their allegiance to sectarian militias and – if qualified – to enter the security forces as individuals and not as groups.

The more important issue in assessing the cohesion and loyalty of Iraqi Security Forces is the presence of sectarian influence. This influence plays out in two ways: actively and passively. Active sectarian influence is criminal conduct. Passive sectarian influence is sympathy for those conducting criminal acts on the basis of sect.

We assess that incidents of active sectarian influence in the Army are minimal, in the National Police are moderate, and in the local police are significant – notably in Baghdad and Basra. We assess that incidents of passive sectarian influence in the Army are low and in all the police forces are high. Reducing active sectarian influences requires transparent investigations and actual prosecutions by courageous leaders. Reducing passive sectarian influence will depend upon further political progress towards reconciliation.

The problems affecting the overall development of the ISF have grown worse since late 2006. Statements by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki, and the impact of the US election, seem to have accelerated US and allied scheduling for withdrawal. Expanding Iraqi forces has become a political necessity, as it seems to be the only way for the US to stay for a significant period, and the only way to make an Iraqi takeover seem credible.

Little about Iraqi performance in the field, however, indicates that the army, security forces, and police are “75% complete” as some US spokesmen claimed in talking about an 18-24 month time period for a full scale shift of responsibility to Iraqi forces in 2006, and the ISF will require a very substantial aid and advisory effort, and significant if diminishing support from US combat forces, far beyond the start of 2008. A realistic timeframe is closer to 3 to 5 years.

In short, the number and quality of Iraqi security forces have increased. Both US and Iraqi government plans must still, however, deal with critical problems in terms of manpower, troop quality, discipline, and equipment that will take at least three to five more years to solve. Most importantly, the improvement in Iraqi forces has not yet led to increased security, and the current effort cannot be accelerated or surged in ways that allow the US to make a rapid and successful withdrawal of its forces.

Reacting to American Failures and Self-Inflicted Wounds

US politicians and commanders are being forced to rethink their entire course of action for securing the country. President Bush announced a new strategy for Iraq on January

10th, 2007, centering on a short-term “surge” of American troops to Baghdad and Anbar province.

This “surge” strategy, combined with the new “Gated Communities” counterinsurgency operational plan for Baghdad employed by General Petraeus, may bring a temporary drop in violence. However, without a much more intense and realistic ISF development effort, combined with political conciliation among Iraq’s major powers, the “surge” may fail. The same is true is Iraqi force development is pushed too fast. “Pace” is a key issue that must shape the intensity of the development effort; Iraqi forces must be able to absorb what the MNF-I is providing for them and have enough time to work with embeds and Coalition partner units so they become truly effective and self-sustaining.

The latest strategy, however, focuses so much on Baghdad that even “victory” leaves open the question of what strategy – if any – the US has for dealing with Iraq as a nation or for taking effective action even if its “surge” strategy wins in Baghdad

More money, manpower, and patience will not be enough to pull Iraq back from the brink without a new and more realistic strategy for shaping and integrating US, allied, and Iraqi efforts. The US mid-term elections are simply a confirmation of this need to make major changes in US policy towards Iraq that has been acknowledged by the replacement of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld with Robert Gates.

The wrong kind of change, however, can simply make defeat a certainty, increase risk, and force events to spiral out of control. The demand by some Democrats to pressure the Iraqi government into fostering compromise and conciliation by drawing down troop levels is gathering momentum, but the ISF simply is not ready to take such missions and it is far easier to force Iraq’s leaders to divide along sectarian and ethnic lines that force compromise on a fractured political structure and society. Encouraging federation and separation may well have the same effect. The key issue is balance. If the US and its allies transition to Iraqi control too fast, they will falter and perhaps fragment. If the US and its allies transition too slowly, Iraqi forces will become dependent upon the Coalition and fail to progress]

Setting realistic goals for the ISF development effort means understanding the need to make today’s forces effective before any major expansion, to correct drastic past mistakes in developing the police and rushing Iraqi army forces into the field. More time is needed, not less. Moreover, no form of US military action and Iraqi force development can succeed without Iraqi political success and some major new approach to providing economic aid, helping Iraq develop effective governance, and creating a rule of law and criminal justice system.

The end result is growing tension between three at least partly conflicting imperatives: the wish to draw down US troop levels rather quickly, the need to exert political pressure on the main political players in Iraq, and the need for continuing high force levels to provide security so the slow political process and force training effort can take place. How these conflicting forces will play out remains to be seen.

II. The Political and Economic Dimensions of Iraqi Force Development

"Any student of history knows there is no military solution to a problem like that in Iraq, to the insurgency of Iraq. Military action is necessary to help improve security ... but it is not sufficient."

Gen. David Petraeus, March 9, 2007⁵⁶

A meaningful assessment of Iraqi force development must recognize that progress in political compromise and economic development are the sine qua non for success. Without such progress there is a significant risk that even the successful development of an Iraqi army could backfire. That said, Americans need to remember that Iraq's political leadership cannot always move at an American pace and that the present government has really been empowered since June 2006.⁵⁷

An effective army will be useless or even counter productive if it is used to promote narrow sectarian aims. As Ambassador Barbara Bodine put it: "The issue is not the size or capability of the Iraqi military or police force. The issue is the legitimacy, not just the legality, of the Iraqi government. Creating an army or a police force absent not just a functioning state but a legitimate one is to create a house of cards, a hollow structure unable to stand."⁵⁸ Though there have been some positive signs in recent months, Iraq is not yet making the political and economic progress necessary to create an environment in which the ISF can successfully develop into an organization for Iraqi national unity.

Iraqi Force Development and Iraqi Public Opinion

Insurgencies and civil wars are as much wars of perception as military struggles. The role that internal and external forces play in achieving strategic victory is partly determined by their ability to win tactical battles, but is in large measure achieved when government security and other institutions impose popular obedience or win popular support. Despite the steady expansion of every element of Iraqi forces, both Iraqi and Coalition forces have faced steadily growing problems.

Iraqi public opinion has been split in many ways, with marked differences among Iraq's major ethno-religious groups. Despite the increasing violence, many Iraqis did not lose hope. The trend did however deteriorate sharply between 2005 and early 2007 (**Figure 2.1**).

The favorable trends in Iraqi opinion were heavily concentrated in Kurdish areas where the Iraqi government and forces played only a minimal role, and in Shi'ite areas where local governments and forces dominated by other Shi'ites played a major role. Public opinion was far less favorable in mixed areas, areas where insurgents and militia death squads were active, and in all Sunni areas.

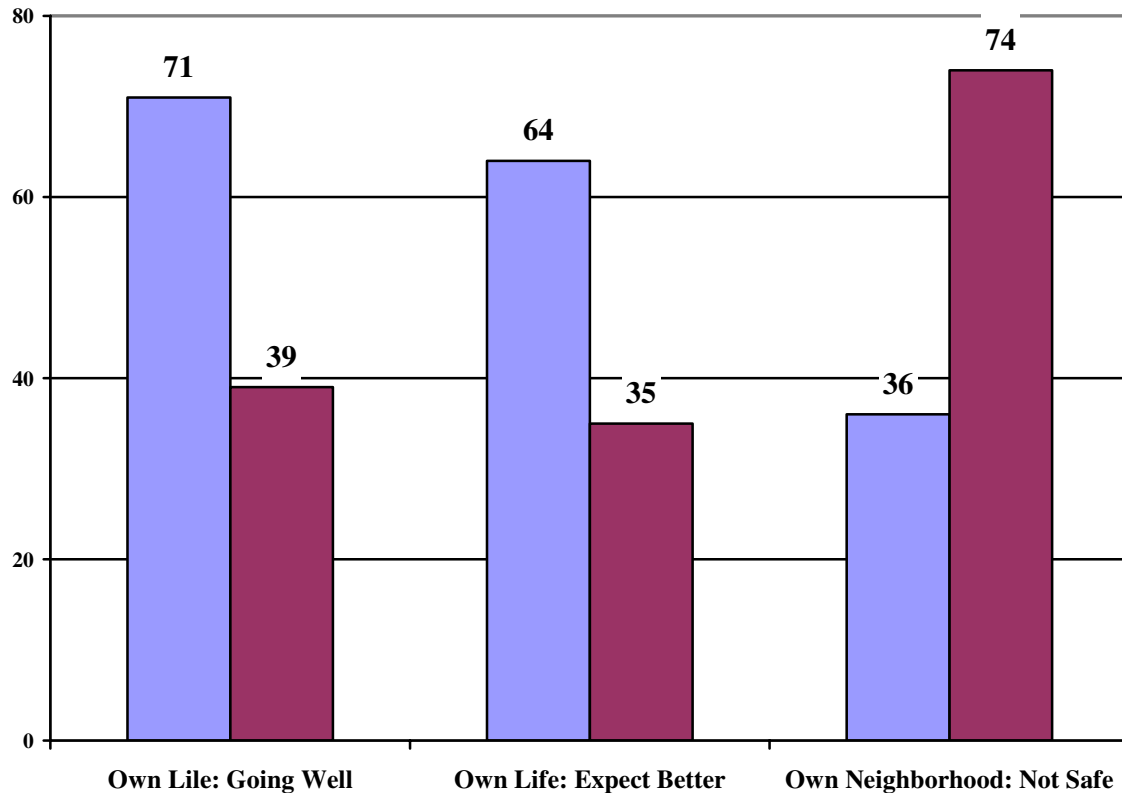
Polling data from the Kurdish areas in the north also suggested that geography and ethno-sectarian realities play a large role in determining whether militias or government troops are more trusted. Additionally the data on the Shi'a-dominated south suggests that confidence is divided along sectarian lines. Since the Shi'a are the largest ethnic group, and showed the highest participation in voting and governmental programs, it is unsurprising that the south shows the greatest confidence in the government.

These trends were not unexpected. **Figure 2.2** shows the results of another poll warning that by Fall 2006 confidence in the Iraqi government had already waned in Sunni and other troubled areas as the violence caused by the insurgency and civil conflict steadily worsened. It also shows that in the Sunni and mixed areas--where the insurgency and civil conflict are most serious--there was almost no confidence in security and the future, while that in areas where Shi'ites are clearly achieving dominance, "confidence" is more the result of Shi'ite success than national progress.

This may change with time. Al Qaeda has alienated key tribes in the West. Al Anbar-based Sunni tribes have organized to fight against Al Qaeda efforts at control. The Government of Iraq and Coalition plan to provide limited but still significant standardized training and support for Provincially-controlled Emergency Response Units (ERUs) to support the tribal sheikhs, and are taking other significant steps to improve security and confidence in the mixed provinces of Diyala, Salah ad-Din, et al, as well as throughout Baghdad [(Joint Security Stations (JSS)). At present, however, it is far too early to know just how much such efforts will succeed or alter Iraqi perceptions.

Figure 2.3 provides a "snapshot" of Iraqi attitudes as revealed in February and March 2007 in perhaps the most detailed poll yet conducted. It is clear that enough Iraqis perceive the country to be in a civil war for it to be a civil war: Any serious effort by the majority or one of Iraq's significant minorities can sustain a conflict. The same poll found that 53% percent of all Iraqis saw security as the most serious single issue facing the country (55% Sunni, 52% Shi'ite, and 45% Kurd), with political and military issues making up a close second (26% of all Iraqis, 26% Sunni, 27% Shi'ite, and 18% Kurd.) Only the relatively secure Kurds revealed a significant percentage that saw Iraq's growing economic problems as a dominant factor. (9% of all Iraqis, 9% Sunni, 7% Shi'ite, and 18% Kurd.)⁵⁹

Figure 2.1
Iraqi Views of Life in Iraq: November 2005 versus February-March 2007
 (Percent Replying Yes to Question)



Source: ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007. This is the third such poll and is based on experienced local pollsters going from location to location in a statistically relevant number of points throughout the country. The survey was conducted for ABC News, USA Today, the BBC and ARD German TV by D3 Systems of Vienna, Va., and KA Research Ltd. of Istanbul. Interviews were conducted in person, in Arabic or Kurdish, among a random national sample of 2,212 Iraqis aged 18 and up from Feb. 25 to March 5, 2007.

Four-hundred-fifty-eight sampling points were distributed proportionate to population size in each of Iraq's 18 provinces, then in each of the 102 districts within the provinces, then by simple random sampling among Iraq's nearly 11,000 villages or neighborhoods, with urban/rural stratification at each stage.

Maps or grids were used to select random starting points within each sampling point, with household selection by random interval and within-household selection by the "next-birthday" method. An average of five interviews were conducted per sampling point. Three of the 458 sampling points were inaccessible for security reasons and were substituted with randomly selected replacements.

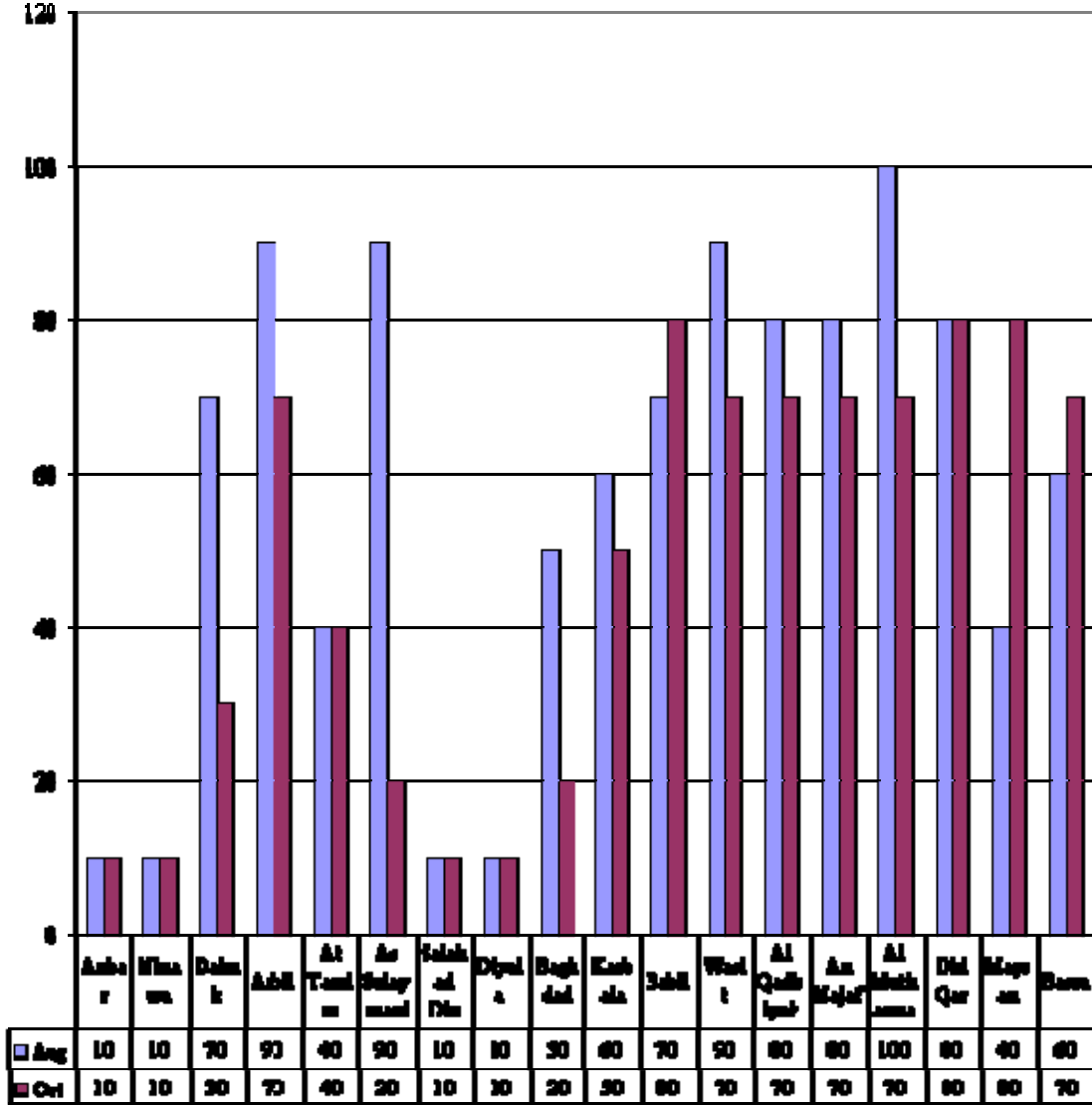
Interviews were conducted by 103 trained Iraqi interviewers with 27 supervisors. Just over half of interviews were back-checked by supervisors – 28 percent by direct observation, 14 percent by revisits and 10 percent by phone.

In addition to the national sample, oversamples were drawn in Anbar province, Sadr City, Basra city and Kirkuk city to allow for more reliable analysis in those areas. Population data came from 2005 estimates by the Iraq Ministry of Planning. The sample was weighted by sex, age, education, urban/rural status and population of province. The survey had a contact rate of 90 percent and a cooperation rate of 62 percent for a net response rate of 56 percent. Including an estimated design effect of 1.51, the results have a margin of sampling error of 2.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

Figure 2.2

Confidence in the ability of the Iraqi Government to protect from threats, August versus October 2006

Percent people answering “a great deal” or “some” confidence



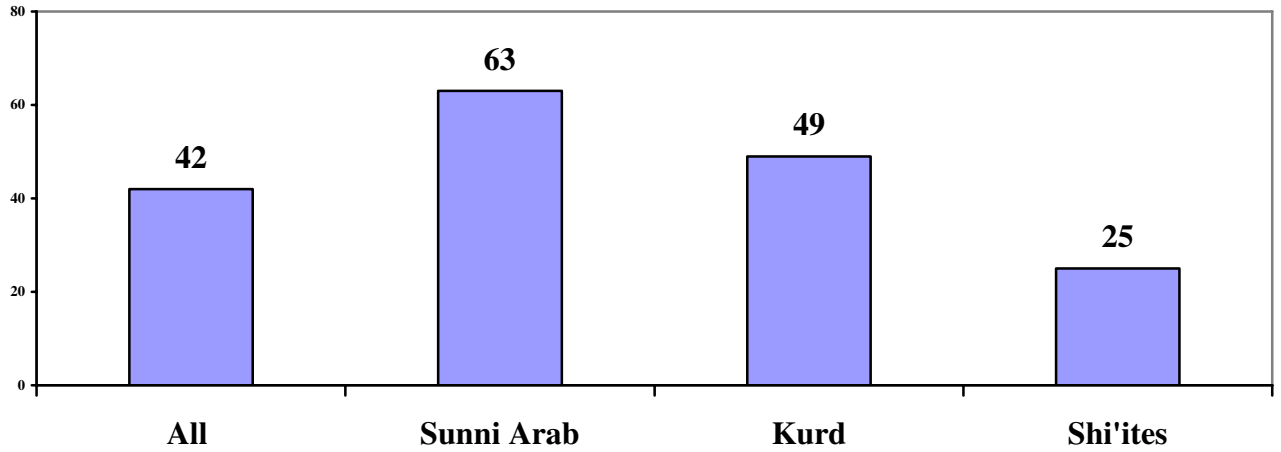
Source: “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” Department of Defense, Quarterly Report to Congress, November 2006, p. 26

Data points are estimates from the DoD report.

Sample Size ~8,000, margin of error +/- 1%

Figure 2.3
Iraqi Views of Life in Iraq: Detailed Attitudes Towards Security and
Civil War in March 2007 – Part One
 (ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll⁶⁰)

Is Iraq in a Civil War (Percent Saying Yes)



Ethnic Cleansing and Displacement (Percent)

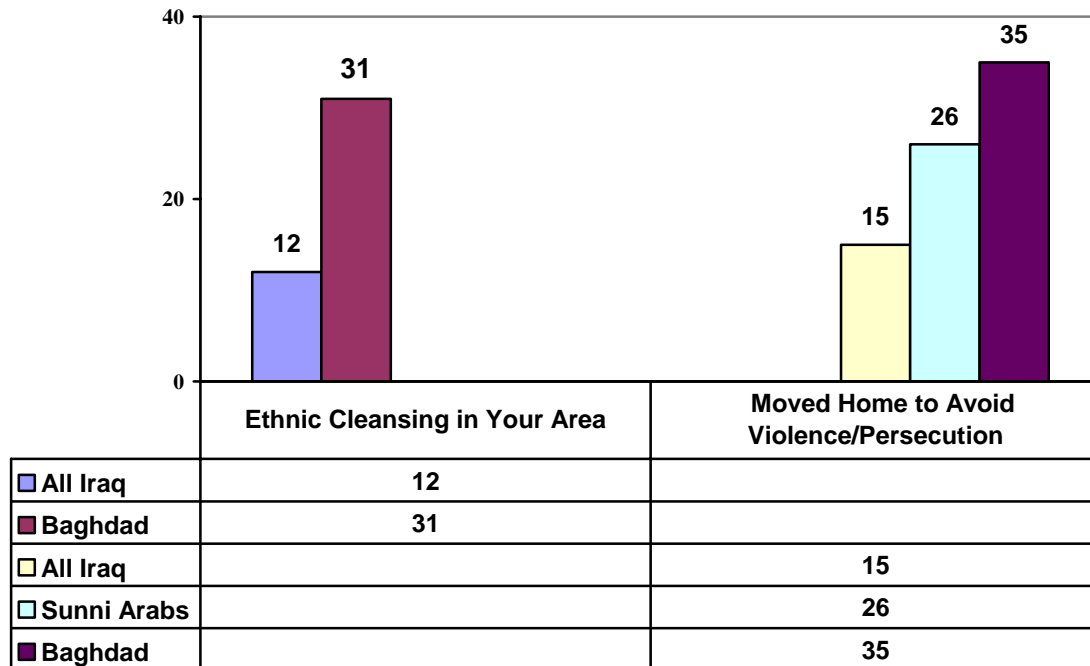
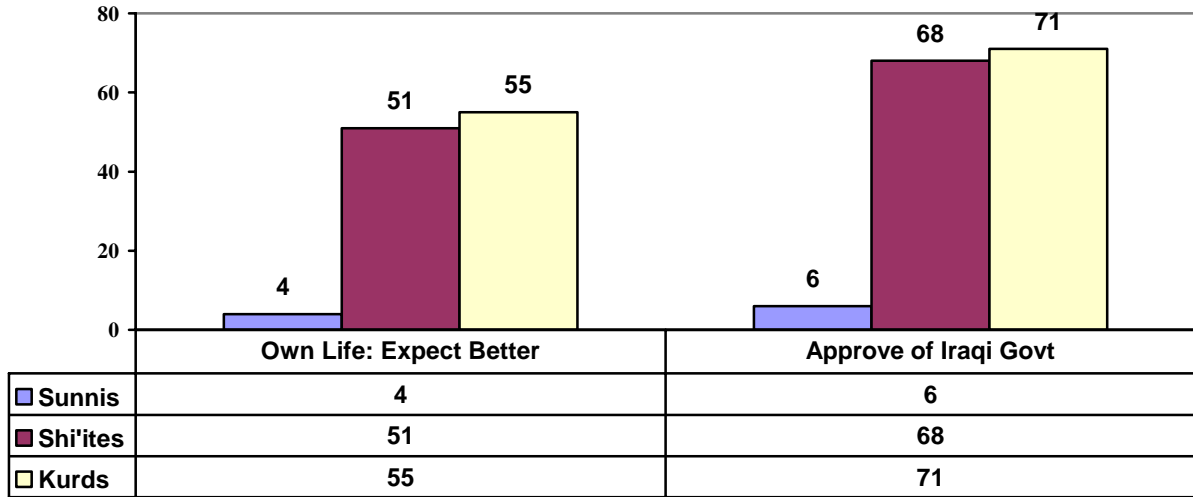


Figure 2.3

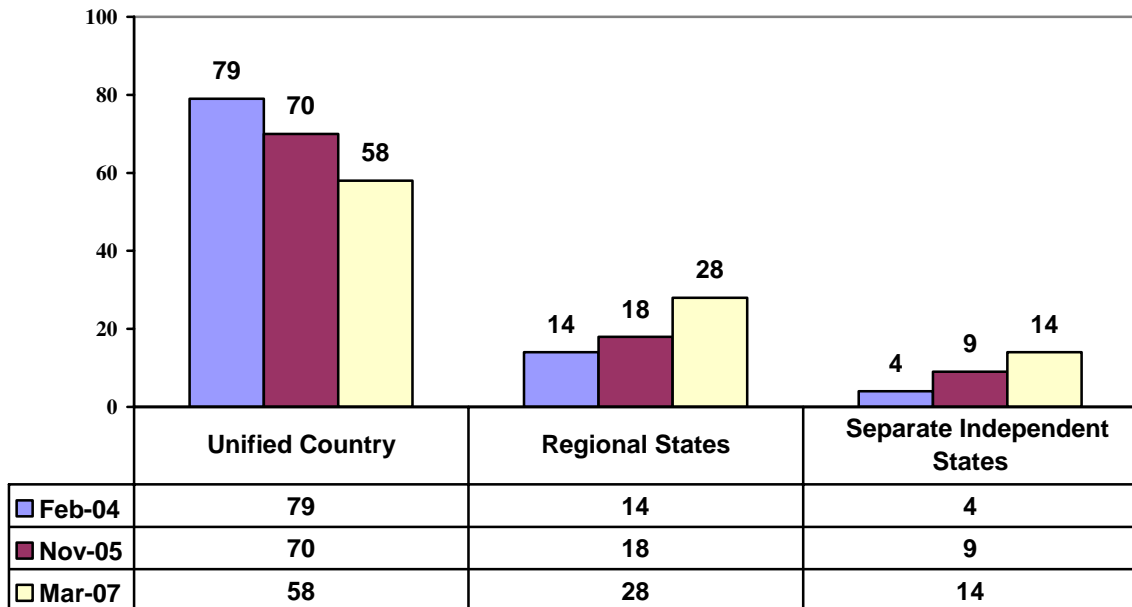
Iraqi Views of Life in Iraq: Detailed Attitudes Towards Security and Civil War in March 2007 – Part Two

(ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll⁶¹)

Sectarian Divisions Over Future (Percent)



Preference for Future Structure of Iraqi State (Percent)



An ABC news poll, conducted between February 5 and March 7, 2006, revealed a slide in the confidence Iraqis have in both the Iraqi Army and police force. The poll also revealed clear divisions between Sunnis, Kurds, and Shi'ites in their level of confidence in the ISF. As seen in both **Figure 2.4** and **Figure 2.5**, total level of confidence in the Iraqi army and police force was higher in 2007 than it was in 2003. However, in both cases total confidence dropped between November 2005 and March 2007. This suggests that confidence in the ISF has been dropping in response to the massive increases in civilian casualties during 2006, although the Iraqi Army is still popular enough to be an important institution in supporting Iraqi national unity.

Despite the rise in violence in 2006, Few Iraqis blamed the ISF. Only 2% of Iraqis listed "unnecessary violence against civilians" by either the Iraqi Army or Police Service as their greatest concern. This contrasts with the 16% of Iraqis listed "unnecessary violence against civilians" by the US or Coalition forces as their greatest concern. Likewise, only 1% of Iraqis blame the Iraqi Army or Police for the violence occurring in Iraq, while 31% blame Coalition forces.⁶²

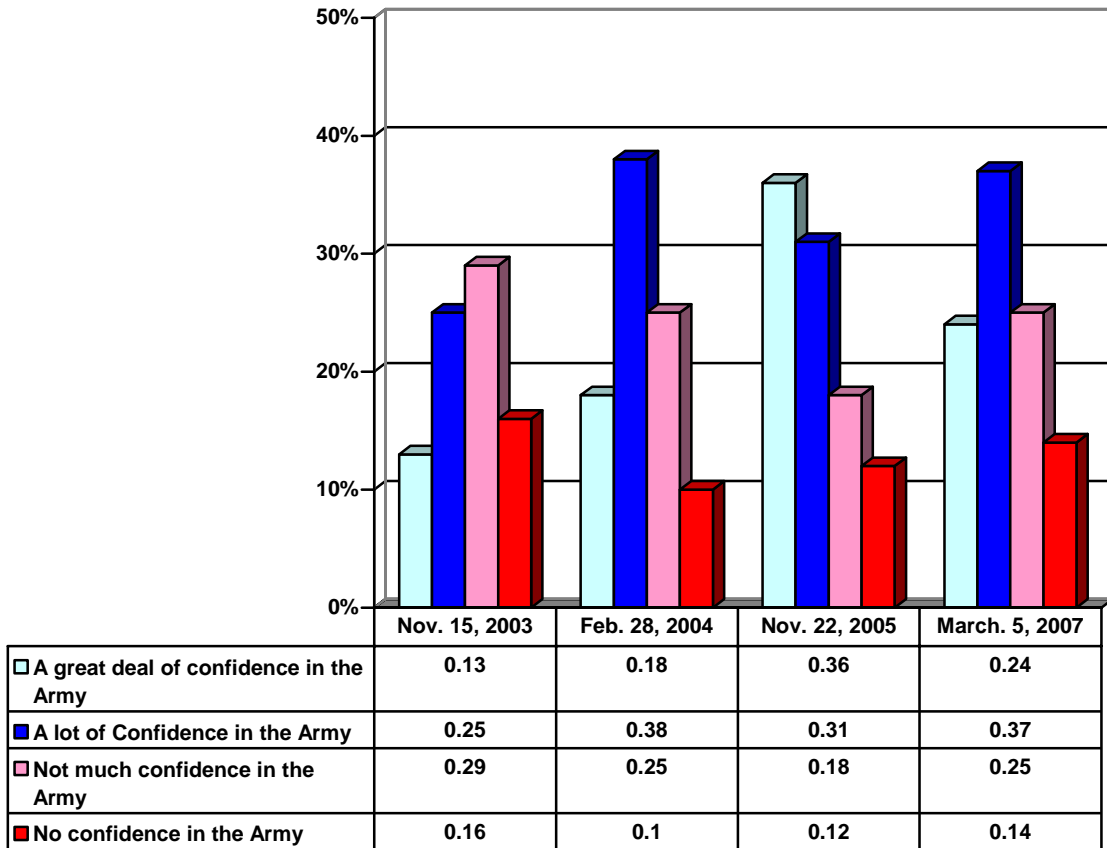
Iraqi support for the ISF was higher than Iraqi support for Coalition forces. As seen in **Figure 2.6**, the vast majority of Sunni and a slim majority of total Iraqis find attacks against Coalition forces acceptable. **Figure 2.7** clearly shows that a huge majority of Iraqis do not find attacks on the ISF acceptable. Unfortunately, 34% of Sunnis believed that attacks on the ISF were acceptable.

Although confidence in the ISF remained relatively high, many Iraqis tried to avoid contact with them because their deployments were associated with US and British operations, checkpoints, or fighting with insurgents and militias. One irony of the rising violence in Iraq was that ordinary Iraqis had more day-to-day reason to fear the forces fighting for national unity than the various groups that sporadically attacked and whose presence was far less predictable and far harder to avoid. For similar reasons, local militias were seen as more of a day-to-day problem than outside threat.

As seen in **Figure 2.8**, more than half of Iraqis avoid Police stations, two-thirds avoid checkpoints, and an even greater majority of Iraqis avoid US/Coalition forces. The percentage of Sunnis avoiding ISF checkpoints or buildings was markedly higher than other ethno-religious groups in Iraq. The lack of confidence in ISF forces by Sunnis comes as no surprise when viewed in light of **Figure 2.9**. The percentage of Sunnis reporting violence against civilians by ISF forces nearby was much higher than what was reported by Shi'ites or Kurds.

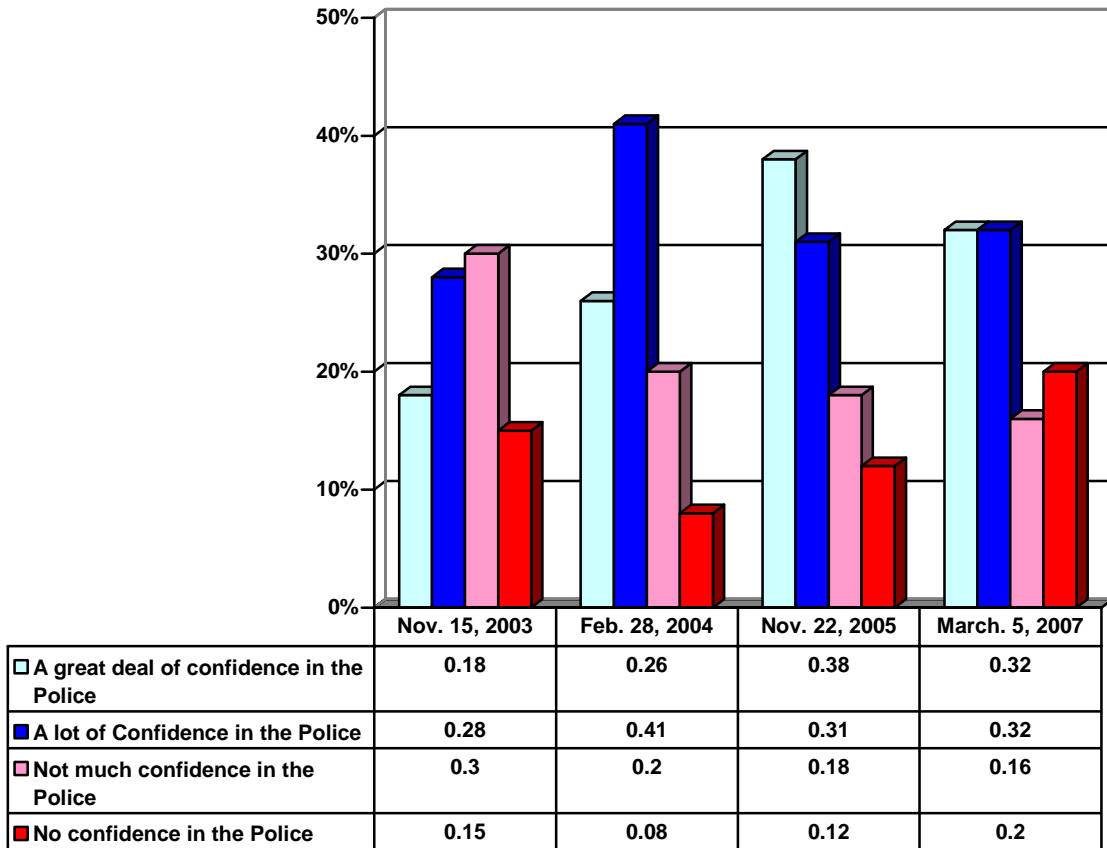
There were several other negative polling results in regards to the overall situation in Iraq. 42% of Iraqis felt they are now in a civil war, with 24% feeling one is likely. Barely 40% of Iraqis expect their children to have a better life. In November 2005, 63 percent of Iraqis felt very safe in their neighborhoods. In early 2007 just 26 percent said the same. In Baghdad, 84% of Iraqis feel entirely unsafe. 53% of Iraqis have a close relative or friend who has been killed or wounded in the violence.

Figure 2.4
Confidence in the Iraqi Army Over Time: 2003-2007



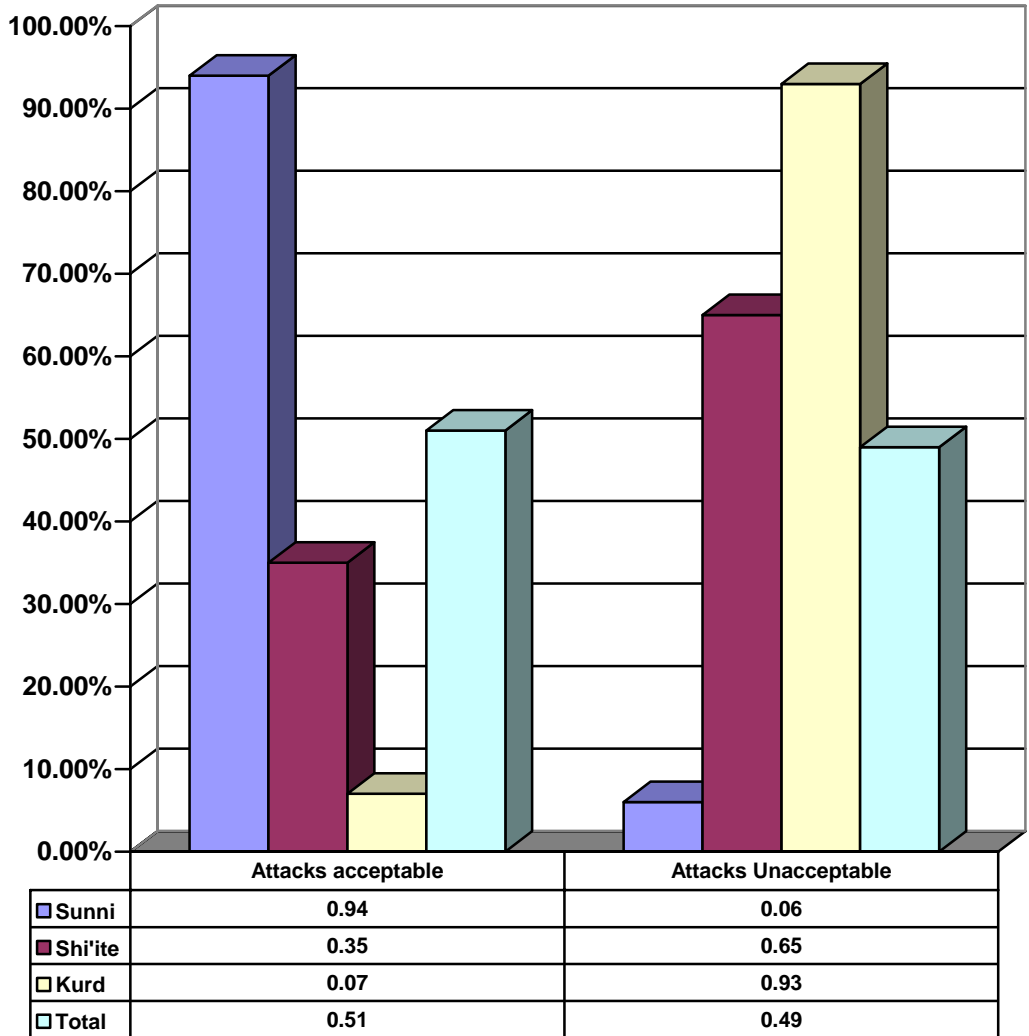
Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll. March 19, 2007. Pg. 25

Figure 2.5
Confidence in the Iraqi Police over time: 2003-2007



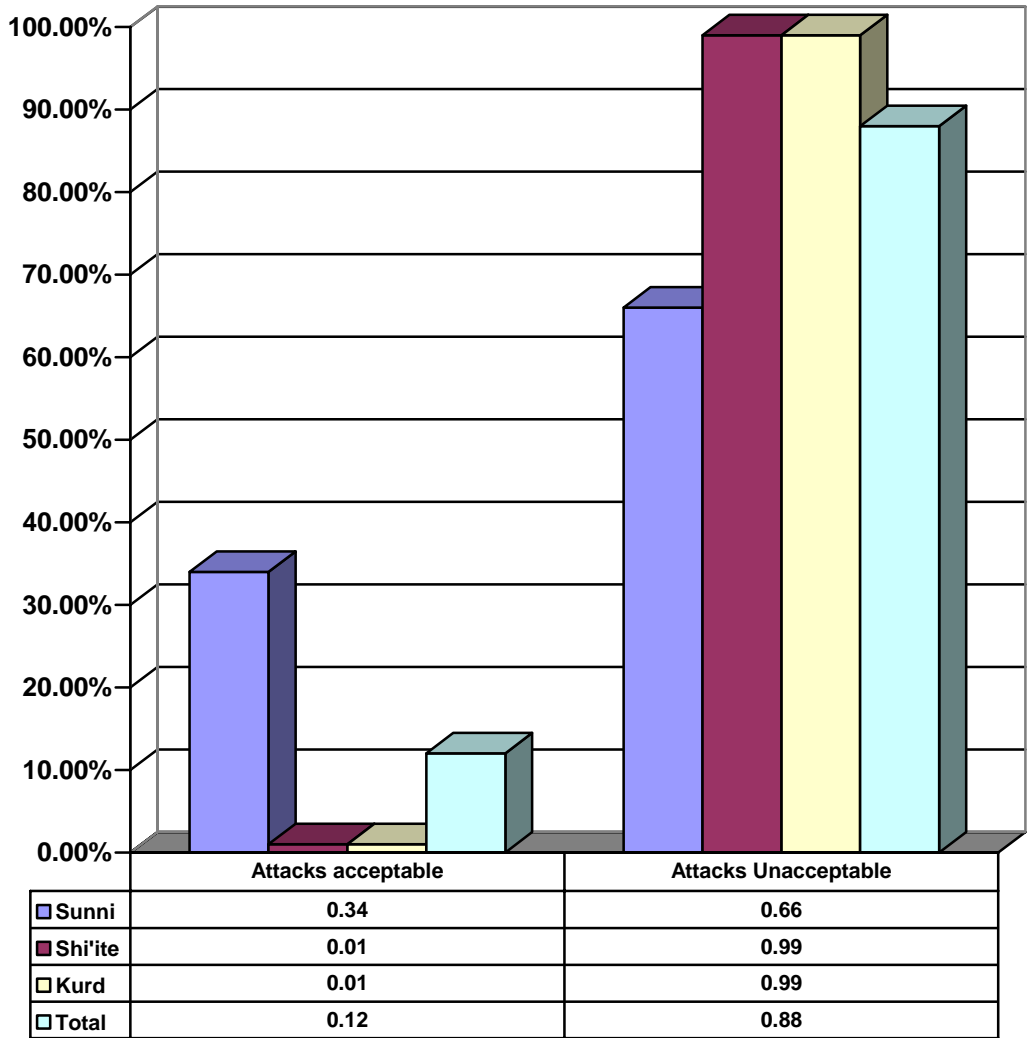
Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll. March 19, 2007. Pg. 25

Figure 2.6
Percentage of Iraqis Finding attacks against Coalition Forces Acceptable by Sect and Ethnicity: Early 2007



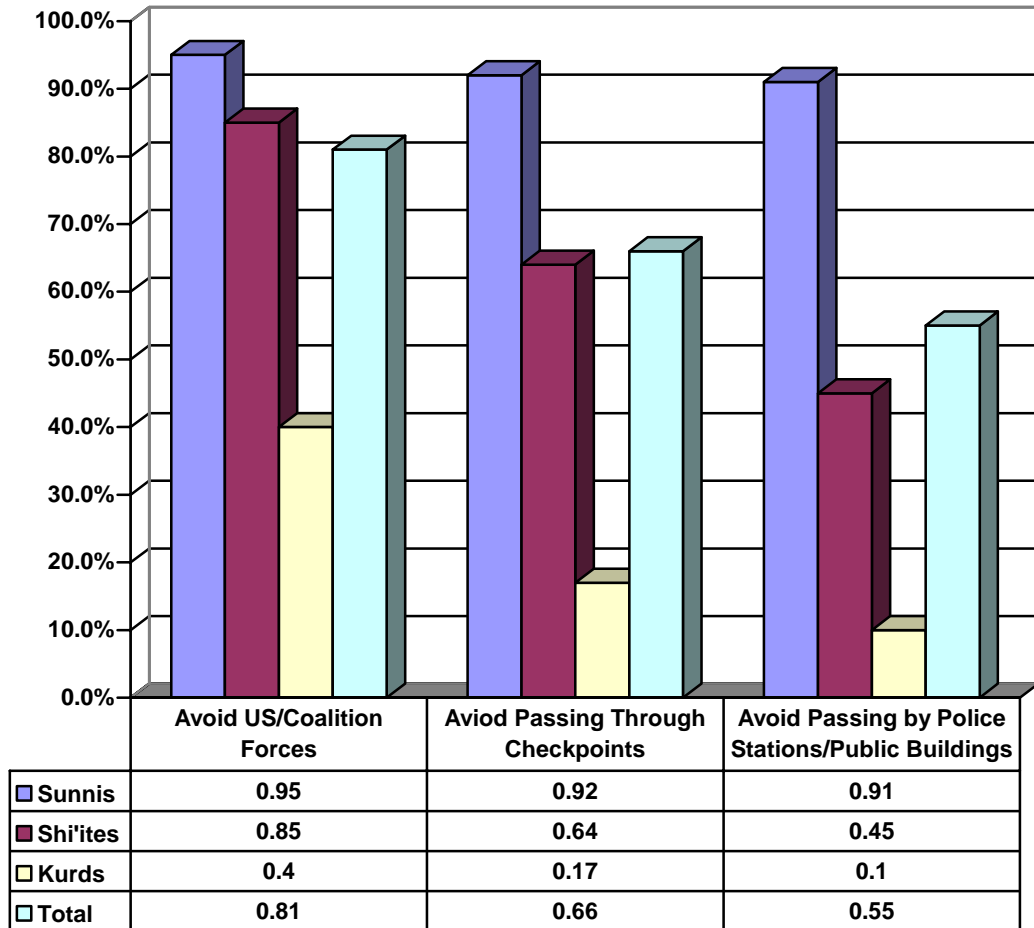
Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq." ABC News/BBC/USA Today/ARD March 19,2007. Pg 29.

Figure 2.7
Percentage of Iraqis Finding attacks against Iraqi Government Forces Acceptable
by Sect and Ethnicity: Early 2007



Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq." ABC News/BBC/USA Today/ARD March 19,2007. Pg 29.

Figure 2.8
Percentage Of Iraqis Avoiding US/Coalition Forces, Checkpoints, Or Passing By Police Stations By Sect and Ethnicity: Early 2007

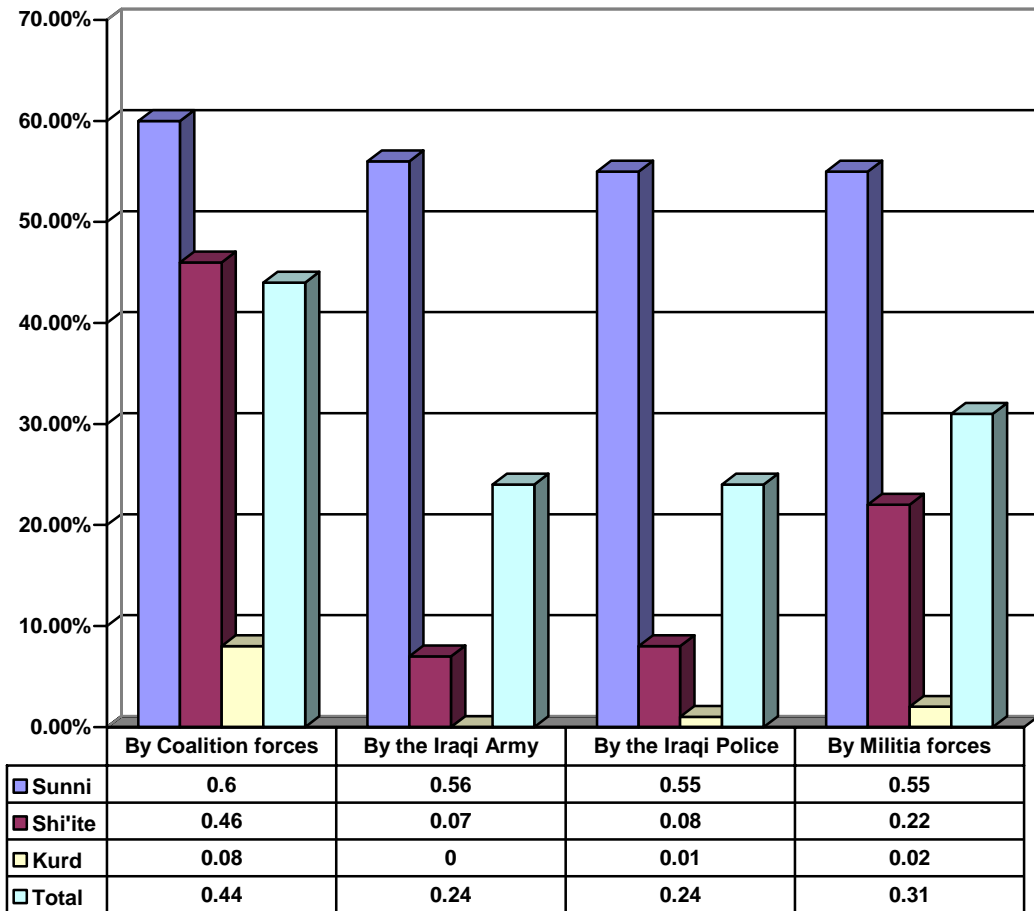


Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC/D/USA Today Poll, 03/19/2007. Pg 5.

Figure 2.9

Violence Against Iraqi Citizens

Percentage of Iraqis Reporting Violence Against Citizens Nearby Being Perpetrated by Coalition forces/ the Iraqi Army/ the Iraqi Police/ Militias



Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC/D/USA Today Poll, 03/19/2007. Pg 10.

Political Progress and Creating the Conditions for an Effective and Unified ISF

The efforts at political conciliation that are as critical to successful ISF development as any aspect of military training and advice have had some limited success, but scarcely on the necessary scale. On August 20, Iraqi security forces officials, national and local government officials, and local civic, tribal and religious leaders met in Hillah to discuss the government's national reconciliation objectives and to sign an oath pledging to cooperate to meet these goals, without regard to ethnic, religious or tribal differences. The conference was organized by the provincial police chief, Major General Das Hamza. A similar meeting was organized on August 26-27, 2006, and drew several hundred tribal leaders.⁶³

Under pressure from the Bush administration, Prime Minister Maliki announced that Iraqi leaders would meet in mid-December 2006 to reconcile opposing factions and "strengthen the Iraqi national unity."⁶⁴

The Iraqi parliament passed a law on October 11, 2006 to postpone the creation of "federal" regions for at least 18 months. At the same time, the law set up a system allowing provinces to merge into autonomous regions with considerable self-rule.⁶⁵ The sectarian identities of the major political parties, as well as the political weakness of the non-sectarian parties, continued to foster a political climate that increased the divisions between Iraq's sectarian and ethnic groups. Federalism as an organizational principle was vaguely incorporated into the Iraqi constitution, but was interpreted differently by different factions.

Arab Sunnis, however, had growing reason to fear being left in Shi'ite and Kurdish dominated areas in most of the country with only a resource-poor enclave in the West. Arab Sunnis have dominated Shi'ites and Kurds for decades and even centuries in some cases, and are concerned about political payback. Many believe that they are the rightfully endowed rulers of Iraq despite their minority status. The Shi'ites and Kurds faced tensions of their own over Mosul, Kirkuk, and control of their "ethnic fault line." Iraq's neighbors had conflicting interests as well, and Turkish foreign minister Abdullah Gul warned that federalism in Iraq could lead to the country's break-up and threaten regional stability:

The core of the problem is that if Iraq is divided, definitely there will be civil war and definitely neighboring countries will be involved in this. The Middle East can't shoulder this. It's too much."⁶⁶

While Iraqi leaders did continue to try to make progress in conciliation, and brought together outside nations in an effort to reduce external pressures and threats, the Iraqi Parliament continued to have severe problems in solving any of Iraq's major issues. Most members of Parliament stopped showing up when Parliament was in session in the fall of 2006. The Sadrists suspended participation in the Council of Representatives during this period and many of the legislators went on pilgrimage and vacation during these traditional Ramadan and Feast of the Sacrifice periods,

During November and December 2006 nearly every session had to be adjourned because of low attendance. As few as 65 members made it to work some days, and many don't even live in Iraq anymore.⁶⁷ The poor attendance on the part of legislators reflected both

the immaturity of this new institution and security concerns. The end result, however, was a widespread view that the Parliament was ineffective.

Legislators were paid generously, regardless of attendance. As a result, decisions, when they occurred at all, occurred in private meetings, with Parliament merely rubber-stamping them when it manages to meet. "They have never sat together to have a sound dialogue" stated Mahmoud Othman, a Kurdish member of Parliament. Othman also added that sectarian tensions are "preventing the Parliament from doing anything."⁶⁸

Yet despite Othman's view, the Parliament was able to come back into special session and pass a responsible budget in a democratic manner and in accord with the Iraqi Constitution. Moreover, both the Prime Minister and the Council of Representatives have seen fit to extend a necessary State of Emergency so as to better enable ISF, Council of Representatives and other institutions critical to the Government of Iraq's effort to prosecute the counterinsurgency.

The government also did little to give even Sunni officials confidence, and increasingly discriminated against both Sunni political leaders and government officials. In a February, 2007 interview, Salam Z. al-Zobae, the Deputy Prime Minister, expressed frustration over the sectarian nature of the Iraqi government. As one of two deputy Prime Ministers, he was technically a powerful office holder in the Iraqi government. However, as a Sunni in a Shi'ite dominated government, his influence was small. "I don't have any authority," he stated.⁶⁹

It also was not clear whether Shi'ite and Kurdish officials who seemed to seek conciliation really did so, or were simply reacting to outside pressure with political gestures. When US pressure to rein in militias and reach a political consensus on Iraq's future intensified in late 2006, both Maliki's rhetoric and his reaction to militia violence and police infiltration appeared to change, signaling at least some tolerance for confronting Shi'ite militias. Maliki also announced an initiative to reshuffle his cabinet, possibly including the Defense and Interior ministers.

This shift still had not taken place as of late April 2006, however, and many in the Government of Iraq and Coalition viewed the possible removal of the current Minister of Defense and Minister of the Interior as a giant step backwards as both have taken technocratic and generally non-sectarian approaches with their efforts to build their respective institutions. Candidates to replace ministers are also chosen by political parties, not directly by the Prime Minister, raising the prospect of serious political problems in find better replacements.⁷⁰

In mid-April, 2007, Moqtada al-Sadr withdrew his six ministers from Maliki's cabinet in protest of the lack of government pressure on US forces to withdraw. The departing ministers led the Health Ministry, Tourism and Antiquities Ministry, and the Ministries of Agriculture, Civil Society, and Provincial Affairs.⁷¹ The Transportation Minister, also loyal to Sadr, left the country in 2006 and did not return. Although it was unclear what the full effects of this move would be, if Sadr were to cut off all support for Maliki it would seriously weaken his government. However, as most of the departed ministers were corrupt and inefficient, their removal may not hurt the government in the long run.

After a particularly large-scale kidnapping with probable police involvement had occurred in Baghdad in early November 2006, Maliki said: "What is happening is not terrorism, but the result of disagreements and conflict between militias belonging to this

side or that.” The government reacted with large police sweeps, and the interior ministry publicly announced several hours after the abductions that arrest warrants had been issued for several police commanders from the district where the crime had occurred.⁷²

Not all signs regarding political conciliation were negative. An Iraqi government spokesman stated in early February, 2007 that consensus had been reached among the major political parties on a few initiatives, including: an agreement to create a committee to negotiate with political parties close to sectarian militias to try to get them to lay down their arms; and a planned debate in Parliament on whether to relax restrictions on allowing former Ba’ath party members back into government service.⁷³

A more encouraging step occurred on February 26, 2007, when the Iraqi cabinet approved a draft oil law. An agreement between Iraq’s major factions on revenue sharing and oil exploitation is widely seen as key to any broad political conciliation. The draft of the law approved by the cabinet allows the central government to distribute oil revenues to the provinces based upon population. This is an important concession to the Sunnis, who mostly live in oil poor areas and fear being cut off from of Iraq’s oil riches. The law also grants regional oil companies the right to sign contracts with foreign oil companies for exploration and exploitation. Although this was certainly a positive step, significant hurdles remained. The draft must be passed by Parliament to become law. Furthermore, the draft law was short on important details, such as establishing a dispute resolution mechanism. The draft law was also vague on what legal protections foreign investors would have.⁷⁴ In early May, both Sunni and Kurdish parliament members began expressing serious doubts about some of the Oil Law’s major provisions.⁷⁵ It is doubtful that the law would pass in Parliament without the support of at least the Kurdish block.

There were a few other positive accomplishments. The Council of Representatives (CoR) passed a law on January 23 creating an Independent Higher Election Commission, although no members were immediately appointed to it. Also, on January 24, 2007, the Council of Representatives passed the *Military Court Procedures Law* and the *Military Punishment Law*. These two laws formally established the Iraqi military justice system.⁷⁶ Finally, in late March the Iraqi prime minister introduced a law to Parliament that would allow former members of the Iraqi Baath party to return to government work.⁷⁷ This measure was seen as vital to ensuring the support of Sunnis in the Iraqi government, as well as increasing the skill and experience level of the Iraqi government bureaucracy.

The Council of Representatives passed the 2007 Federal Budget on February 8, 2007. The \$41 billion budget committed \$7.3 billion to the ISF. While the passage of the 2007 budget was an important achievement, it must be noted that only 40% of the 2006 budget was actually obligated to capital projects.⁷⁸ Persistent corruption and a lack of accounting practices added to this problem, as did “a culture of corruption coupled with incompetence in certain key areas.”⁷⁹

The impotence of the Iraqi Parliament, combined with the hardening of sectarian lines, left limited hope for a political compromise. According to a January 2007 National Intelligence Estimate: “. . . even if violence is diminished, given the current winner-take-all attitude and sectarian animosities infecting the political scene, Iraqi leaders will be hard pressed to achieve sustained political reconciliation”⁸⁰

These internal tensions were further complicated by negotiations with Iraq’s neighbors. Maliki’s foreign policy also took a new turn on November 20, when he announced he

would restore diplomatic ties with Syria after nearly 25 years. He announced this step after a meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem. Al-Muallem pledged Syria's help in quelling sectarian violence in Iraq, while Maliki urged Syria to tighten its borders to stop the flow of foreign Sunni Arab extremists into Iraq.

At the same time, relations with Iran also underwent change. President Talibani met with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in late November, 2006. Both Syria and Iran have offered to help stabilize the fractured government in Baghdad.

US State Department spokesman Tom Casey said the Bush administration welcomed "discussion and dialogue" between the three countries, but urged caution: "The problem is not what they say, but what they do," alluding to Syria not stopping foreign fighters from entering Iraq, and to Iran's support for Shi'ite militias. The Syrian foreign minister said that while his government had not allowed foreigners to enter Iraq to join the insurgency, it was impossible to completely seal the Syrian-Iraqi border.⁸¹

Despite calls by the Iraq Study Group for the US to engage with Iran, relations between Iran and the US grew increasingly tense in the winter of 2006-2007. The US arrested several Iranian security officers during high-profile raids in Iraq. Furthermore, new, more aggressive "kill or capture" rules of engagement for US forces dealing with Iranian agents in Iraq were revealed in late January.⁸² Previously, a "catch and release" policy was employed in regards to Iranian agents.

Perhaps partly in response to the more aggressive US stance, Iran announced an ambitious plan to strengthen its economic and military ties with Iraq. The plan included military assistance and equipment, as well as reconstruction assistance to Iraq.⁸³

The Shi'ite dominated Iraqi government also increasingly resisted outside interference. When UN Secretary –General Kofi Annan suggested in December 2006 to hold an international conference on Iraq, Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, leader of SCIRI, denounced this idea as "unrealistic, incorrect and illegal." He said it would be "unreasonable or incorrect to discuss issues related to the Iraqi people at international conferences."⁸⁴

Prime Minister Maliki was especially critical of the suggestion to hold the conference outside of Iraq, but on December 5, 2006 called for a regional conference (to be held in Iraq) himself. He said he would send envoys to neighboring countries (which he did not name). The Prime Minister said he would call for holding a conference "after preparing the proper political atmosphere" and that he would invite "all those countries that are interested in the security and stability of Iraq."⁸⁵

In early May, 2007, an international summit on the future of Iraq was held in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt. Unfortunately, Iraq did not receive much relief from its huge Saddam-era debts owed to multiple countries. The summit did, however, result in a pledge by many of Iraq's neighbors to stop foreign militants from joining the insurgency in Iraq.⁸⁶

The Iraqi Economy and Its Impact on ISF Development

There are positive signs in Iraq's economy. The Iraq Study Group noted that: "Currency reserves are stable and growing at \$12 billion. Consumer imports of computers, cell phones, and other appliances have increased dramatically. New businesses are opening, and construction is moving forward in secure areas. Because of Iraq's ample oil reserves,

water resources, and fertile lands, significant growth is possible if violence is reduced and the capacity of government improves. For example, wheat yields increased more than 40 percent in Kurdistan during this past year.”⁸⁷

Most official reporting on the Iraqi economy has been as misleading and unrealistic as the reporting on Iraqi force development. The US and Iraqi governments have issued largely meaningless macroeconomic and aid data that do nothing to reflect the real world economic plight of many ordinary Iraqis, and which again sharply exaggerates progress in an area where parallel action is critical to effective Iraq force development.

The Real Economy and its Role in Civil Violence

The real-world economic situation in much of Iraq is a major factor in the insurgency and civil violence, and does as much to ensure that tactical victories, or “wins,” cannot be followed by “build,” and the lack of effective police forces, criminal justice and governance does to make it impossible to “hold.” There is massive unemployment, constant uncertainty, compounded by crime.

This situation is made worse by massive mistakes in the past US aid effort. An Inspector General report in late October noted that the decentralization of authority that the CPA initiated had “the effect of empowering inexperienced local officials to manage the delivery of provincial government services.”⁸⁸ The Iraqi government, according to the Iraq Study Group “is not providing its people with basic services: electricity, drinking water, sewage, health care, and education.”⁸⁹

Far too much of the outside aid to Iraq, however, was wasted in ways that did nothing to contribute to its security or to ease the pressures on the development of the ISF. As of October 2006, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction estimated that the US had appropriated a total of \$38.3 billion in reconstruction funding. In addition, the Coalition Provisional Authority and the Iraqi governments that had followed had used up some \$41.2 billion in Iraqi funds.⁹⁰ A

Accurate information on the expenditures of the funds pledged at the Madrid conference continues to be difficult to obtain, but other international donors seem to have pledged some \$15.0 billion more.⁹¹ Much of this funding has been wasted, or has done nothing more than maintained the economic status quo that existed before the US led invasion. As the US government eventually came to report in detail, so much money went to security, waste, corruption, contractors outside Iraq, dealing with insurgent threats and sectarian violence, coping with crime, and paying for other factors that ordinary Iraqis rarely saw any progress over the level of services and wealth that they had had at the time Saddam fell. In May, 2007, the former chairman of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq stated that “Reconstruction is difficult enough in a relatively pacific environment. In this environment, it is almost impossible, if not impossible. Over all, the picture is dire, dire.”⁹²

Reporting by the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR)

The October 2006 report on the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR) painted a bleak picture of American reconstruction efforts, stating that only four of Iraq’s 13 provinces had US Provincial Reconstruction Teams or satellite offices that were “generally able” to carry out their missions.⁹³ Four were “somewhat able,” while

three were “less able,” and two were “generally unable” to carry out their PRT missions.⁹⁴ (Note that the SIGIR report did not evaluate the PRTs’ actual performance, only their “ability to meet the mission.)

The main obstacles were security concerns that limited the face-to-face contact of PRT personnel with Iraqi officials, while State Department funding seemed adequate for 2007.⁹⁵ While the MNF-I told the SIGIR that one-on-one contact with local officials was not necessary for satellite office personnel, staff at the local level thought differently. Overall, the SIGIR evaluates the PRT effort as “individual successes arising from individual efforts and improvisations, which allowed some PRTs to move forward with their capacity-development mission.” The teams were expected to continue operating through FY 2008 and then transition their mission to a traditional USAID training program to develop local governance capacity.⁹⁶

The SIGIR report further investigated US military commanders’ use of the Iraqi Interim Government Fund (IIGF). This \$136 million fund could be used by US military commanders to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements in their areas of responsibility. As of July 31, 2006, MNC-I had disbursed \$114.9 million. While the SIGIR the funds were used for their intended purposes and in accordance with rules and regulations, he noted that project files were incomplete and “data could not be reconciled to the financial records or to the project files.” MNF had also not reported to the Iraqi government between December 2005 and July 2006, although monthly reporting was required.⁹⁷

The SIGIR recommended several actions to the Commanding General, MNF-I, in order to alleviate these problems.

“Enforce existing guidance on maintaining project records, including conducting quarterly reviews to ensure the accuracy of IIGF project files.

Develop a tracking system for controlling and processing IIGF project files through the entire management process

Continue efforts to improve IRMS accuracy for IIGF projects.”⁹⁸

The Iraqi side of the reconstruction effort was also blamed, with “bureaucratic resistance within the Ministry of Finance, which traditionally has been slow to provide funds,” keeping the Iraqi government from spending its \$6 billion budget for major rebuilding projects. Of 142 primary health clinics funded by the US, only six were operational. Some successes, however, were also noted. Electric capacity nationwide passed pre-war levels in the fall of 2006, though not in Baghdad, and oil exports at 1.66 million barrels per day met Iraqi goals. 88% of US projects had been completed when the report was published.⁹⁹ These problems will grow worse, at least in the near-term, and the US has neither plans nor funds to provide major new amounts of aid.

Another SIGIR report released in April 2007 examined 8 reconstruction projects that had been declared a “success” by the US. The report found that 7 of them were no longer operating as designed because of plumbing and electrical failures, bad maintenance, apparent looting, and expensive equipment that lay idle. Many of the problems were not due to Iraq’s deteriorating security situation; rather they were a product of poor initial construction, and a lack of maintenance.¹⁰⁰

In a joint State Department / DoD initiative, the number of PRT's in Iraq was set to double (from 10 to 20) as part of the 2007 "surge." The PRTs would be embedded in US combat brigade teams. Six teams will be added to Baghdad, three to Anbar, and one to North Babil province.¹⁰¹

The Lack of Security and the Lack of Aid

The fighting in Iraq has already compounded serious, if not critical, problems in the past allocation of aid. US implementation of nation-building programs has been guided by National Security Presidential Directives 36 and 44.¹⁰² The work of SIGIR has led the Bush Administration to admit that much of the effort based on these directives has failed.¹⁰³ Iraq and the US have been unable to account for aid spending in detail, or to measure the effectiveness of aid projects with any accuracy.

The US aid program was rushed into Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein without proper planning, management, and oversight. The US initially sought the rapid transformation of Iraq from a command kleptocracy into liberal capitalism with little understanding of the scale of the economic, political, political, and, and cultural problems it faced. Massive infrastructure projects were planned and started without proper surveys of need, without proper assessment of whether suitable contract support existed, and without consideration of whether the Iraqi government could manage the effort or whether the completed project would be sustainable.

In fact, Iraqis in Baghdad, Western Iraq, and in many areas outside the Kurdish security zone saw a major drop in delivered services, major problems with unemployment, and crippling personal losses because of violence or forced ethnic and sectarian cleansing. All of these problems were further compounded by the fact that paper increases in salary for those who were employed were largely offset by what SIGIR reported in January 2007 was the second highest rate of inflation in the world – reaching a rate of over 33% in calendar 2006.¹⁰⁴

Iraq ranked 137th out of the 158 countries surveyed in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. It ranks lower than Egypt, Syria, Iran, and other countries in the region. Iraq's Commission on Public Integrity requires financial disclosure by senior government officials, from the civilian level of director general and military rank of captain and upward. The commission has threatened to refer noncompliant individuals to court.¹⁰⁵

The SIGIR has poignantly called corruption Iraq's "second insurgency," saying it cost the country \$4 billion per year. A US government report concluded that oil smuggling provided insurgents with \$100 million a year, helping to make them financially self-sustaining.¹⁰⁶ Some US companies were part of the problem; the SIGIR referred 25 cases of fraud to the justice department for criminal investigation, four of which have led conviction, and 90 more cases are under investigation. The main reason for fraudulent behavior appeared to be a lack of oversight and contracts that calculated company profits as a percentage of the total costs, giving companies a strong incentive to let costs increase.

The other part of the corruption problem was Iraqi side. The SIGIR found that nearly \$9 billion in Iraqi oil revenues were unaccounted for.

US Political Developments and Iraqi Force Development: The “Surge”

On January 10th, 2007, President Bush announced a new security strategy for Iraq. A “surge” of US troops, helped by an increase in ISF units in Baghdad, would attempt to quell the spiraling violence in the country. The equivalent of five combat brigades, or 17,500 troops U.S. combat troops, was to be sent to Baghdad. A further 4,000 soldiers would be added to Anbar. Three Iraqi Army brigades, totally roughly 8,000 soldiers, were to be sent to Baghdad from the Kurdish north and Shi’ite south. The new “surge” strategy was dependant on the performance of Iraqi forces in the capital, with the Iraqi government officially in charge of the operation.¹⁰⁷

The President announced that the US troop increases were to be tied to benchmarks of political and military progress in Iraq. Gen. David Petraeus was put in overall command of US forces in Iraq, and unanimously confirmed by the Senate on January 23rd. Petraeus is seen by many as the Army’s preeminent counterinsurgency expert.

At the same time, the Busch Administration came under growing pressure from a Congress that was now controlled by Democratic majorities to speed Iraqi force development, push the Iraqi government into more active efforts at conciliation, establish clear benchmarks for Iraqi progress, and withdraw US troops. This raised the pressure to create Iraqi forces to replace Coalition forces as soon as possible – or sooner.

Partly in response to such calls for timetables or a more rapid withdrawal from Iraq, several retired US generals, including outspoken critics of the war and of Secretary Rumsfeld, openly warned against quick withdrawals and the idea of pressuring the Iraqi government with troop reductions. Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, former head of CENTCOM, stated that

The logic of this is you put pressure on Maliki and force him to stand up to this. Well, you can’t put pressure on a wounded guy. There is a premise that the Iraqis are not doing enough now, that there is a capability that they have not employed or used. I am not so sure they are capable of stopping sectarian violence.

Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Batiste also spoke out against withdrawing US forces too soon. Calling Congressional proposals “terribly naïve,” he said:

There are lots of things that have to happen to set them up for success. Until they happen, it does not matter what we tell Maliki.

The January 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq supported the view that rapid withdrawals of US troops from Iraq would have serious negative consequences. The declassified portion of the report states:

Coalition capabilities, including force levels, resources, and operations, remain an essential stabilizing element in Iraq. If Coalition forces were withdrawn rapidly during the term of this Estimate, we judge that this almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq, intensify Sunni resistance to the Iraqi Government, and have adverse consequences for national reconciliation.

If such a rapid withdrawal were to take place, we judge that the ISF would be unlikely to survive as a non-sectarian national institution; neighboring countries—invited by Iraqi factions or unilaterally—might intervene openly in the conflict; massive civilian casualties and forced population displacement would be probable; AQI would attempt to use parts of the country—particularly al-Anbar province—to plan increased attacks in and outside of Iraq; and spiraling

violence and political disarray in Iraq, along with Kurdish moves to control Kirkuk and strengthen autonomy, could prompt Turkey to launch a military incursion.¹⁰⁸

Iranian Influence on Iraq and the ISF

Domestic political and economic factors, and US politics, were only part of the factors influencing Iraqi force development. Iraq's neighbors also played an important role, particularly Iran.

Press sources reported in January 2007 that some 150 Iranian intelligence officers, plus members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Command, were operating in Iraq at any given time.¹⁰⁹ They reported that Iran had significant influence over some members of the Iraqi government and ISF. They also reported that Iran was playing a powerful role in training, arming, and funding Shi'ite militias, including some that attack US and British forces.

Most Shi'ite political parties had strong links with Tehran. SCIRI's orientation towards the Iranian regime was longstanding and well documented – the party was formed in Tehran in 1982 and its armed wing, the Badr Organization, was trained, even staffed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Chatham House also argued that Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army was the probable recipient of Iranian fighters should the time come for an all-out fight between the Mahdi Army and US forces.

Iranian influence was not only felt in the south or in Shi'ite regions – Kurdistan remained vulnerable to Iranian (and Turkish) meddling and “could be turned into a dangerous and volatile region, like the rest of Iraq.”¹¹⁰ A senior coalition intelligence official said that Iran funded many different groups to ensure continued influence no matter which one came out on top.¹¹¹

Iraq's political and Shi'ite religious leadership viewed Iran's role with mixed feelings. On the one hand, Iran was a source of significant support. On the other hand, there were longstanding tensions between the two countries. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the pre-eminent Shi'ite cleric, had a very different theological outlook than many Iranian-based clerics. Al-Sistani's ideas of the separation of the spiritual and political realms were at odds with Iranian style rule of the clerics. A Chatham House report in 2006 noted that:¹¹²

“Several Iranian-based Ayatollahs may be well placed to succeed Sistani if anything untoward happened to him, including Kazim al-Haeri of Qom. If this happened, the political landscape of the centre and south of Iraq would change overnight.

There is also a struggle for supremacy in the Shi'a world between the most prominent of the religious centers, and especially Najaf and Qom. During Saddam's rule, Najaf was virtually off limits as a centre of pilgrimage and Qom benefited greatly. However, the situation has changed and Najaf is again the pre-eminent city. Maintaining this trend, and keeping control of Najaf away from the clutches of Iran, must surely be on the minds of the learned men of the religious establishment.”

The report also noted that Iraqis viewed Iranian influence with some sympathy, but realized they had to accommodate both US and Iranian demands.¹¹³

“The view from Iraq, however, is in keeping with most of the Arab world outside the Gulf – i.e. why should Iran not have a nuclear weapon? There is little apparent danger that any such weapon would be deployed against Iraq, especially as Iraq is now dominated by Shi'a parties and movements, and it is unrealistic to think that Iraq could pose a threat to Iran at any time in the foreseeable future. Rather, Iraqis tend to view Iran's bomb as a ‘Muslim bomb’, balancing against it the fact that Israel possesses nuclear weapons, and that the US presence in the region continues unabated.

But Iraqis also recognize that they are caught between the geopolitical wishes of two powers, both of which have to be satisfied. The US maintains a dominant presence on their territory, and retains formative influence over Iraq's development and integration into the international community. The wishes of the US, therefore, cannot be ignored. But the problem is that the same argument can be applied to the Iran-Iraq relationship. In terms of pure influence, Tehran now has more than Washington and, more importantly, its ability to affect Iraq exists at the level of the street in addition to the more confined spaces of the Green Zone. Furthermore, the ability of Iran to influence Iraqi decision-makers is very well developed, not only among the Shi'a leadership, but also with the Kurds, and to a lesser extent, the Sunnis. Caught between such immovable forces, the Iraqi government may find itself having to say one thing to the US, but in effect, taking pragmatic actions that are more satisfying for Iran."¹¹⁴

President Jalal Talibani publicly spoke out against regional (Iranian) interference in September 2006, threatening that Iraq was prepared to "make trouble" with its neighbors if countries like Iran, Turkey, and Syria did not "stop interfering in our internal affairs."¹¹⁵

Iran's national security adviser Ali Larijani outlined his ideas about the Iranian role and the political price for Iranian cooperation with the US at the Arab Strategy Forum in early December 2006. In his view, America was bogged down in Iraq, while Iran was positioning itself as a dominant regional power. He repeatedly called for a USS withdrawal plan from Iraq, although he did not outline a strategy for the time after US military disengagement. When asked about what he would see as evidence that the US was changing its strategy, he said: "The clearest sign would be the exit or evacuation of US forces. Should there be a timetable presented, that would serve as a positive sign."

Larijani also stated Iran was opposed to a "tribal democracy," and instead favored a system based on the current constitution, which enfranchised Iraq's Shi'ite majority.¹¹⁶ After a one-on-one conversation with Larijani, Harvard professor Graham Allison, said: "In discussing Iraq after US withdrawal, he didn't seem to have a credible idea of what comes next."

Iranian Arms Transfers, and Tensions with the US

Iran's action also led to a more direct confrontation between Iran and the US, with an obvious potential impact on Iraqi force development. US officials were concerned that the progressively more powerful and sophisticated weaponry being employed against US armored vehicles was coming from Iran.¹¹⁷ According to a February 10, 2007 report in the New York Times, there was "broad agreement" among US intelligence agencies that Iran is supplying Iraqi militants with sophisticated armor-penetrating roadside improvised explosive devices.¹¹⁸

These IEDs use an explosively formed projectile that is a shaped charge warhead that focuses its explosive power to form a jet of molten metal and gas that can penetrate many forms of armor. It is theoretically similar to the High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT) rounds used by many advanced conventional armies. Additionally, US intelligence agencies have stated that they possess evidence of Iranian transfers of other weapons to Iraqi Shi'ite militias, including rocket propelled grenades, anti-aircraft missiles, and mortars.¹¹⁹

The US sent a second aircraft carrier group was sent to the Persian Gulf area in January 2007, creating a very large naval task force close to Iranian shores.¹²⁰ The purpose of this carrier group was to "underscore to our friends, as well as to our potential adversaries in the region, that the United States has considered the Persian Gulf and that whole area,

and stability in that area, to be a vital national interest” according to Secretary Gates.¹²¹ General William Fallon, the nominee for Central Command, called Iran "destabilizing and troubling" in his confirmation hearings before the Senate.

The Bush Administration authorized US forces in Fall 2006 to “kill or capture” Iranian security agents found working in Iraq According to leaks from senior administration officials to the Washington Post.¹²² This altered the previous policy wherein most Iranian agents were merely captured and held for several days, fingerprinted, photographed, and then released. In January 2007, a National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq found that “Iranian lethal support for select groups of Iraqi Shia militants clearly intensifies the conflict in Iraq.”¹²³ The US arrested several Iranian security officers during high-profile raids in Iraq in January. Additionally, senior pentagon officials have indicated that the US Air Force may begin more aggressively patrolling the Iranian border with Iraq.¹²⁴ There is no evidence that Iranian agents have directly attacked US forces, and likewise there have been no reports of US forces killing Iranians.¹²⁵

In an interview on January 12th, President Bush stated that “The Iranians are providing equipment that is killing Americans . . . if they are, in fact, in Iraq killing Americans, they'll be brought to justice.”¹²⁶ General William Fallon, the nominee for Central Command, called Iran "destabilizing and troubling" in his confirmation hearings before the Senate.¹²⁷

On February 1st, Under Secretary of State R. Nicholas Burns stated ““We have picked up individuals who we believe are giving very sophisticated explosive technology to Shia insurgent groups, who then use that technology to target and kill American soldiers . . . This is a very serious situation, and the message from the United States is Iran should cease and desist.” He added the United States has been tracking expanding contacts between Iranian security services and Iraq's Shi'ite militias for the past two years and have warned the Iranian government privately to stop destabilizing their Iraqi neighbors.¹²⁸

Perhaps partly in response, Iran announced an ambitious plan to strengthen its economic and military ties with Iraq. The plan included military assistance and equipment, reconstruction assistance, and even the opening of an Iranian bank in Baghdad.¹²⁹ This announcement came on top of the already large economic and social ties between Iraq and Iran. According to a Washington Post report, it is “increasingly common” for Iraqis to receive medical care in Iran. Furthermore, Iran exports electricity, refined oil products, cars, and many other products to Iraq. Iran also extended a \$1 billion line of credit to Iraq to help fund reconstruction. Iran’s ambassador to Iraq stated, “The economic power between these two countries, it’s enormous.”¹³⁰

III. Trends in Attacks and Violence and Their Impact on Iraqi Force Development

“It seems pretty clear to me that what we’ve been doing is not working”

-Admiral William Fallon, CENTCOM Commander, January 30, 2007.¹³¹

The steady increase in insurgent and sectarian violence provided another powerful set of influences on Iraqi force development during 2006 and early 2007. Despite of a variety of new defensive efforts in Baghdad and the country as a whole during the fall of 2006 the total number of attacks on civilians, the ISF, and Coalition forces continued to increase, and the security situation across the country continued to “deteriorate.”¹³² The violence in Iraq also worsened considerably in the winter of 2006-2007.

The nature of the conflict did, however, vary from province to province. Much of the violence was focused on local or regional issues, rather than on control of the entire country. Baghdad continued to be the center of much of Iraq’s violence, with dozens of bodies turning up everyday, most showing signs of torture and bullet wounds in the head. Firefights and bombings were an almost daily occurrence, with the violence being characterized by sectarian struggles between the Mahdi army and Sunni groups, as well as continuing attacks on Coalition forces.¹³³

In Diyala and Balad, as well as in Baghdad proper, the violence was the result of a conflict between al-Qa’ida in Iraq and the Mahdi Army, described by the DoD as “a sectarian competition for power and influence.”¹³⁴ Importantly, the Mahdi militia and Al Qa’ida rarely clashed directly, instead carrying on reciprocal violence against Shi’ite and Sunni civilians through high-profile bombings or sectarian cleansing.¹³⁵ Throughout Baghdad, Shi’ite groups were clearly ascendant, systematically taking over Sunni neighborhoods using intimidation and death squads.¹³⁶

In Basra, Amarah, and in the south, tribal rivalries, intra-Shi’ite competition, and attacks on Coalition forces characterized the violence. The main groups causing violence in the south are the Mahdi militia, the Badr Organization of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), and smaller militias.

In Anbar, the violence was almost exclusively initiated by Sunni insurgent groups or Al Qa’ida in Iraq (AQI) and directed at Coalition forces. According to the DoD: “AQI and affiliated Sunni extremists are attempting to intimidate the local population into supporting the creation of an Islamic state. However, in a positive development, these efforts are provoking a backlash among some tribal figures and Sunni insurgent leaders, who are encouraging local opposition to AQI, particularly in ar-Ramadi.”¹³⁷

The DoD also reported in March, 2007, that the fighting in the north of Iraq “is characterized by sectarian tensions, insurgents and extremist attacks, and competition among ethnic groups (Kurd, Arab, Turcoman) for political and economic dominance, including control of the oilfields centered around Kirkuk. Violence remained focused primarily in and around the northern cities of Kirkuk, Mosul, and Tal’Afar, where ethnic competition for power is exacerbated by violence from Sunni extremists.”¹³⁸

Rising Levels of Violence

The Department of Defense has consistently underreported the number of attacks on ISF and Coalition forces in Iraq since the beginning of the insurrection in 2003, although much the problem lies in the difficulties in getting meaningful reporting on the complex mix of violence in Iraq. Part of the problem is that the DoD counts focus on insurgent activity with a known source. For example, some attempted attacks are not counted, and murders and crimes that cannot be clearly linked to insurgents or militia are not counted. This may explain why the UN estimated that 6,000 civilians were killed in December 2006, while DoD estimated roughly 3,000. An estimate by the Iraq Study Group found that the DoD might be underreporting attacks by as much as a factor of ten, although the Iraq Study Group Report used attacks and significant acts of violence interchangeably and did not define how either were measured.

Kidnappings and disappearances of Iraqis are often not counted because there are no reliable reports. Intimidation, threats, and force relocations have also been key instruments of violence, particularly in Arab versus Kurd struggles, Shi'ite versus Shi'ite struggles, and Sunni versus Sunni struggles, but cannot be include in counts of attacks or killings. Iraqis also perceive civilian involvement and woundings in combat between Coalition and ISF forces and hostile forces as major threats, but no data exist that allow such incidents to be counted.

Even using DoD counts, however, attacks against Coalition forces, the ISF, the civilian population, and infrastructure increased 22% between August 2006 and November, and remained high into early 2007. The total number of attacks on and casualties suffered by Coalition forces, the ISF, and Iraqi civilians, was the highest on record from October to December for any 3-month period since 2003.¹³⁹ Iraqi casualties increased by 51% between May and August 2006, and a further 2% by November.¹⁴⁰ Comparing October 2006 to January 2006, the total number of attacks increased 70%, attacks against the ISF doubled, and attacks against civilians were four times higher.

The majority (68%) of the attacks that the DoD did count between August and November were directed against coalition forces. However, the insurgents did not seek close engagement with Coalition forces and the majority of attacks against Coalition forces consisted of IEDs, small arms fire and indirect fire weapons.

The roadside bomb continued to be the biggest killer of US soldiers. Compared with the period from May-August, Coalition casualties increased by 32% during August-November. Compared to the February-May period, casualties increased by 60%. Despite this massive increase in Coalition losses, however, Iraqis continued to suffer the "overwhelming majority" of casualties.¹⁴¹

The Changing Nature of Combat

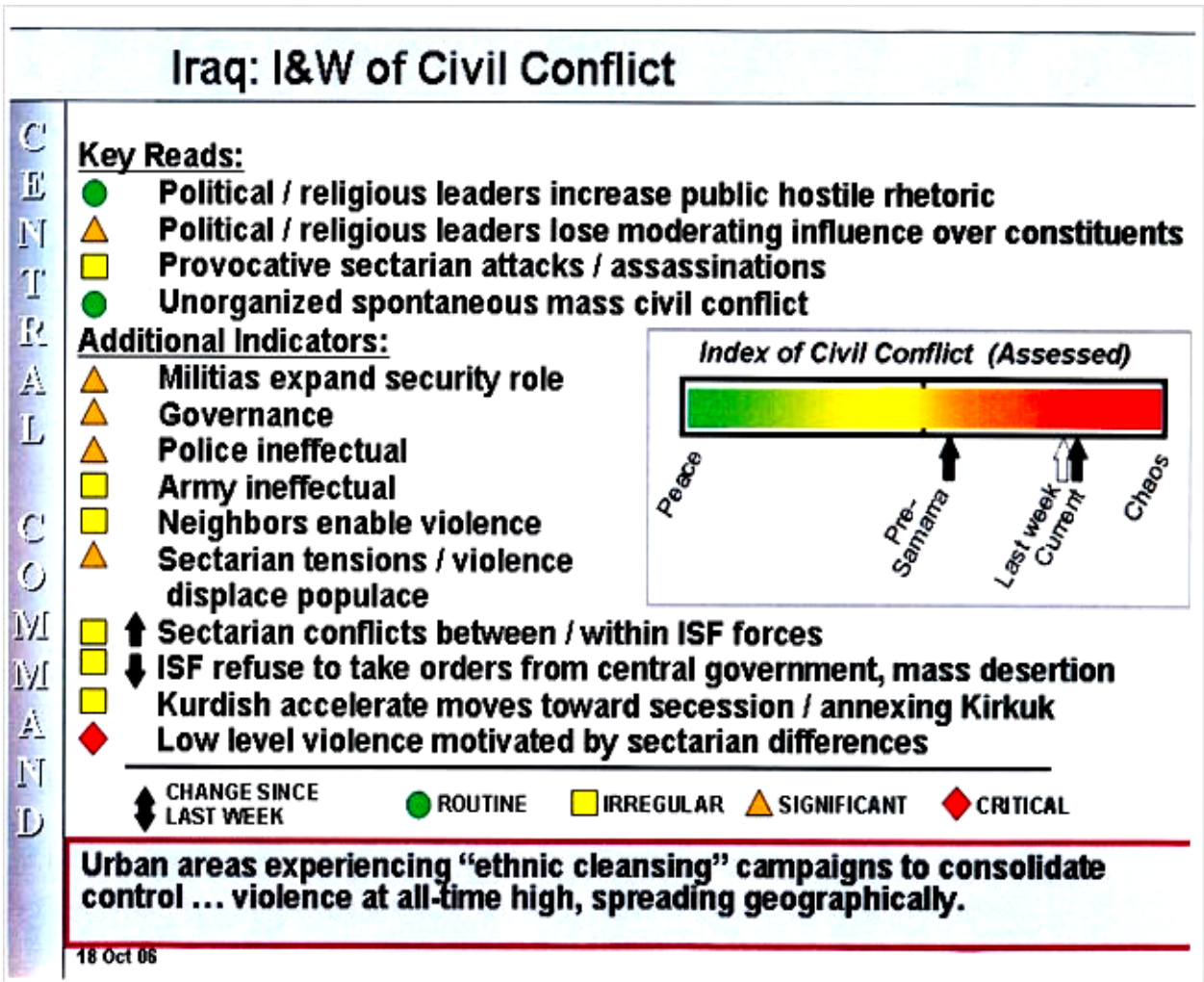
The nature of the combat US and Iraqi forces had to engage in also shifted in late 2006. Protracted urban battles, which, with the exception of the fight to retake Fallujah in 2004, had been rare, were becoming increasingly common. This increase in urban combat led to increased American casualties. An Associated Press analysis found that more American casualties occurred in the months of October, November, December and January than in any comparable period since the war began. The analysis also found a

higher percentage of US deaths occurring in Baghdad, again reinforcing the dangers of protracted urban fighting to US troops.

A US Central Command briefing slide dated October 18, 2006 provides a summary graphic display of CENTCOM's assessment of the overall security situation of a kind that has not generally been publicly released, and of the threat coalition and ISF forces had to deal with. This display is shown in **Figure 3.1**. It was published by the New York Times on November 1, and showed a significant rise in civil conflict since the February bombing of the Samarra shrine, and includes a continuing downward trend in the week before it was prepared. CENTCOM noted several indicators of a deteriorating situation, while the one positive indicator was that fewer "ISF refuse to take orders from central government, [fewer] mass desertions."¹⁴² It is especially noteworthy that CENTCOM noted ethnic cleansing campaigns in urban areas to consolidate control, and that the level of violence was higher than ever and spreading geographically.

Figure 3.1

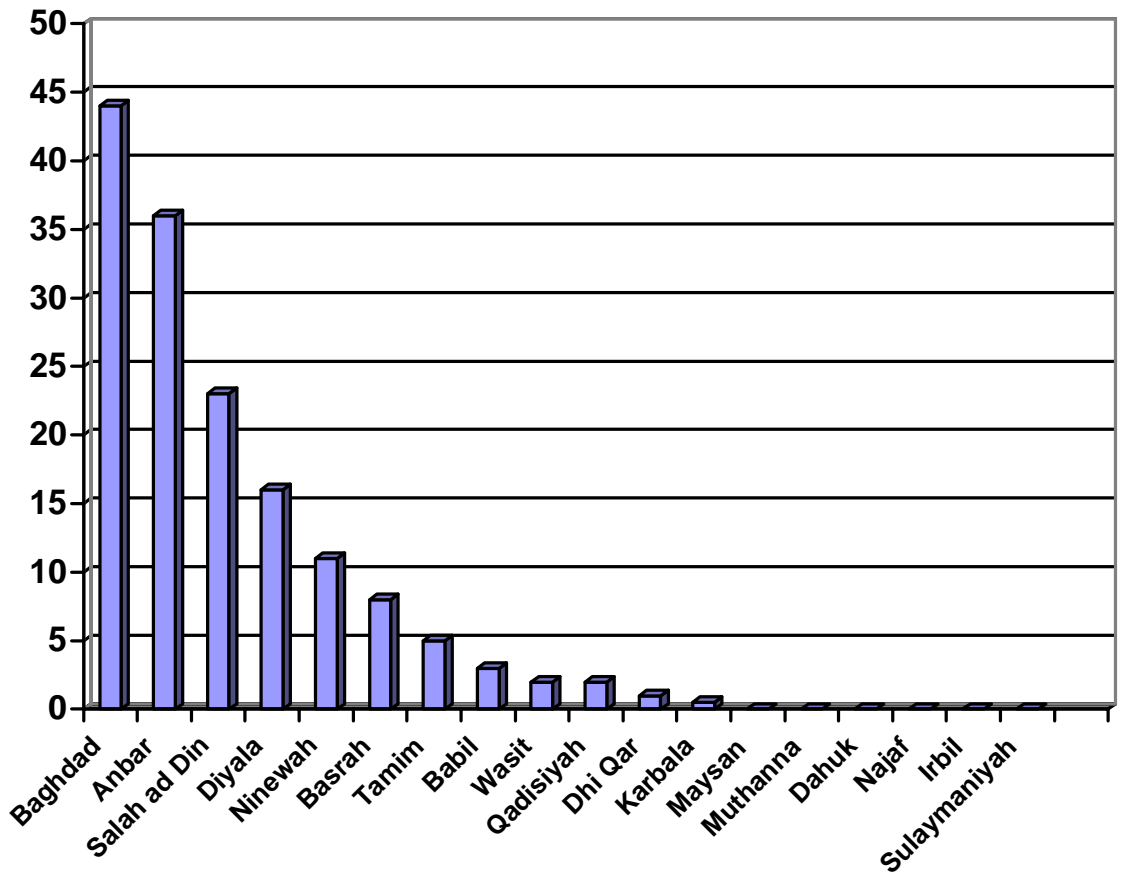
CENTCOM View of Iraq's Civil War, October 18, 2006



Source: Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Central Command Charts Sharp Movement Of The Civil Conflict In Iraq Toward Chaos," New York Times, November 1, 2006

Baghdad, Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Diyala continued to be the most volatile provinces in terms of direct insurgent violence, accounting for 80% of attacks, as counted by the DoD.¹⁴³ This can be seen in **Figure 3.2**, which ranks the provinces by the average number of daily attacks. These 4 provinces account for 37% of Iraq's population.

Figure 3.2
Average Daily Attacks by Province, as Counted by MNF-I, November 11, 2006-February 9, 2007*



Source: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2007 Report to Congress, p. 15

Note: Margin of error: +/- 5%.

Other sources generally support this trend analysis, although they differ in detail. According to a June 2006 UN report, an increasingly complex armed opposition continued to be capable of maintaining a consistently high level of violence across Iraq. The UN worst affected provinces were Baghdad, Ninewa, Salahuddin, Anbar, and Diyala, while other areas, particularly Basra and Kirkuk, saw an increase in the number of violent incidents.¹⁴⁴ Figures published in late September 2006 reported more than 250,000 Iraqis displaced by sectarian violence.¹⁴⁵ MNF-I estimates are somewhat higher, although the time periods involved are not directly comparable, and the MNF-I finds the four most violence provinces are Baghdad, Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Diyala.

In contrast to some previous Defense Department efforts to present a favorable picture of the trends in the insurgency and civil conflicts, the March 2007 DoD quarterly report on Iraq presented a more realistic perspective on the nature of the violence in Iraq. The report called the conflict in Iraq “a mosaic,” and admitted that, much like a civil war, “Illegally armed groups are engaged in a self-sustaining cycle of sectarian and politically motivated violence, using tactics that include indiscriminate bombing, murder, and indirect fire to intimidate people and stoke sectarian conflict.”¹⁴⁶ According to the report, there were three main “destabilizing elements” in Iraq: Sunni Insurgents, Al Qa’ida in Iraq, and the Jaysh alMahdi (Mahdi militia).

The DoD report stated that the goals of the Sunni Insurgents were:¹⁴⁷

- Expel US and Coalition forces from Iraq
- Topple the “unity” government
- Re-establish Sunni governance in Anbar and Diyala

The goals of Al Qa’ida in Iraq were:

- Force Coalition forces withdrawal
- Gain territory to export conflict
- Provoke clash between Islam and others
- Establish caliphate with *Shari’a* governance

The goals of the Mahdi militia were:

- Force Coalition forces withdrawal
- Consolidate control over Baghdad and the Government of Iraq
- Exert control over security institutions
- Implement *Sahri’a* governance

These different goals resulted in different forms of violence, although the overall trend in every type of violence continued to increase in spite of Coalition and ISF efforts. On September 20, 2006, the US military reported a “recent” increase in attacks by Al-Qa’ida in Iraq, other insurgents, and death squads, together with the expectation of a further rise in attacks during Ramadan 2006.¹⁴⁸ The number of deaths among Iraqi security forces, however, fell to 150 in September 2006, the lowest number since June and among the lowest in 18 months. This happened even as US military casualties were climbing.

Possible reasons for this development included both an insurgent’s concentration on attacking US forces and a stronger and more able Iraqi force. One indication that insurgents have indeed shifted their focus back towards Americans was a radio address

by Al Qa'ida in Iraq's new leader Abu Ayyub Masri calling for such a shift.¹⁴⁹ The trend of fewer casualties among Iraqi forces continued in October, with 139 killed, according to Interior Ministry figures, while US casualties climbed to the highest monthly total in 2006. This number was substantially below the more than 300 Iraqi forces casualties the US military commander in Iraq had announced for Ramadan. (9/23 – 10/22 2006)¹⁵⁰

Gen. Caldwell attributed the high American death toll in October to "very conscious and deliberate operation" in Ramadi.¹⁵¹

It's an aggressive, offensive approach to taking back the city of Ramadi, to return it back to Iraqi security forces. *Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell*

A spate of successful attacks on American helicopters occurred in the first two months of 2007. Seven helicopters were shot down between January 20th, and February 7th. According to an intelligence report leaked to the New York Times, these crashes were the result of a coordinated effort involving machine guns, rockets, and surface-to-air missiles.¹⁵²

Overall Attack Levels

Attack levels continued to follow the seasonal pattern of increasing through the spring and summer and decreasing in the fall and winter months. Overlaid on this seasonal variation, however, was a trend of increasing violence. Overall, attacks increased by 23% from 2004 to 2005. The number of attacks rose to the highest level ever in July 2006. Indicating increasing violence, total attacks reported from January 2006 through July 2006 were about 57 % higher than the total reported during the corresponding period in 2005.¹⁵³

Patterns in Weekly Attacks

Figure 3.3 shows the ebb and flow of weekly attacks during different periods and the overall increase in attacks, reflecting the record highs during the summer of 2006. These attacks again, however, only reflect the patterns in insurgent and Sunni versus Shi'ite violence that could be directly confirmed with MNF-I sources.

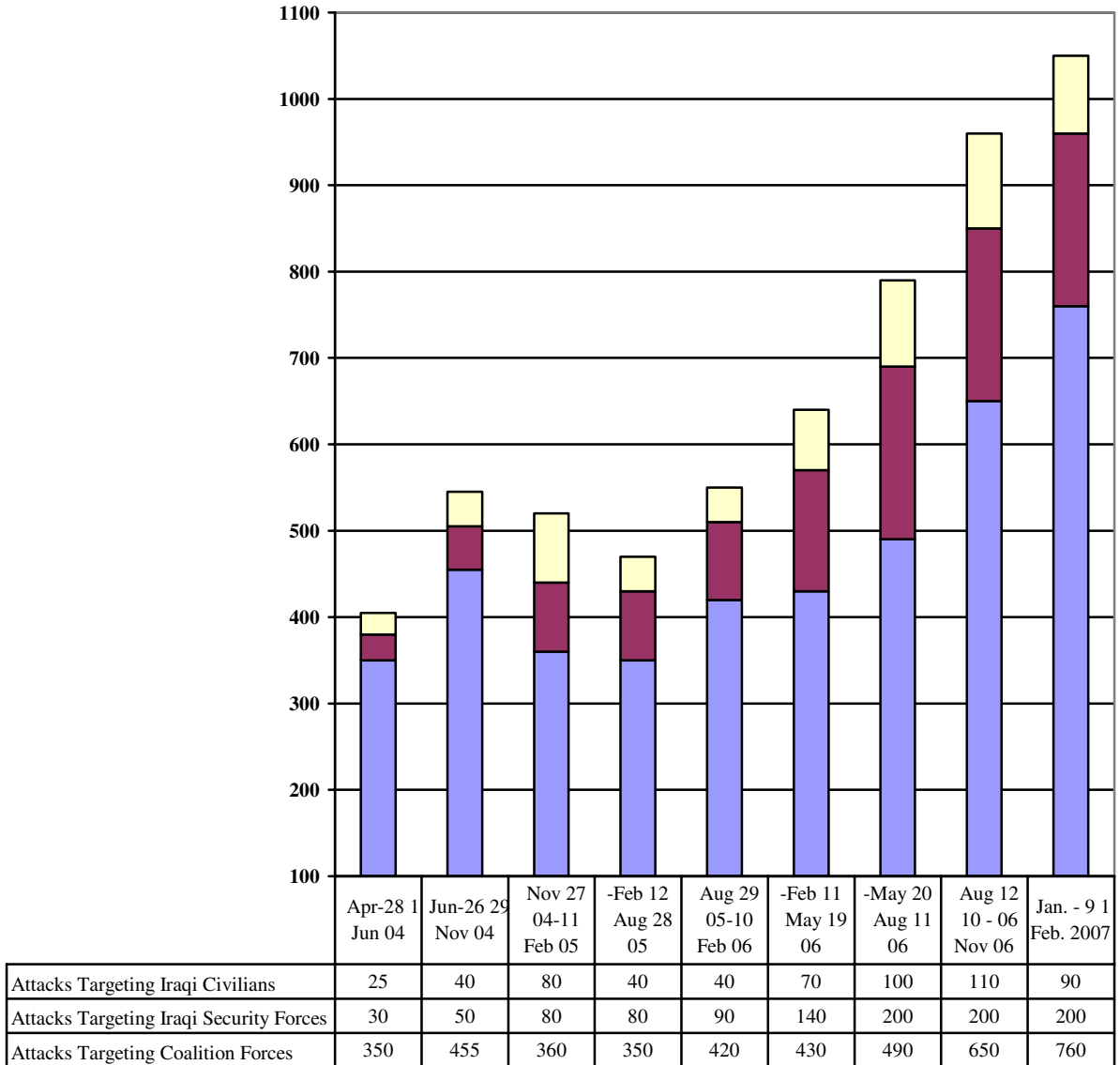
In Baghdad, a massive expulsion of Sunnis from their houses is taking place across much of the city. In Amal, a mixed Sunni-Shi'ite neighborhood in southwest Baghdad, the entire Sunni population of a track of about 300 houses had left. Shi'ite militias, sometimes supported by Iraqi security forces, threaten and attack residents until they leave, often sending them threatening letters.¹⁵⁴ One such letter, received by a Sunni, read:

"We decided that you should be expelled from our neighborhood in order to make it peaceful," the letter began. "Remove your evil from our neighborhood in the next three days or else you should be killed like dogs in the street." The letter was signed: "God's Revenge."¹⁵⁵

Once again, many of the types of violence that pose a challenge to the ISF and MNF-I cannot be collected or counted with any accuracy and are not be reported in US government or MNF-I reports. They do, however, remain critical factors in the ongoing conflict.

Figure 3.3:

Average Weekly Attacks by Time Period 1 Apr 04-9 February, 2007*



Source: MNC-I, as adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Report to Congress, March 2007, and p. 19;

*Note: Data points are estimates from material adapted from the DoD report. The DoD has named the time periods used in the graph as follows: Pre-sovereignty: 1 Jan-31 Mar 04, Pre-sovereignty: 01 April 2004 – 28 June 2004, Sovereignty: 29 Jun-26 Nov 04, Election: 27 Nov 04-11 Feb 05, Pre-Constitution: 12 Feb-28 Aug 05, Referendum/Election: 29 Aug 05-10 Feb 06, Gov. Transition: 11 Feb-19 May 06, Government Established: 20 May-11 Aug 06, Government Established: 12 Aug 06 - 10 Nov 06, Transition to self reliance: 1 Jan. - 9 Feb. 2007.

*Note: The Iraq Study Group found that the Department of Defense may be underreporting attacks by as much as a factor of ten.

Rising ISF and Iraqi Civilian Casualties

Figure 3.3 provides a rough estimate of the increasing number average attacks over time. Total Iraqi casualties increased by 60% over the 11 February-19 May period. The proportion of attacks targeting civilians increased from making up 11% of all attacks in April 2006 to 15% of all attacks in June 2006. In Baghdad attacks against civilians began at a higher percentage in April (15%) and reflected a greater increase than in the country as a whole, climbing to 22% in June.¹⁵⁶

A report by UNAMI's Human Rights office stated in September that 3,590 civilians were killed in Iraq during July and 3,009 during August. These figures reflected a two-month total of 6,599 civilians killed, a record high, increasing from the 6,000 that were killed in the previous two months. For Baghdad, the numbers were 2,884 in July and 2,222 in August, the decrease most likely being the result of greater security because of the "Together Forward" large-scale sweeps. The numbers in Baghdad included body counts from both the morgue and from hospitals in the capitol.

Rising Average Daily Levels of Violence

As **Figure 3.4** shows, the number of Iraqi civilians killed by political, sectarian and ethnic violence also continued to climb according to Interior Ministry figures. Average daily civilian casualties also rose steadily, as seen in **Figure 3.5**. While these numbers are significantly lower than UN estimates or the disputed study undertaken by the medical journal *The Lancet*, they still showed intensifying violence against civilians, with 1,089 deaths in September and 1,289 in October 2006. According to these numbers, 42 Iraqi civilians were killed per day in October, 18% more than in September.¹⁵⁷ These data are both a clear indication of the growing challenges the ISF faced, and the pressures threatening to divide them on sectarian and ethnic lines.

The casualty figures issued by the Iraqi government, however, became increasingly politicized as the violence mounted. The Prime Minister's office in October instructed the health ministry to stop providing mortality figures to the UN. The UN's top official in Iraq, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, warned in a confidential cable that this might affect the UN's ability to accurately record the number of civilians killed or wounded.

The Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad (controlled by the health ministry) had been supplying UN investigators with raw figures from morgues on violent civilian deaths since July 2005. The health ministry's department of operation provided similar figures from hospitals. One reason for the information cut-off may have been the Prime Minister's suspicion that the health ministry, controlled by politicians allied to Moqtada al-Sadr, was deliberately overstating fatality numbers.¹⁵⁸

Despite this change in information policy, health minister Ali Shammari estimated on November 9, 2006, that an estimated 150,000 civilians had been killed since the 2003 invasion. He later said this figure was based on an estimated average of 100 bodies per day taken to morgues and hospitals, although this calculation would yield a number closer to 133,000 fatalities. Hassan Salem of SCIRI said the 150,000 figure included not only civilian deaths, but also police fatalities and kidnapping victims. Shammari said: "It is an estimate." His number was three times as high as an LA Times estimate in June that was based on Health Ministry and Baghdad morgue statistics.

Although it is nearly impossible to calculate the numbers of civilians killed by US forces, the Pentagon did disclose 500 claims submitted to the Army by Iraqi and Afghan civilians seeking payment for non-combat killings.¹⁵⁹ The US released the documents in response to a Freedom of Information Act request by the ACLU. The 500 claims represent only a fraction of the total submitted to the US Army. As of mid-April, 2007, the military had spent a total of \$32 million paying off these claims. That figure does not include condolence payments made at a unit commander's discretion. The claims are not numerous or comprehensive enough to allow an estimation of the number of civilians accidentally killed by US forces. However, as most payments were under \$7,500, the \$32 million in total payouts does indicate the immense scale of the problem.

Figure 3.4 depicts the total casualties for the ISF, Coalition, and Iraqi civilians from the beginning of 2004 to November 2006. The huge increase in civilian casualties after the February bombing of the Golden Mosque is evident. ISF casualties also rose over this period.

Figure 3.4
Iraqi Government Reports of Civilian Deaths from Political Violence 2006

Source: Alistair Macdonald, "Iraqi Government Reports Big Jump In Civilian Deaths," Boston Globe, November 2, 2006

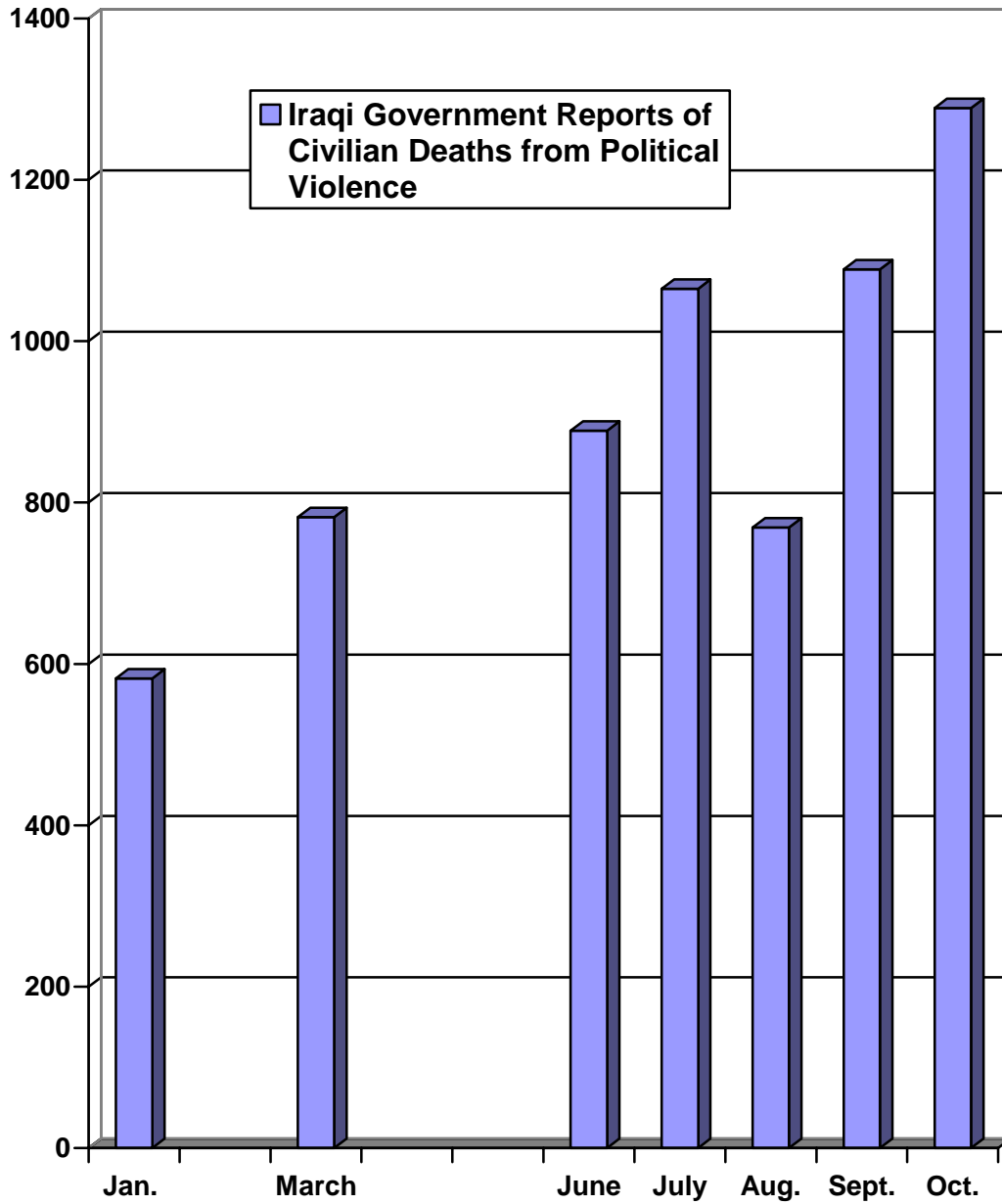
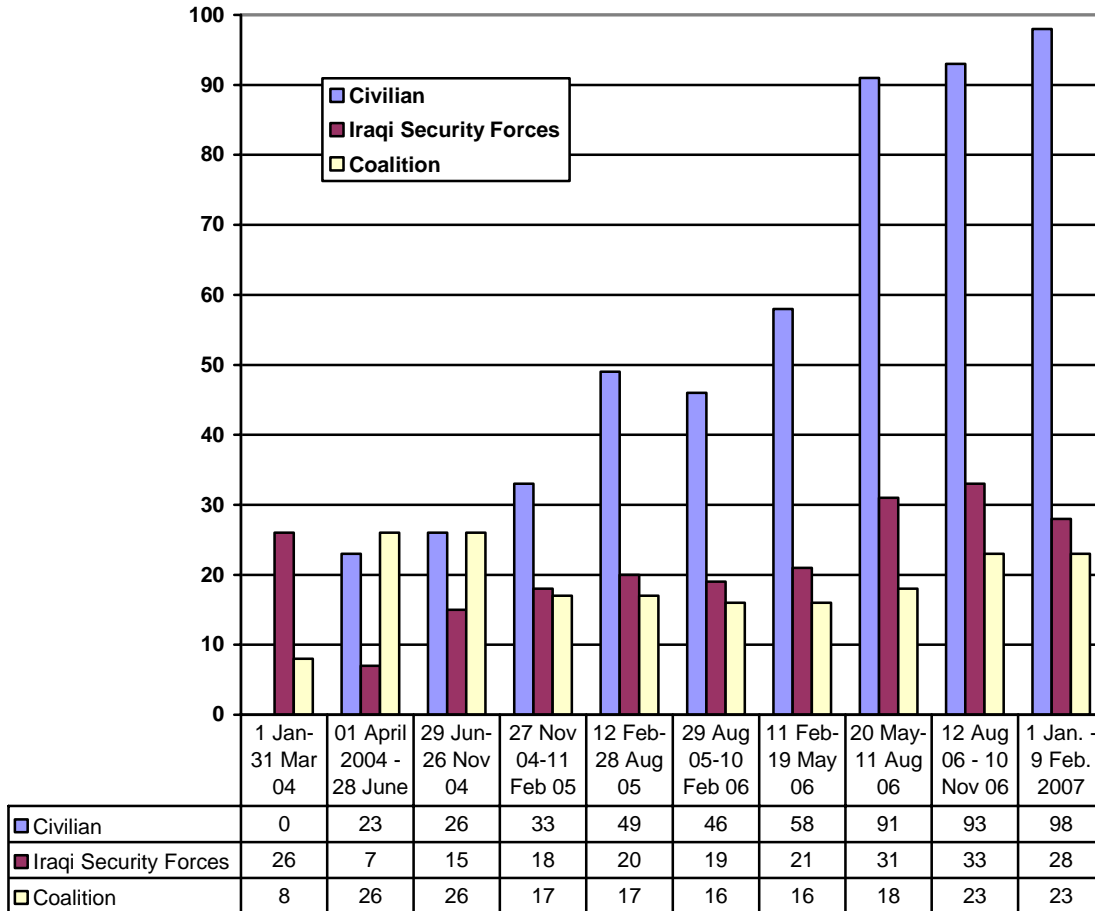


Figure 3.5

Average Daily Casualties*-Iraqi (including ISF) and Coalition 1 Apr 04 - 9 February, 2007



*Casualty data reflect updated data for each period and are derived from unverified initial reports submitted by coalition elements responding to an incident; the inconclusively of these numbers constrains them to be used only for comparative purposes.

Note: Data points are estimates from material adapted from the DoD report. The DoD has named the time periods used in the graph as follows: Pre-sovereignty: 1 Jan-31 Mar 04, Pre-sovereignty: 01 April 2004 – 28 June 2004, Sovereignty: 29 Jun-26 Nov 04, Election: 27 Nov 04-11 Feb 05, Pre-Constitution: 12 Feb-28 Aug 05, Referendum/Election: 29 Aug 05-10 Feb 06, Gov. Transition: 11 Feb-19 May 06, Government Established: 20 May-11 Aug 06, Government Established: 12 Aug 06 - 10 Nov 06, Transition to self reliance: 1 Jan. - 9 Feb. 2007.

Source: MNC-I, as adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Report to Congress, March 2007, p. 19; Note: +/- 5% margin of error

Other Forms of Violence: Torture, Kidnappings, and Disappearances

It is again important to stress that MNF-I, US and Iraqi government statistics on violence in Iraq fail cannot collect reliable estimates of threats, kidnappings, woundings, intimidation, or sectarian and ethnic crimes.. These ‘lower’ forms of violence became far more common in Iraq than killings, and represent the bulk of the real-world challenge to the ISF.

The ABC News poll conducted in February and March 2007 found that,¹⁶⁰

Widespread violence, torn lives, displaced families, emotional damage, collapsing services, an ever-starker sectarian chasm – and a draining away of the underlying optimism that once prevailed. Violence is the cause, its reach vast. Eighty percent of Iraqis report attacks nearby – car bombs, snipers, kidnappings, armed forces fighting each other or abusing civilians. It’s worst by far in the capital, Baghdad, but by no means confined there. The personal toll is enormous. More than half of Iraqis, 53 percent, have a close friend or relative who’s been hurt or killed in the current violence. One in six says someone in his or her own household has been harmed. Eighty-six percent worry about a loved one being hurt; two-thirds worry deeply. Huge numbers limit their daily activities to minimize risk. Seven in 10 report multiple signs of traumatic stress.

The poll found that while in 2005, 63 percent of Iraqis said they felt very safe in their neighborhoods in 2005, only 26 percent had said this in early 2007. One in three did not feel safe at all. In Baghdad, home to a fifth of the country’s population, eighty-four percent feel entirely unsafe. Even outside of Baghdad, just 32 percent of Iraqis felt “very safe” where they lived, compared with 60 percent a year and a half ago.¹⁶¹

The ABC poll asked about nine kinds of violence that broke the security problems Iraqis and ISF forces faced into far more detail than the Coalition and US had ever reported (car bombs, snipers or crossfire, kidnappings, fighting among opposing groups or abuse of civilians by various armed forces). Essentially everyone in Baghdad said at least one of these had occurred nearby; half reported four or more of them. Even outside Baghdad, 74 percent reported at least one form of violence, and 25 percent reported four or more (34 percent excluding the Kurdish area, which ABC, ORB, and other surveys showed as far more peaceful than the country overall.) These results are reflected in **Figure 3.6**¹⁶²

Figure 3.6

Kinds of Violence Iraqis Reported as Occurring Nearby in Early 2007
(In percent)

	All	Baghdad	Kurdistan	Rest of
Iraq				
Kidnappings for ransom	40%	58%	4%	41%
Gov't/anti-gov't fighting	34	57	1	33
Car bombs, suicide attacks	32	52	3	31
Snipers, crossfire	30	56	*	27
Sectarian fighting	25	49	1	22
Unnecessary violence by:				
U.S./coalition forces	44	59	9	47
Local militia	31	44	2	32
Iraqi police	24	44	1	22
Iraqi Army	24	44	0	22
Any of these	80	100	12	86
Four or more of these	37	70	1	34
Friend/family member harmed	53	77	29	49

Source: ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007, pp. 5-6.

As **Figure 3.6** shows, 53 percent of Iraqis said a close friend or immediate family member had been hurt in the current violence. That ranged from three in 10 in the Kurdish provinces to nearly eight in 10 in Baghdad.

Torture continued to be widespread, not only by death squads, but also in official detention centers, where some detainees showed signs of beating, as well as use of “electrical cables, wounds in different parts of their bodies, including in the head and genitals, broken bones of legs and hands, electric and cigarette burns.” Bodies found in Baghdad (most likely victims of death squads) often showed signs of torture that included “acid-induced injuries and burns caused by chemical substances, missing skin, broken bones (back, hands and legs), missing eyes, missing teeth and wounds caused by power drills or nails.”¹⁶³ These victims were frequently found dead on the streets with execution style gunshot wounds.

The increase in violence not only caused problems in terms of security and increased casualties, but also caused problems in political and economic spheres. Furthermore, the violence greatly hindered efforts to create effective, unified and loyal ISF forces. The State Department reported to Congress in July 2006 that the recent increase in violence had hindered Coalition efforts to engage with Iraqi partners. For example, sectarian divisions and violence frustrated Iraqi government efforts to foster reconciliation.

Kidnappings and threats to embassy personnel made some Iraqi ministers reluctant to meet US personnel. A lack of security also hindered relations between Provincial Reconstruction Teams and provincial leaders. The UN noted that security problems were hampering reconstruction efforts, that the diplomatic community remained under serious threat, and that international agencies needed improved security to provide their services.¹⁶⁴ Overall, the State Department argued that a basic security level was a prerequisite for improvements other realms, which together would help achieve the conditions for withdrawing US forces.¹⁶⁵

Increasing Sectarian Violence

What had been a largely Sunni insurgency from 2003 to 2004, increasingly became a sectarian struggle between Sunni and Shi'a factions during 2005 and 2006 that effectively escalated into a state of limited civil war. Much of the violence was concentrated on controlling the capital, leading to the overwhelming majority of casualties being reported in Baghdad.

“The sectarian violence that’s taking place in the Baghdad area and up northwards towards Diyala province is probably the gravest threat to stability that there is in the country right now.” stated Army Gen. John Abizaid in January 2007¹⁶⁶. However, increasing violence between Sunni and Shi'a extremists, violence between Kurds and Arabs took place in virtually every mixed area in Iraq. Sunni insurgents, like Shi'ite militias, engaged in ethnic cleansing in urban centers, threatening or killing Shi'ite residents.¹⁶⁷

The increase in sectarian incidents (which includes all types of violence or threats of a sectarian nature) was accompanied by an increase in sectarian executions. “Sectarian executions” are defined by the DoD as “murders with distinct characteristics” that reveal their sectarian nature. These executions were partially reflected in the large numbers of bodies found each day throughout Iraq showing signs of torture and bullet wounds, most often to the head. The rising numbers of sectarian executions and incidents is shown in **Figure 3.7**. Towards the end of 2006, the gap between the number of sectarian incidents and murders grew considerably, again demonstrating the increasing lethality of the sectarian conflict.

Figure 3.8 shows a clear trend towards more sectarian incidents, and more casualties caused by these attacks. The number of sectarian incidents increased 6-fold in February 2006, largely in response to the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra. In the months that followed, sectarian incidents, and their casualties, increased even further.

This graph illustrates not only the scale of the response to the bombing of the Golden Mosque, but the changing nature of the conflict in Iraq. Before February 2006, Sunni insurgent forces caused most of the attacks and casualties. After February 2006, Sectarian violence came to dominate the conflict in Iraq.

The steady increases in sectarian violence during 2006 led not only to death and injury but also to further displacements. The UN estimated that a total of 1.6 million Iraqis had been displaced within Iraq by the fall of 2006, primarily because of direct or indirect threats against them or attacks on family members and their community, and a further 1.8 million Iraqis had fled the country altogether.¹⁶⁸ Because internally displaced persons' were competing for limited services, their plight could lead to further intercommunal animosities and generate further displacement.¹⁶⁹

In its August report to Congress on stability and security in Iraq, the Department of Defense acknowledged these trends noting:

Setbacks in the levels and nature of violence in Iraq affect all other measures of stability, reconstruction, and transition. Sectarian tensions increased over the past quarter, manifested in an increasing numbers of internally displaced persons. Sunni and Shi'a extremists, particularly al-Qa'ida in Iraq and rogue elements of Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM), are increasingly interlocked in retaliatory violence and are contesting control of ethnically mixed areas to expand their existing areas of influence.¹⁷⁰

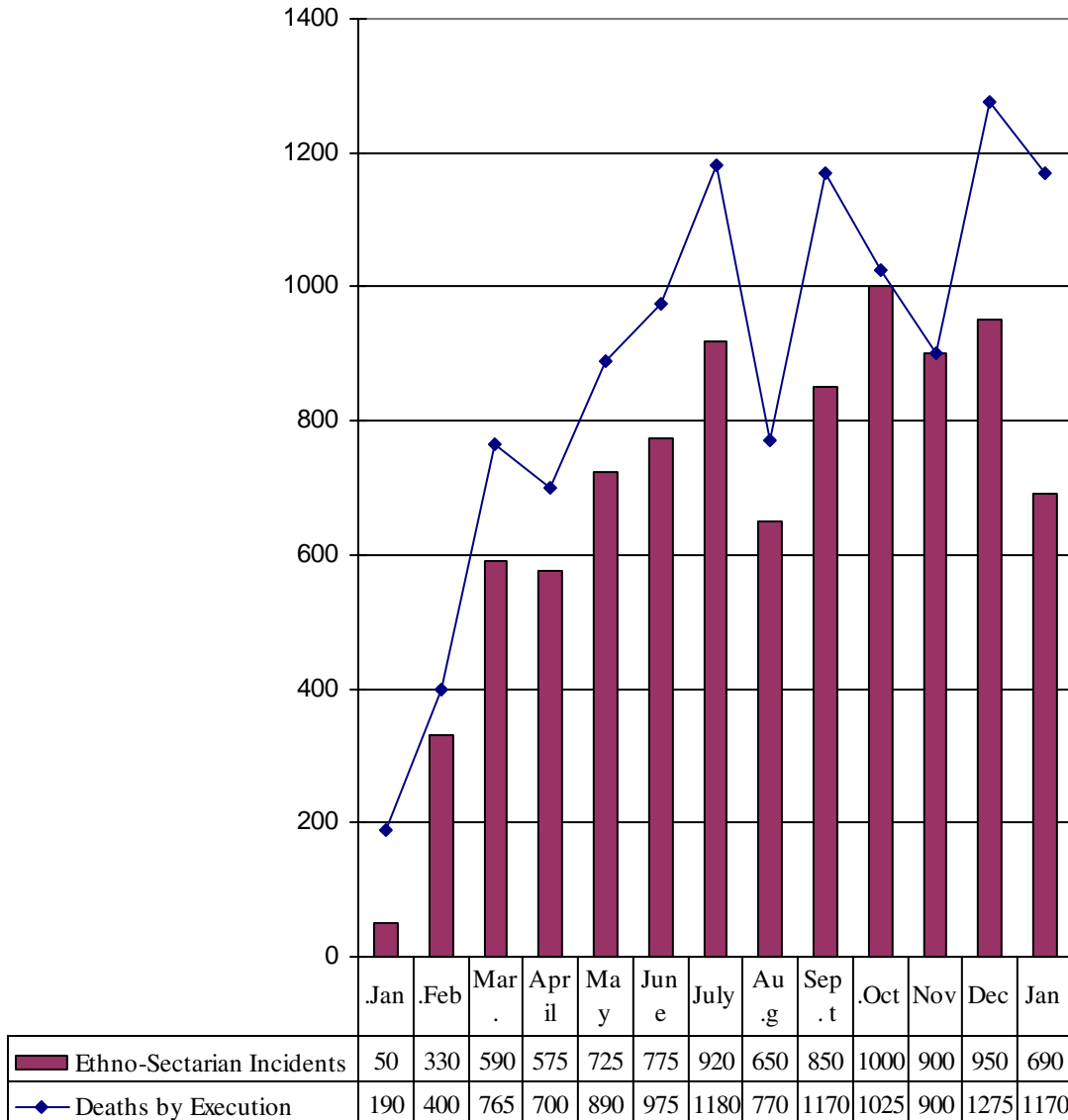
In an interview on September 21, 2006, General Casey emphasized the changing nature of the insurgency, saying, “We’re starting to see this conflict here transition from an insurgency against us to a struggle for the division of political and economic power among Iraqis.”¹⁷¹

This shift also changed the attitude of different Iraqi actors towards US troops. As Shi’ite militia violence continued to grow, Baghdad’s Sunnis sometimes became more welcoming towards US forces, seeing them increasingly as protectors against death squads.

“There’s no question we’re seeing that the Sunni extremist elements are in fact being much more engaging with coalition forces. If you go into neighborhoods where traditionally in the past we found some real anti-coalition-force sentiment, it’s probably turned around almost 180.” *Maj. Gen. William Caldwell*¹⁷²

Figure 3.7

Ethno-Sectarian Incidents and Murders, January, 2006 – January 2007



Source: “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” Department of Defense, Quarterly Report to Congress, March, 2007, p. 17

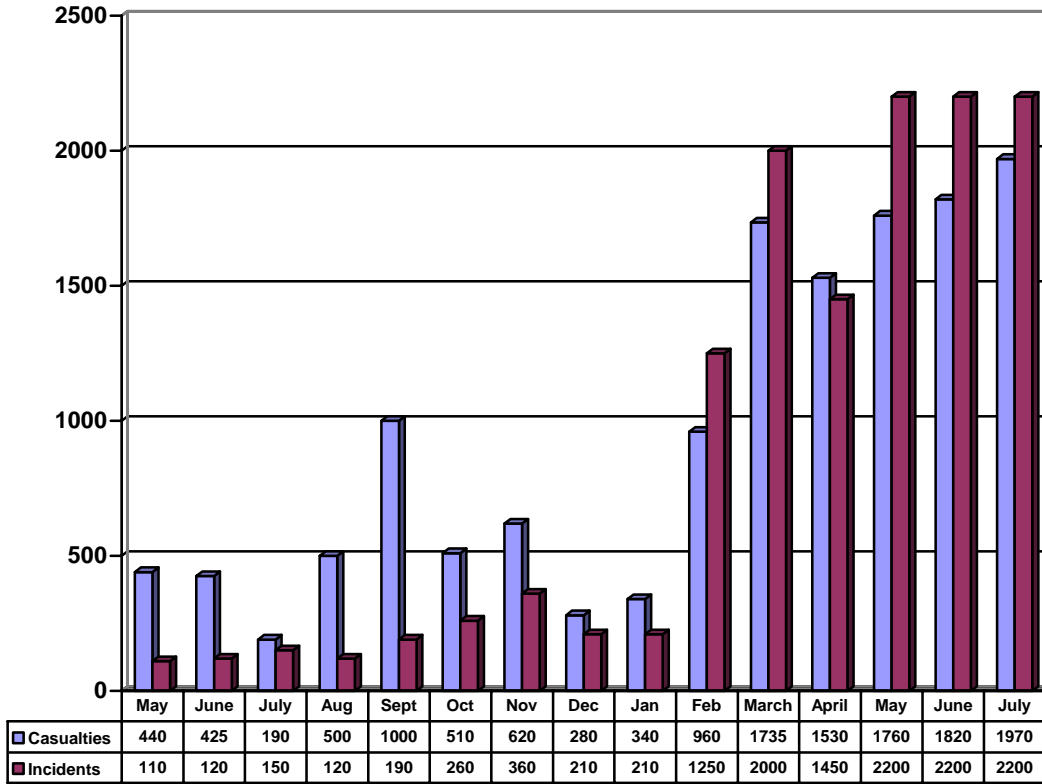
Note: Data points are estimates from material adapted from the DoD report.

Note: Ethno-sectarian incidents and execution recorded in MNC-I Significant Activities Database. Ethno-sectarian incidents are threats and violence with apparent sectarian motivations. Multiple casualties can result for a single incident. Ethno-sectarian executions are murders with distinct characteristics, and are a subset of total civilian casualties.

Note: The Iraq Study Group found that the Department of Defense may be underreporting attacks by as much as a factor of ten.

Figure 3.8:

Sectarian Incidents and Violence: May 2005 – July 2006



*Casualty data reflect updated data for each period and are derived from unverified initial reports submitted by coalition elements responding to an incident; the inconclusively of these numbers constrains them to be used only for comparative purposes.

*Note: The Iraq Study Group found that the Department of Defense may be underreporting attacks by as much as a factor of ten.

Source: MNC-I, as adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, August 2006 Report to Congress, p. 35; Note: +/- 5% margin of error

Insurgent Attacks on the ISF

The Sunni insurgency remained a pressing problem, even after the death of Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qa'ida in Iraq. DoD reported that al-Qa'ida remained capable of conducting operations due to its resilient command structure of semi-autonomous cells.¹⁷³

October 2006 marked a 9-month high in US fatalities. This was driven by assaults by Sunni Arab insurgents, demonstrating their undiminished capability to conduct anti-Coalition operations. 43 of the 103 US deaths occurred in Baghdad, mostly in the capital's Sunni-dominated western neighborhoods, possibly indicating a shifting focus away from the Sunni heartland to Baghdad. Yet, two thirds of the attacks continued to occur outside the capital.

At the same time, the rise in sectarian and ethnic conflict made Iraqi security forces key targets in the effort to bloc the creation of an effective Iraqi government and were a key reason many elements of the Iraqi force development effort did not provide a realistic basis for recruiting, training, equipping, and committing Iraqi forces.

The nature of the attacks on the ISF can be illustrated by a chronology for the month of October 2006. Note that the difference between "insurgent" and "militia" attacks could not always be clearly distinguished:

- October 1, 2006:** A policeman was killed in Mosul. Police found the body of another policeman a day after he was kidnapped in the town of al-Shirqat. Mortar rounds landed on a police station wounding seven people, including four policemen, in Mosul.
- **October 2, 2006:** 3 bomb incidents targeting Iraqi security forces killed two people and wounded 7. 3 attacks by gunmen killed 4 police officers, including a colonel in the Interior Ministry, and wounded 5
- **October 3, 2006:** Gunmen attacked a police checkpoint near Tikrit late on Monday, killing a police officer and wounding a policeman.
- **October 4, 2006:** A roadside bomb in Anbar province blasted the motorcade of a police chief, killing six policemen and seriously wounding their chief. A suicide car bomber struck an Iraqi police and army checkpoint in Tal Afar, wounding three policemen, two soldiers and nine civilians. At least 14 people were killed and 75 wounded in a car bomb attack in central Baghdad targeting the convoy of Iraq's industry minister. Two of the bodyguards were killed. A suicide truck bomber blew himself up outside the Iraqi army headquarters in western Ramadi. Only the bomber was killed but a number were wounded. An Iraqi Army brigadier escaped an assassination attempt when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in Kirkuk. Mortar rounds hit an army recruitment centre killing four recruits and wounding eight others in Mosul. A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol wounded a policeman and a civilian in central Baghdad. Gunmen killed two policemen and wounded four people in the town of Baquba. A suicide car bomber wounded four policemen in Ramadi.
- **October 5, 2006:** A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol wounded two policemen in Mahmudiya. Gunmen killed two people, including a policeman, in Fallujah. Gunmen also killed a police officer in Baquba. Police Brigadier Shaaban al-Obeidi died of wounds he sustained in a roadside bombing near his convoy on Wednesday in Anbar province.
- **October 7, 2006:** A suicide car bomb killed 14 people, including four soldiers, and wounded 13, including nine civilians, at a checkpoint in Tal Afar. A roadside bomb killed one policeman in southern Baghdad. Gunmen attacked an Iraqi army checkpoint and wounded four soldiers near Ishaqi. One gunman was killed.

- **October 8, 2006:** Three roadside bombs in Baghdad wounded at least seven policemen. A mortar round landed near a police patrol, killing one policeman and wounding two people. Gunmen killed a policeman and his 8-year-old son in Samarra. One policeman was wounded by gunmen in Baghdad. Baghdad police found the body of the deputy chief of the Interior Ministry internal affairs office. A roadside bomb killed the police chief of Rabia, a small town near the Syrian border.
- **October 9, 2006:** A suicide car bomber killed a policeman and wounded 11 others - a policeman and 10 civilians - at a police checkpoint in Tal Afar. Gunmen shot dead police Colonel Faleh al-Obeidi in Baquba. A roadside bomb killed two policemen and wounded three others near Baquba.
- **October 10, 2006:** Two roadside bombs targeting police wounded five civilians in Mosul. Another roadside bomb killed two policemen in Mussayab. Gunmen killed a police captain in Mosul and two policemen near Kirkuk. Another policeman was shot near Hilla.
- **October 11, 2006:** A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol exploded in west-central Baghdad, killing one and wounding six, including three policemen. Two more roadside bombs targeting a police patrol in eastern Baghdad wounded eight people, including three policemen. One insurgent and two policemen were killed and four people were wounded following clashes after gunmen attacked a police station south of Baghdad. A policeman was shot in front of his house in Fallujah. Brigadier Qais al-Mamouri, chief of Babil police, escaped an assassination attempt when his convoy was struck by a roadside bomb in Iskandariya.
- **October 12, 2006:** A motorbike strapped with explosives targeted a police patrol and killed three people, including a policeman, and wounded 15, including five policemen, in Qahira district. Gunmen attacked a police station on Wednesday, killing a policeman and freeing 10 detainees near Diwaniya.
- **October 13, 2006:** A bomb planted inside a police station in Hilla killed Colonel Salam al-Mamoury, commander of a special police force, his deputy and six others. The blast wounded 10 others and punched a hole in the building's ceiling in Hilla.
- **October 14, 2006:** Three policemen were wounded when two mortar rounds hit their building near Hawija.
- **October 15, 2006:** Five people were killed, including three policemen, in Tal Afar by a suicide bomber. In Baghdad, a roadside bomb targeting the convoy of a Finance Ministry official killed four civilians and wounded six. Clashes between gunmen and Iraqi police on Saturday night left three policemen wounded in an area between Baghdad and Kut. Nine gunmen were also arrested.
- **October 16, 2006:** Gunmen killed Farouq Atta, an air force brigadier, and wounded two of his companions on Sunday in northern Baghdad. A roadside bomb targeted the convoy of Mohammad Daekkh, the head of the police crime department, wounding one of his bodyguards in Najaf. Gunmen killed two bodyguards of former Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari in Khalis. Three roadside bombs killed three civilians and wounded seven other people, including a policeman, near a bank in central Baghdad. Clashes between police and gunmen killed three people and wounded five in central Baghdad. Gunmen killed 5 more policemen, wounded two, and kidnapped three in different towns and cities.
- **October 17, 2006:** A suicide car bomber targeted an Iraqi army checkpoint, killing a soldier and wounding two others in Shirqat. A roadside bomb in Baghdad produced the same number of victims. Another suicide car bomber targeting police commandos killed two police and wounded nine, including four civilians, in Baghdad. A roadside bomb aimed at a police patrol wounded five civilians in eastern Baghdad. Also in Baghdad, a mortar round killed two people and wounded three policemen. Gunmen killed a man and wounded a policeman when they attacked the house of the brother of Mosul's governor.
- **October 18, 2006:** Gunmen killed a policeman in Fallujah and another policeman as he was leaving his house in Suwayra. A car bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol in central Baghdad

wounded five civilians. Police found the body of a police officer shot dead in an area between Kerbala and Hilla.

- **October 19, 2006:** A former police chief, Brigadier Sabar al-Janabi, was killed in front of his home in Fallujah on Thursday. He had been detained by U.S. forces and released two weeks before. In Baghdad, gunmen shot dead police Colonel Basim Qasim. A roadside bomb in the capital targeting a police patrol killed five people -- three policemen and two civilians -- and wounded 12, nine of them civilians. Gunmen attacked a police station in Baghdad and killed four policemen and wounded 10 civilians. A car bomb and a roadside bomb in targeting a police patrol killed a civilian and wounded five others in Baghdad, including two policemen. In Kirkuk, a suicide car bomber targeted Iraqi army troops collecting salaries from a bank. He killed at least eight people and wounded 70 others. Also in Kirkuk, two roadside bombs targeting police patrols wounded three policemen and a civilian. Near Kirkuk, a suicide car bomb killed two Iraqi soldiers and wounded four more. Six suicide bombers in vehicles, including one in a fuel truck, attacked Iraqi police and U.S. patrols in Mosul, and insurgents fired mortars and clashed with police. The violence killed at least 20 people. Three Iraqi policemen were killed in clashes with gunmen near Baquba.
- **October 21, 2006:** Insurgents killed six policemen and wounded two others when they attacked a police station in Baghdad. Also in the capital, gunmen wounded a policeman and two civilians. Gunmen killed three policemen after attacking their patrol in Baquba. A roadside bomb killed two Iraqi soldiers and wounded four in Diwaniya. The governor of Diyala province Raad Rasheed al-Timimi escaped an assassination attempt when a roadside bomb exploded near his motorcade in Baquba.
- **October 22, 2006:** Gunmen in a car shot and killed one civilian and wounded two policemen in Kirkuk. One civilian was killed and five people, including two policemen, were wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol in Latifiya. Two policemen were killed while they were defusing a bomb placed on the side of the road in Iskandariya. Two children were wounded in the attack. Assailants bombed the house of a policeman who was killed a week ago in Mosul, wounding five of his neighbors.
- **October 23, 2006:** Men at a checkpoint beheaded nine people, including some policemen, after pulling them out of two cars in Baiji.
- **October 24, 2006:** Clashes erupted between gunmen and police in southern Baghdad, killing two civilians and wounding eight others. Two roadside bombs exploded in quick succession in Kirkuk. The first targeted the police deputy chief and wounded one of his security guards. The second exploded near a police station, wounding two policemen and two civilians. A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol killed two soldiers and wounded another one in central Kirkuk.
- **October 25, 2006:** A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol wounded two policemen in Baghdad. Gunmen wounded a policeman in Diwaniya.
- **October 26, 2006:** Gunmen ambushed an Iraqi police convoy near Baquba, killing 28 policemen, including the commander, and wounding 25. Earlier, gunmen attacked an Iraqi special police force station near Baquba, killing six police and wounding 10. A suicide bomber in Tal Afar detonated his explosive-laden belt and injured two Iraqi soldiers. Clashes between gunmen and Iraqi police erupted in towns near Baquba, and hospital sources said there were casualties.
- **October 28, 2006:** A roadside bomb exploded near an Iraqi police patrol, killing one policeman and wounding three. A roadside bomb targeting security forces guarding an oil industry facility wounded two police officers in eastern Baghdad. A third car bomb exploded near a municipal building in Dujail, wounding five people including a policeman. In Fallujah, at least two soldiers and one civilian were killed in clashes between Iraqi army and insurgents. Another three civilians were wounded. One Iraqi soldier was killed and three wounded when they raided a house in Hawija and clashed with gunmen inside. Also in Hawija, gunmen killed the head of a women's

organization and then shot dead a police officer as they fled her home. Gunmen kidnapped 11 Iraqi soldiers traveling in a minibus at a fake checkpoint in the town of Udham.

- **October 29, 2006:** A roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol, seriously wounding two people, including a policeman, in the centre of Kirkuk. Gunmen clashed with the Iraqi army on Saturday, killing three soldiers and wounding four near Balad. Gunmen shot dead a policeman near a checkpoint in Kut. Gunmen also killed three people and seriously wounded two, including a police major, in two different incidents on Saturday in Baquba.
- **October 30, 2006:** Police found four bodies, including that of a policeman, in different parts of Mosul. A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army convoy injured one soldier, also in Mosul. A suicide car bomber hit an Iraqi army checkpoint at a border pass near Syria, killing four soldiers and wounding one. An hour earlier, another suicide bomber attacked the same checkpoint, causing no casualties. A suicide attacker blew himself up inside a police headquarters in Kirkuk, killing two policemen and a three-year-old girl and wounding 19, including 10 policemen. Police said the attacker was wearing a police officer uniform. Gunmen attacked a police centre in Baiji, killing two policemen. Police retrieved the bodies of six policemen bearing signs of torture and with bullet wounds from a river in Suwayra.
- **October 31:** A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed a policeman and wounded three others in Baghdad. A roadside bomb killed one policeman and one civilian in the western city of Fallujah. Two civilians were also wounded. Also in Fallujah, an Iraqi army soldier died in clashes with gunmen. Four "terrorists" and one Iraqi army lieutenant were killed during a raid on a building used by militants in Tal Afar. Four gunmen and an Iraqi army soldier were killed in clashes in the same city. In Baquba, clashes between gunmen and police left a policeman dead and three others wounded.

Key Centers of Insurgent Violence

Baghdad and Anbar province remained the focus of insurgent activity, as counted by the MNF-I and DoD. Most attacks in Al Anbar occurred in Ramadi, the embattled provincial capital.¹⁷⁴ The casualty statistics showed not only the strength of the insurgency, but also an increase in sectarian violence and the US and Iraqi government effort to meet this challenge by force. The rise in US casualties inevitably rose as US forces attempted to stiffen and replace Iraqi units in an essentially hopeless mission. According to the White House, insurgents may also have tried to influence the US mid-term elections by increasing US casualties, but none of the data available support this claim.¹⁷⁵

According to the Brookings Institution, 34.8% of US fatalities through October 26 were caused by IEDs, while "other kinds of hostile fire" killed 31.8%.¹⁷⁶ This continuing high impact of IEDs came despite jamming devices, tactical adjustments and the increased armoring of military vehicles.¹⁷⁷ This may be partly explained by the fact that significant numbers of explosively formed shaped charge projectiles (EFPs) started appearing at this time.¹⁷⁸

The Iraqi body count in October was 224 Iraqi security forces and 1,315 civilians.¹⁷⁹ Al Qa'ida in Iraq stepped up insurgency activity during Ramadan 2006.¹⁸⁰ Al Qa'ida leadership's broad direction of attacks through public statements also appeared to work, as suggested by the increase in attacks on US forces in the two weeks after its leadership called on insurgents to target American forces on September 7, 2006.¹⁸¹

The Role of Foreign Volunteers

Foreign fighters still made up a small percentage of the Sunni insurgency, around 20% according to Iraq's national security advisor, Mowaffak Rubaie, 10% or less according to

a Brookings Institution Report, and possibly fewer than 5% according to some US intelligence expert.¹⁸² Their total numbers were estimated in the range from 800 to 2,000 in October 2006, with a total insurgent strength of over 20,000 people. They have, however, had a much more important impact on the fighting than their numbers would indicate because they initially made up most of the suicide attackers, and still played a significant role in such attacks in the spring of 2007.

The US military estimated that between 50 and 70 foreign fighters crossed the border into Iraq every month, while US and Iraqi forces captured 630 foreign fighters between January and mid-September 2006 (an average of 74 per month). Meanwhile, most insurgents were native Iraqi Sunni Islamists or members of the old Ba'ath party regime.¹⁸³

US military spokesman Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell said in November 2006 that Iraqi and US forces had killed more than 425 foreign fighters and caught more than 670 in Iraq in 2006. More than 20% of those detained came from Syria, Caldwell said.¹⁸⁴

New Patterns in Sectarian Violence

The most important trend in Iraqi violence during 2006 was the increase in sectarian Sunni-Shi'ite violence, which rose twelve times between January and mid-August 2006. Sectarian violence continued to increase throughout 2006. Much of this violence was carried out by militias. Despite the existence of several militias in Iraq before 2003, many other militias and other small armed have arisen as a defensive response to the violence plaguing much of the country. According to the DoD:

...militias and other small, armed groups operate openly, often with popular support, but outside formal public security structures. These militias provide an element of protection for the populace, generally on a sectarian or political basis. This is especially true in areas where there is a perception that the Government of Iraq is unwilling or unable to provide effective security for the population. Some militias also act as the security arm of organizations devoted to social relief and welfare, lending these armed groups further legitimacy.¹⁸⁵

Changes continued in insurgent tactics. Insurgents were reported in September 2006 to have started using involuntary "suicide" bombers. This technique involves kidnapping motorists, putting bombs in their cars, and then setting their victims free with their rigged vehicles, detonating the bombs by remote control once the car reached a checkpoint or another target deemed valuable.¹⁸⁶

Infrastructure Attacks

Poor security conditions continued to hamper efforts to rebuild Iraq's economy, and put additional stress efforts to develop effective ISF capabilities. Indicators include the following:

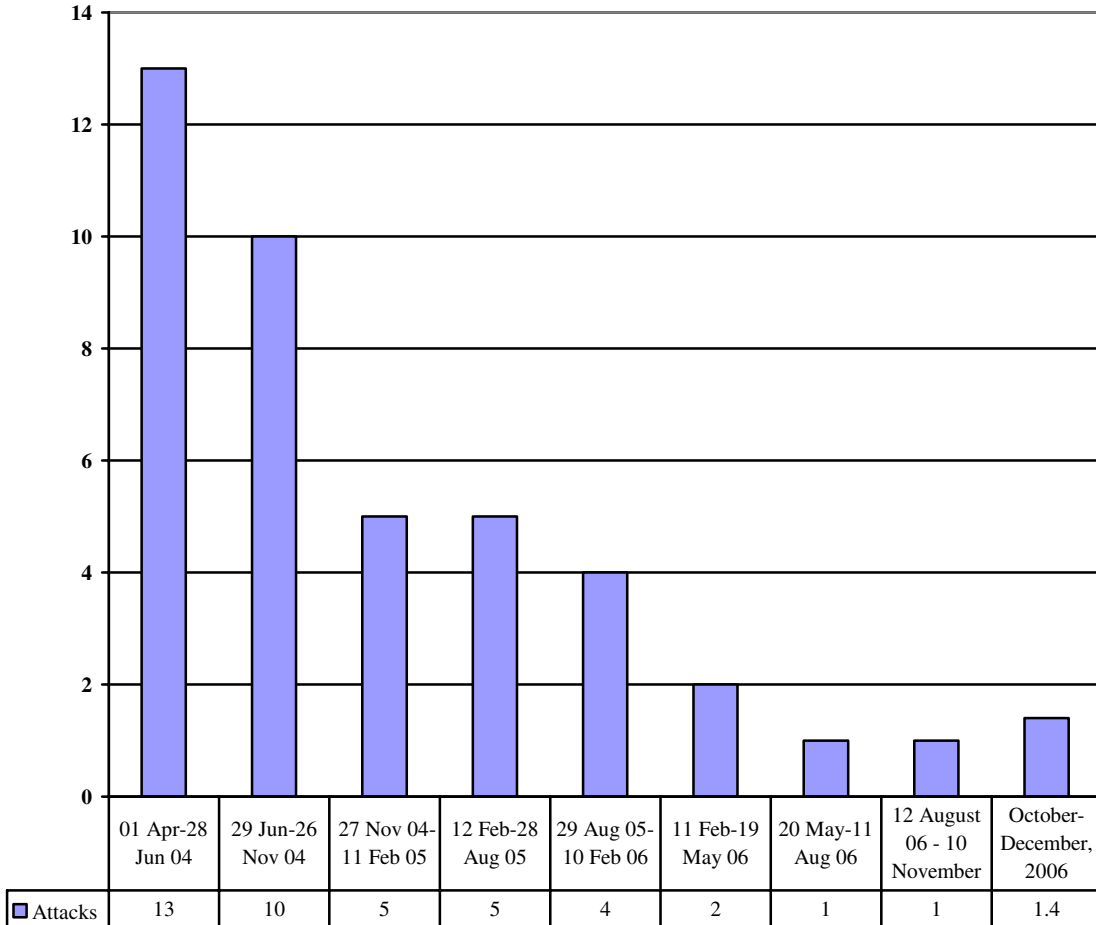
- Iraq's oil production remained under target levels: during the week of August 16-22, Iraq produced 2.17 million barrels per day, while the Oil Ministry's goal was 2.5 million barrels (the pre-war level was about 2.6 million barrels per day)
- According to SIGIR: "Electric lines are attacked regularly, and the northern pipelines are largely inoperable because of interdiction. Iraqi repair crews are frequently unable to work because of repeated attacks."
- Over the same week, electricity availability averaged around 5.9 hours per day in Baghdad and 10.7 hours nationwide. Electricity output for the week was only about 9% above the same period in 2005.

Despite the decrease in the number of infrastructure attacks shown in **Figure 3.9**, they continued to have a significant impact. In addition to decreases in production, major oil pipelines continue to be sabotaged, shutting down exports. Efforts to increase electricity output by a greater amount were also injured by repeated sabotaging of major electrical transmission lines. The Defense Department noted in its March, 2007 quarterly report that “the timing and location of more recent attacks resulted in greater disruption of services” when compared with earlier attacks.¹⁸⁷

According to the DoD: “weak ministerial oversight, ineffectual rapid-repair teams, and criminal harvesting of infrastructure assets (e.g., copper from power lines) have proved to be major impediments to improving the supply of essential services. Since poor delivery of essential services adversely affects the legitimacy of the government in the minds of the civilian population, Iraq’s infrastructure will remain a high-value target”¹⁸⁸ To combat these problems, the US planned on focusing efforts on strengthening the Strategic Infrastructure Battalions.¹⁸⁹

Figure 3.9

Average Weekly Infrastructure Attacks: 1 April 2004 to December, 2006**



*Average rounded to nearest whole number

**Note: The Iraq Study Group found that the Department of Defense may be underreporting attacks by as much as a factor of ten. The DoD has named the time periods used in the graph as follows: Pre-sovereignty: 1 Jan-31 Mar 04, Pre-sovereignty: 01 April 2004 – 28 June 2004, Sovereignty: 29 Jun-26 Nov 04, Election: 27 Nov 04-11 Feb 05, Pre-Constitution: 12 Feb-28 Aug 05, Referendum/Election: 29 Aug 05-10 Feb 06, Gov. Transition: 11 Feb-19 May 06, Government Established: 20 May-11 Aug 06, Government Established: 12 Aug 06 - 10 Nov 06, Transition to self reliance: 1 Jan. - 9 Feb. 2007. Source: MNC-I, from US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March, 2007 Report to Congress, p. 20.

The United States had invested about \$320.3 million by October 2006 in an effort to improve Iraq's capability to protect its oil and electricity infrastructure. The protection of key infrastructure nodes and an upgraded Iraqi government capability to protect them itself are part of the overall strategy of the current administration.¹⁹⁰ The US has done much to further this self-sustaining infrastructure protection effort, including the training and equipment of several special security services, and partnering them with coalition forces. These services are the:

Strategic Infrastructure Battalions

Oil Protection Force

Electrical Power Security Service¹⁹¹

The SIGIR further noted that insurgent attacks were only part of the problem – Iraq's energy infrastructure is also plagued by criminal activity and simply by its own age and poor maintenance.¹⁹²

Shi'ite Militias: Open Challenges, Police Infiltration, and Underground Death Squads

“This is the toughest thing I hope I ever do: fighting a counterinsurgency atop a sectarian conflict.” *Col. James Pasquarette, commander of the Army's 1st Brigade Combat Team.*¹⁹³

At the same time, civil conflict presented a growing challenge to ISF development. Shi'ite Militias of varying sizes played a steadily rising role in the violence in Iraq during mid 2005 to the end of 2006. The DoD stated that: “It is likely that Shi'a militants were responsible for more civilian casualties than those associated with terrorist organizations. Shi'a militants were the most significant threat to the Coalition presence in Baghdad and southern Iraq.”¹⁹⁴

According to the CENTCOM commander, Shi'ite militias became the largest contributors to sectarian violence in the country.¹⁹⁵ They targeted Sunnis, mostly civilians, both in retaliation for insurgent attacks and for sectarian reasons. Sunnis in mixed-sect neighborhoods in turn formed local “neighborhood watches”.

The Iraq Study Group reached a similar conclusion:

Shi'ite militias engaging in sectarian violence pose a substantial threat to immediate and long-term stability. These militias are diverse. Some are affiliated with the government, some are highly localized, and some are wholly outside the law. They are fragmenting, with an increasing breakdown in command structure. The militias target Sunni Arab civilians, and some struggle for power in clashes with one another. Some even target government ministries. They undermine the authority of the Iraqi government and security forces, as well as the ability of Sunnis to join a peaceful political process. The prevalence of militias sends a powerful message: political leaders can preserve and expand their power only if backed by armed force...Militias are currently seen as legitimate vehicles of political action.”¹⁹⁶

The Uncertain Role of the Mahdi Militia

The Mahdi militia presented the most serious problem, and had clearly recovered from its military defeat in 2004 to become a serious threat. According to a report by the RIIA in 2006, Mahdi Army membership “may now be several hundred thousand strong and is itching for the opportunity to be unleashed upon both the Arab Sunni insurgents and the

Multinational Force.”¹⁹⁷ US government estimates put their numbers at 60,000, and felt that they were only a limited force given the power of other Shi’ite parties. One US Army intelligence analyst in Baghdad did say in October 2006, however, that,¹⁹⁸

“They’ve infiltrated every branch of public service and every political office they could get their hands on. As soon as the US leaves, they’ll be able to dominate the area with key citizens, key positions, key offices. They’ll pretty much have the lay of the land.” –

The same analyst reported ethnic cleansing activities carried out by the Mahdi Army in Baghdad. Its members would paint large red Xs on the sides of houses the militia wanted vacated. People knew they had a few days before it would be firebombed. The organization used this tactic to clear entire clans from neighborhoods and drive rivals from neighborhoods under its control.¹⁹⁹ The Defense Department reported in November that the Mahdi Army is “currently having the greatest negative affect on the security situation.”²⁰⁰

US forces found it increasingly difficult to respond to the growth of the Mahdi militia, Badr organization, other Shi’ite sectarian forces and death squads in carrying out their ISF training missions: “To fight these extrajudicial killings effectively, we need to be embedded, almost one to one, with the Iraqi forces. We need to watch their every move,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Nelson, an intelligence analyst with the US Army’s 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment in Baghdad. Nelson further stated that arrests for sectarian killings were rare because of militia affiliations of Iraqi security forces. When US forces had intelligence on a death squad or killing, they would often share it with their Iraqi counterpart, leading to leaks and blown operation. The Sergeant reported that his battalion had investigated 40 sectarian killings and collected 57 bodies one particular week, with none leading to an arrest. “Sometimes we have a feeling of complete hopelessness,”²⁰¹

As extremist elements in the Mahdi Army caused more and more violence, it became less and less clear how firm Sadr's control really was over his militia. Many security officials believed that he was losing the grip on the more extreme elements, and that many parts of the militia were really loosely tied affiliates that often acted on their own or with a considerable degree of independence.²⁰²

A senior coalition intelligence official in Baghdad said in September 2006 that: “There are fractures politically inside Sadr’s movement, many of whom don’t find him to be sufficiently radical now that he has taken a political course of action.”²⁰³ One report put the number of “rogue” Mahdi Army members as high as a third of the militia.²⁰⁴

A Coalition intelligence official said in September there were at least six senior militia leaders striking out on their own, including Abu Dera, whom Sunnis believe to be responsible for thousands of murders.²⁰⁵ News reports citing “defense sources” reported the loss of control over “large numbers” of militiamen who had formed independent death squads to murder civilians around Baghdad.²⁰⁶ Prime Minister Maliki commented that, “we don’t know what Mahdi Army means any more.”²⁰⁷ These defections increased Iran’s avenues for manipulation in Iraq, with more independent Shi’ite groups that could be influenced.²⁰⁸

A February 2007 report by Jane’s Terrorism & Security Monitor also cast doubt on the unity of the Mahdi Army. In particular, the political and military branches of the organization appeared to be at odds. According to Abu Kamael, Mahdi Army member

and admitted death squad leader: "There is conflict between the two branches. The fighters say they are the source of the Sadrists' political power, while the politicians say they give the group its focus and meaning, its ability to build, and stop it being a rabble. The only thing holding the two elements together is Moqtada al-Sadr himself. Without him, the movement will be destroyed...Sadr is trying to impose control ...In my opinion, the political wing of the Sadr line is being weakened by the worsening security situation."²⁰⁹

Moqtada al-Sadr himself, in a telephone interview with *Jane's*, Sadr said: "I am innocent of any element of the Mahdi Army that kills members of the other community. They are not acting for the Mahdi Army and do not represent the Mahdi Army they are criminals, gangsters and extremists." He added "Death squads that say they kill on behalf of the Mahdi Army are trying to destroy us and divide us and prevent us from raising arms against the forces of occupation. Criminals are using my name as cover for their actions."²¹⁰

At the same time, Sadr City, the home territory of the Mahdi Army, was one of the safest parts of Baghdad for Shi'ites, and the Mahdi militia provided much better security than the ISF. Mahdi Army death squads would go to other, contested parts of the city, commit violence, and then return to Sadr City and blend back into the general population there. US officers in Baghdad examined where the victims of sectarian killings were found in Baghdad, and concluded that the perpetrators mostly came from Sadr city:

"Sadr City. That's the nucleus." *Capt. Will Wade, 1st Battalion, 77th Armored Regiment.*

"They're in the export business, so a lot of their force is outside Sadr City. The fact that the Corleones or the Gottis may live in my neighborhood doesn't mean they do all their business there." *Maj. Charles St.Clair, military advisor in Sadr City with the 506th Regimental Combat Team*

The Failure to Disband or Control the Militias

The growing political and security problems created by militias being seen as protectors by "their" constituencies became evident in October 2006, when US troops cordoned the Sadr City district in Baghdad in October, looking for a kidnapped US soldier as well as a particularly notorious death squad leader. The US operation forced the Mahdi Army to go underground in the area, and when attacks happened in the usually safe neighborhood, Sadr supporters blamed the Americans for suppressing the only force that protected them.²¹¹ Moreover, US forces received only token ISF support and Prime Minister Maliki ordered the end of the operation on October 31.²¹²

It was also easier for a Shi'ite-dominated Iraqi government to talk about dealing with the militias, and relying on truly national Iraqi security forces, that it was for the government to take meaningful action. Prime Minister al-Maliki made several statements to the effect that militias had to be disbanded.²¹³ But his government initially lacked the will and capacity to back his words up with enforcement measures, since they had no apparent effect on the size and vitality of these organizations. Al-Maliki stressed that "the dissolution of militias must be through the political powers."²¹⁴ He stated in late October that the Sunni insurgency was still the main engine of sectarian violence in the country.²¹⁵

The efforts for all political groups should be focused on the most dangerous challenge, which is the combination of al Qa'ida and the Saddam Ba'athists.

After the bombing in Samarra there was sectarian tension. The Mahdi Army and the Badr group and some independents had a reaction to that. But the government managed to stop that. [...] Terrorism and the militias are separate issues. There is a political plan aimed at making the militias the priority. The militias are not acceptable but they are not the main reason [for the security situation]. Terrorism is the main reason. There is Sunni pressure and Arab pressure on this but we reject drawing a veil over the Ba'ath party and terrorism. At least we can talk to the militias, we know who they are. They follow Moqtada al Sadr, the Dawa party, Badr etc. We can talk to them but who are terrorists loyal to and who do they follow? *Nouri al Maliki, Oct. 26, 2006*²¹⁶

By late in 2006, Maliki realized he could not succeed by trying to reconcile with his Shia Political rivals, and that some of his rivals were irreconcilable. This gave new impetus to President Bush's new security plan for Baghdad, because Maliki did not place restrictions on either the ISF or Coalition forces in acting even-handedly against extremists of either sect, and indicated that the Iraqi government would finally sanction military and political actions against the Shi'ite militias.

This was critical because the new security plan for Baghdad was officially commanded by Iraq, and as such any decision to attack the Mahdi army or enter Sadr city would be left up to the Iraqi government. However, pentagon official felt that this time, as opposed to Operation Together Forward, they would be allowed to attack the Shi'ite militias. According to one anonymous pentagon official "This time we have a commitment from Maliki and other key players in the Iraqi government . . . to have a no holds barred arrangement for neighborhoods in Baghdad." Sadr city, he added, "would not be a safe haven" for militias.²¹⁷

Even so, such statements presented the practical problem that the Shi'ite militias could respond by dispersing and/or standing down as the new plan went into action. The end result was that the US-led effort would then have to focus on the Sunni insurgency and any elements of the Shi'ite militias that did not respond to Iraqi government control. If the US plan worked, it meant steadily expanding Shi'ite power in Baghdad as US domestic political pressure grew on the Bush Administration to leave or phase down US forces. If the US plan failed, it meant the militias could reassert themselves more quickly, possibly with US support.

The beginning of President Bush's "surge" and new 'gated community' security plan for Baghdad in 2007 had mixed results. An anticipation of the coming US/Iraqi security plan, the Mahdi militia was ordered to stand down, and many of its checkpoints in Baghdad disappeared. However, as the Iraqi troops deployed to the capital took longer than anticipated to arrive, a security vacuum developed. A massive bombing on February 3rd, killing 135 in the market of the Sedriya neighborhood of Baghdad was widely blamed on the delay in implementing the security plan and the lower profile of the Mahdi militia.

Shi'ite Militias and Links to the ISF

Shi'ite militias not only 'competed' with the security forces for domination of neighborhoods and cities, they tried to directly influence the behavior of ISF forces' behavior through infiltration and intimidation. They threatened policemen with attacks on their families to coerce their cooperation, for example to let militia members pass checkpoints unsearched. This problem was much harder to address for the government as well as for US officials than infiltration, because it could not be solved by a

straightforward process like vetting recruits. US troops in Baghdad tried to prevent intimidation of police officers by watching for suspicious cars leaving a police station, with unknown results.²¹⁸

Militia infiltration of the security forces not only took place at the level of policemen and soldiers, but at the political level. Iraqi policemen complained that whenever they moved against militias, they would receive phone calls from top politicians telling them to allow these militias to operate. This put commanders in the uncomfortable position of either letting radicals operate freely in their area of responsibility or risking their job.²¹⁹ Some American officers went so far as saying that they could judge the importance of a captured Sunni insurgent or Shi'ite militiaman by the number of high-ranking Iraqi commanders calling to demand his release.²²⁰

Partisan interference in ISF affairs has come from the highest levels of the Iraqi government. A report surfaced in April, 2007, that a department in the office of the prime minister had been responsible for the arrest or removal of several Iraqi Army and National Police commanders because of sectarian reasons.²²¹ This department, the Office of the Commander in Chief, has also been accused of pressuring other commanders to leave Shi'ite groups alone.

As has already been discussed, the two most influential Shi'ite militias -- Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigades (the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)) -- openly challenged Iraqi police's control of Baghdad and Basra. Other cities were affected, such as Diwaniya, where on August 28 the Mahdi Army battled with Iraqi Army and police for hours in a fight that left at least 40 dead, including 25 soldiers.²²² The background for this clash was the arrest of prominent Sadr supporters by Iraqi forces. The raids were carried out by Iraqi Army units backed by Polish troops.²²³ Sadr's office in Diwaniya claimed that the arrests had not been made, as usual, by Iraqi police, but by Army units without warrants.

The political leaders behind the largest Shi'ite militias were also major players in Iraqi national politics: Moqtada al-Sadr not only controlled the Mahdi army, but his followers were in charge of 4 out of 40 Iraqi ministries: the ministries of health, transportation, agriculture, and tourism and antiquities. According to a DoD report, the Sadr militia enjoyed popular support in Baghdad and the southern provinces, and was tolerated by some in the Iraqi government. The second big Shi'ite militia, the Badr organization, was the paramilitary wing of SCIRI, one of the two largest Shi'ite political parties in the new government. One of Iraq's two deputy presidents and the Minister of Finance are SCIRI members.²²⁴

Moreover, Shi'ite militias played a role in death squads that included elements from the police and the army.²²⁵ According to a statement by Gen. George Casey in August 2006, Shi'ite death squads were now responsible for 60% of the killings in Baghdad.²²⁶ One day later, US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad put the percentage of sectarian violence at 77%.²²⁷

There was an increase of incidents in which men in Interior Ministry uniforms rounded up Sunni men, mostly civilians, who were later found dead, hands bound in police handcuffs, showing signs of torture, and shot execution-style. This type of killing started in May 2005, shortly after Bayan Jabr took office as interior minister. Jabr, who was out of office by August 2006, maintained that the perpetrators were outsiders wearing stolen

uniforms. He claimed that death squads mainly emerged from private security services, such as the Facility Protection Service.²²⁸

Iraqi authorities did try to counteract this infiltration. In early October, they pulled an entire brigade of about 700 policemen out of service in its biggest move ever to remove troops with links to death squads.²²⁹ Progress was still mixed, however, as the experience of the American police transition team of the 372nd Military Police Battalion in Baghdad illustrated:

The signs of the militias are everywhere at the Sholeh police station. Posters celebrating Moqtada al-Sadr, head of the Mahdi Army militia, dot the building's walls. The police chief sometimes remarks that Shi'ite militias should wipe out all Sunnis. [...]

Seventy percent of the Iraqi police force has been infiltrated by militias, primarily the Mahdi Army, according to [the head of the police transition team] and other military police trainers. Police officers are too terrified to patrol enormous swaths of the capital. And while there are some good cops, many have been assassinated or are considering quitting the force. [...]

American soldiers said that although they gather evidence of police ties to the militias and present it to Iraqi officials, no one has ever been criminally charged or even lost their jobs. [...]

The American soldiers and civilians who train the Iraqis are constantly on guard against the possibility that the police might turn against them. Even in the police headquarters for all of western Baghdad, one of the safest police buildings in the capital, the training team will not remove their body armor or helmets. An armed soldier is assigned to protect each trainer. [...]

[The deputy team chief] estimated it would take 30 to 40 years before the Iraqi police could function properly, perhaps longer if the militia infiltration and corruption continue to increase.²³⁰

Other MNF-I experts felt, however, that it was not possible to generalize on the basis of single source, local, anecdotal evidence. It was clear that individual police stations, individual units, and individuals may be culpable of every thing alleged in such quotations. However, they felt that only Baghdad and Basra exhibited the kind of sometimes dominant militia influence described. Furthermore, they felt that the period immediately following the Samarra Bombing in February 2006 was characterized by broad expressions of ethnicity and sect, and that the Government of Iraq had later been steadily—albeit cautiously—restoring discipline to the ranks of the ISF.

It is also difficult to precisely attribute given killings to specific ISF and police units or distinguish which were performed by elements of the ISF and by underground groups, but police were clearly culpable in some of the incidents, given the frequency of the murders and the practice of recruiting police from local militias. GAO also reported that Shi'ite militias tried to place members into army and police units as a way to serve their interests.²³¹

There was at least one instance of the Mahdi Army publicly disavowing killings by certain death squads while these death squads continued to serve it by killing Sadr's enemies.²³²

Interior minister Bolani told reporters in October 2006 that “very few, individual” security forces were actually involved in death squad activity, with the majority of the culprits coming from the Facilities Protection Service. He also blamed the bodyguards of unnamed politicians to be involved. Bolani described a “problem of impressions” regarding the police role in sectarian killings. The minister stressed the ongoing reforms of the police force, such as retraining efforts and requiring loyalty oaths. He said major

changes were needed at the command level of his ministry itself and that he had the government's support to implement them.²³³

In September 2006, senior US officers publicly questioned prime minister al-Maliki's tactics for ending sectarian violence, implying this government was not doing enough in this respect.

We have to fix this militia issue. We can't have armed militias competing with Iraq's security forces. But I have to trust the prime minister to decide when it is that we do that. *Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, second-highest-ranking US military official in Baghdad*

[The militias are] a problem that the government must deal with immediately. *Major General James Thurman, commander of US forces in Baghdad*²³⁴

The prime minister announced a plan on October 3 to deal with militias, saying that only the police should be armed and that militias threaten the future of the government. His comments remained unspecific, however, and only outlined committees that would further investigate the problem.²³⁵

Further north, the violence had a more ethnic than religious dimension: in Kirkuk, for example, Iraq's third-largest city, Arabs and Kurds struggled violently for the control of the city.

Shi'ite Militias and Links to Iran

The key Shi'ite groups and militias all had ties to the government of Iran, as well as to elements within the ISF. According to the Director of National Intelligence, Iran provided guidance to political groups as well as weapons and training to militant groups to enable attacks against Coalition forces. Iran also contributed to the increasing lethality of insurgent attacks by enabling Shi'ite militants to build IEDs with explosively formed projectiles, similar to those developed by the Lebanese Hezbollah.²³⁶

During an August 23 press briefing, the new Deputy Director of Operations for the Joint Staff, Brigadier General Michael Barbero, indicated that there was evidence of Iranian elements inside Iraq helping to train Shi'ite extremists. He further stated that there was "irrefutable" evidence that Iran was responsible for training, funding, and equipping some of the Shi'ite groups, particularly with advanced IED technology, and that it was his belief that it was the policy of the central government in Tehran to support Shi'ite extremist groups in Iraq.

Wayne White, who led the State Department's Iraq intelligence team during the war, said a well-placed friend had seen "considerable physical evidence of it, and just about everyone in (Maysan province) knew about it." Meanwhile, the British troops patrolling Maysan province at the border with Iran were unconvinced that arms were being smuggled into the country from the east. The following comments on the subject were made by British army officers stationed in Maysan province and in Basra.

"We have found no credible evidence to suggest there is weapons smuggling across the border."
Maj. Dominic Roberts

"I suspect there's nothing out there. And I intend to prove it." *Lt. Col. David Labouchere*

"It's a question of intelligence versus evidence. One hears word of mouth, but one has to see it with one's own eyes. These are serious consequences, aren't they?" *Brig. James Everard*

Not only British military personnel thought there were no weapons being smuggled into Iraq from Iran. British Defense Secretary Des Browne said in late August that

“I have not myself seen any evidence – and I don’t think any evidence exists – of government-supported or instigated” armed support of Iran in Iraq.”²³⁷

Barbero did state, however, that during the five weeks preceding the briefing, the number of incidents of sectarian violence had dropped steadily, with a corresponding drop in the number of attacks on infrastructure in the preceding three weeks. He also pointed to the denouncement of Iran by two Shi’ite political parties in Iraq that week as a positive development. The two groups publicly called Tehran to task as a destabilizing force responsible for increased violence in Iraq.²³⁸ It is also important to note that British forces operating near the Iranian border did not find evidence of Iranian infiltration or arms transfers.²³⁹

The Uncertain Role of Kurdish Security Forces and Militias

These Sunni-Shi’ite and Shi’ite-dominated central government problems were only part of the story. In Kurdistan, the Kurdish-Arab rivalry for control of key cities continued, and presented additional problems for the development of the ISF. In and around Mosul, 40 to 50 people were being killed each week, according to the city’s deputy governor, Khasro Goran. 70,000 Kurds fled their homes between January and September 2006, many intimidated by death threats. Goran expected the violence to get worse leading up to the decision what areas would be included into Kurdistan at the end of 2007. He advocated the division of the province.

No single group controlled Mosul in the fall of 2006, and the ISF were ethnically divided. The 2nd Iraqi Army Division was based in the city, and the 3rd Division outside it, each 15,000-strong. , Both divisions were at least 50% Kurdish, and both had Kurdish commanders. US forces, however, have forbidden these units to patrol too aggressively in order to not provoke negative Sunni Arab reactions. Meanwhile, Mosul’s police force is Arab-controlled, 16,000 policemen are deployed in the province, 6,000 of them in the city. They are not trusted by the city’s Kurds, who had already long accused them of being sympathetic to the Sunni insurgency.

The relationship between US and Sunni elements of the local security forces deteriorated after most police officers resigned in response to the Battle of Fallujah in November 2004. US and Kurdish forces, however, still cooperated, and the Americans there heavily relied on Kurdish intelligence to search for guerrillas. US forces, originally based at four locations in the city, had retreated to one large base at the airport by fall 2006.

The conflict in predominantly Kurdish areas also played out in the local security forces. In Jalawla, for example, a police station was transferred to a new – Arab – commander in September 2006, prompting Kurdish militiamen to seize the station to prevent the transfer. They were led by the new commander’s predecessor.

These problems had national as well as local implications. Concerns also grew about the deployment of Kurdish brigades to Baghdad as part of President Bush’s “surge” of 2007. The two Kurdish brigades slated to be deployed in the capital do not speak Arabic, and fear meddling in what many see as the primarily Shi’ite-Sunni conflict.

Also in September 2006, the regional parliament of Kurdistan sent a draft constitution to the government in Baghdad that included Kirkuk and other disputed areas in the Kurdish-controlled areas.²⁴⁰ Fighting over Kirkuk grew more intense in late 2006. The January 2007 NIE on Iraq reported that:

The Kurds are moving systematically to increase their control of Kirkuk to guarantee annexation of all or most of the city and province into the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) after the constitutionally mandated referendum scheduled to occur no later than 31 December 2007. Arab groups in Kirkuk continue to resist violently what they see as Kurdish encroachment.²⁴¹

The militia issue in Kurdistan also had implications for Iraq's relations with Turkey. Turkey demanded military action from Iraq to disarm the PKK, which the Kurdish elements of the ISF refused to take. The US on the one hand realized that the Kurds were its strongest allies in Iraq, but on the other hand needed to placate Turkey as a long-standing ally, and wanted to prevent Ankara from turning towards Iran and Syria, who shared Turkey's interests in suppressing Kurdish nationalist ambitions.²⁴²

Israeli security contractors are reported to have secretly trained Kurdish soldiers, starting in 2004. They were employees of the firms Kudo and Colosium, both subsidiaries of Interop, an Israeli security-consulting firm, although both Kudo and Colosium described themselves as Swiss-registered companies. The former Israeli commando soldiers were said to be training two groups of Kurdish soldiers, one guarding the international airport at Irbil (Hawler), and a group of Peshmerga fighters for "special assignments," such as shooting an attacker in a crowd. It was not clear what type of soldiers comprised the group destined to guard the airport. In addition to training, Kudo provided quad bikes, communications equipment and security fencing. During 2004-5, Interop and Kudo were run by Shlomi Michaels, a former head of Israel's counter-terrorist unit. Any public connection to Israel is a sensitive issue for Kurdish officials, since their political enemies have long accused them of cooperating with Israel.²⁴³

IV. Progress in Iraqi Force Development:

The effort to create effective Iraqi military, national security and police forces has been more successful than Iraqi political and economic efforts, but has not achieved the level of success the US planned. The March 2007 Department of Defense report to Congress on “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq” summarized Iraqi progress to date as follows,²⁴⁴

As of February 19, 2007, there were 112 Iraqi Army combat battalions. One hundred three are conducting operations at varying levels of capability; an additional nine battalions are being generated. There are two Special Operations Battalions, both conducting operations. Of the 17-planned Strategic Infra-structure Battalions (SIBs), 14 are assessed as conducting operations at various levels. Of the 103 Iraqi Army combat battalions conducting operations, 93 have the lead in counter-insurgency operations in their areas of responsibility. Additionally, 27 National Police battalions are operational, with 6 in the lead. All but one of the National Police brigades is currently conducting security operations in Baghdad. A brigade-sized operational reserve consisting of a mechanized battalion from the Army, a National Police battalion, and a Special Forces company has been established

The most significant shortcoming in both MOD and MOI forces’ capabilities is in planning and executing logistics and sustainment requirements. Factors underlying this deficiency include inadequate levels of sustainment stocks and limited capacity of the MOD and the MOI to execute the planning/ acquisition/sustainment cycle. DoD is addressing the challenges to reduce Iraqi reliance on U.S. support. For example, the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) is partnered with Iraqi logistics units to assist in the development of Iraqi Army divisional support capabilities. Embedded civilian advisors are assisting senior MOD and MOI officials in developing their capacity to organize, train, equip, sustain, and upgrade their forces.

In addition, Prime Minister Maliki had given the MOD and MOI a critical role in the implementation of the national counterterrorism capability concept that he approved on October 10, 2006. This concept achieved an Initial Operational Capability in March 2007. Iraqi personnel began to occupy positions within each Counter-Terrorism headquarters in March 2007, and begin operations and training. This program will have Full Operational Capability in December 2007, and will consist of three complementary components:

- Development of a national Bureau of Counter-Terrorism, separate from the ministries, that serves as the principal advisor to the prime minister on counterterrorism matters
- Establishment of a coherent, non- sectarian, counter-terrorism “tiering” strategy that determines the level of the terrorist threat, assigns appropriate responsibility for action, and defines approval authority for execution; this strategy was established as part of the overall counter-terrorism concept
- Establishment of a separate major command, equivalent to the ground, air, and naval forces commands, that provides support to the Bureau of Counter-Terrorism in intelligence and targeting areas

These developments do represent very real progress in many areas, but this progress has often been far less successful than the Department of Defense has claimed, and has been presented in recent testimony to Congress. The Iraqi government has also exaggerated the effectiveness of its armed forces, although for different kinds of domestic political reasons. On January 18, 2007, Prime minister Nouri al-Maliki stated that the need for American troops would “dramatically go down” in 3 to 6 months if the United States accelerated the process of equipping and arming Iraq’s security forces.²⁴⁵

It is never quite clear whether these exaggerated reports of progress in ISF force development are the product of “spin” and the search for political advantage, the desire to avoid seeing the US accept defeat, or self-deception on the part of those doing the reporting. The reality is, however, that virtually nothing the US officially says about Iraqi force development can be taken at face value.

US and MNF-I plans that called for Iraqi regular military forces to allow significant Coalition troop reductions in 2006 have failed. Worse, the effort to develop the Iraqi police and security forces has gotten badly out of balance with the effort to develop regular forces and lags more than a year behind it. The so-called “year of the police” has barely begun and will at best gather momentum in 2007. Real-world Iraqi dependence on the present scale of US and allied military support and advisory efforts will continue well into 2008 at the earliest and probably to 2010.

Far too much of the reporting on ISF manning levels has severely distorted force development planning and create unrealistic and unfair expectations of progress. Ironically, the end result may be to cripple the very effort such distortions were expected to aid. It breeds unfair frustration with Iraq performance, makes the US and its allies slow to identify and correct the problems in the effort, understates the time and resources required, and leads to political pressure to make Iraq forces ready too quickly and withdraw US forces too soon.

Two key problems exist in most unclassified manpower and combat readiness reporting. One is reporting the number of “trained and equipped” men in the ISF. This total, for example, was 323,180 military and police personnel as of March 5, 2007.²⁴⁶ The US and MNF-I, however, base such figures on the number of men that the MNF-I has trained and equipped and not on actual manning. Such figures bear little resemblance to the actual levels of men that who are really still in service.

While over 320,000 men have been trained and equipped since the fall of Saddam Hussein, a large percentage has since left and deserted, substantial numbers have been killed and wounded, and some 10-20% of those who remain are absent at any given time because they leave to take care of their families and transfer their pay in a country where there is no meaningful banking system. The Iraqi regular forces and National Police may only be about 20-25% short of the totals reported for trained and equipped manpower, but the percentages could be much higher. There certainly are many battalion elements with manning levels well under 50%, and many units with critical shortages of officers and NCOs.

Such problems in reporting total manning are, however, more complex than focusing on total manpower shortages can indicate. Where there are battalions that are understrength in enlisted soldiers, they have often been mal-assigned. For example, battalion and brigade headquarters are often at 200% strength while companies are short. This tendency to overman headquarter is a heritage carried over from the Saddam era that MNSTC-I and the MNF-I working to correct.

Mid-grade officers (Captains and Majors) are in short supply. Several recalls of former officers have closed the gap, however, and the MoD is examining other options for generating about 5,000 additional officers. Some of the shortages in noncommissioned officers shortages are also a reflection of a force too busy to send its rising soldiers to

required training. In April 2007, the MoD was examining options to generate almost 30,000 additional noncommissioned officers].

Similarly, the US and MNF-I claimed that Iraqi units are in the lead often have little or no real operational capability or activity, mixing units that reflect very real mission capability with ones that are failed force elements that should actually be assigned the lowest levels of readiness. Their reporting mixed real transfers of responsibility to effective Iraqi forces with cosmetic, politically motivated transfers to Iraqi commands and units that cannot perform such missions and often are dependent on US armor, artillery, airpower, logistics and service support, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R).

Iraqi forces simply are not ready to assume the burden of national defense. Moreover, even if more effective and realistic force development plans are implemented and given the proper resources, they will still fail unless Iraqi military progress is matched by Iraqi political progress. The only way to avoid this continuing dependence on the US and other outside power without greatly increasing the risk of a major civil war, and collapse of the Iraqi force development effort, would be a level of political conciliation so great as to fundamentally undermine the insurgency and end the drift towards civil war.

Progress and Problems in the Current Effort

The problems in Iraqi force development are described in details in the chapters that follow, and they are necessarily complex. In broad terms, however, the problems still begin at the top and involve every aspect of Iraqi force development.

Uncertain Leadership by the MoD and MoI

The appointment of a new Minister of Defense on June 8th 2006 brought an end to nearly half a year without clear leadership, but scarcely created an effective Ministry. The new Minister, Abd al-Qadr Muhammad Jassim al-Mufraqi, had only limited experience and inherited a Ministry whose staff had limited competence, a reputation for favoritism and corruption, and was deeply divided along sectarian and ethnic lines.

His status as a Sunni raised questions about his authority in a Shi'ite-Kurd dominated government, and he faced rivals in the form of a Shia Minister of the Interior, Jawad al-Bolani, and two rival and duplicate national security advisors: Muwafaq al-Rubai, the National Security Advisor first appointed under the CPA; and Shirwan al-Waili, the new Minister of Staff for National Security Affairs. Moreover, Prime Minister Maliki called for a major shake-up of his cabinet on November 12, 2006, casting serious doubt as to how long both Mufraqi and the MOI Jawad Bolani would stay in office.

There also were many complaints about the MOI, similar to those about the MoD. MOI Bolani's case is interesting because he was picked for the exact qualities that came to haunt him: Although he was a Shi'ite, he came from a nonpartisan, secular background and did not have strong political ties. US officials continued to publicly back Bolani and praised his efforts against corruption and sectarian violence originating within the ministry, pointing out that he had fired 1,775 personnel in his first 60 days, more than any previous minister.

Some Iraqi officials, however, cast him as an ineffective leader who had done little to root out corruption or quell sectarian violence. They singled out his failure to directly

challenge known Badr Brigade members within the ministry, especially a cell of militia commanders located on the seventh floor of the Interior Ministry headquarters building. Allegedly, powerful Badr and Mahdi leaders had marginalized Bolani within his own ministry.

At least publicly, however, Bolani did not acquiesce to militia demands. In October, he described the Mahdi Army, along with Sunni insurgent groups, as “outside the political body and structure,” and said, “we do not approve of the existence of these militias.”²⁴⁷

Bolani also stressed his ministry’s anti-corruption efforts, saying they had purged about 3,000 employees from their ranks for “corruption.” 1,228 of those employees had received administrative punishment, while 10 to 20% had been referred for possible prosecution.²⁴⁸

Early October brought new charges against Bolani, this time from Shi’ite parliamentarians. They charged he was letting too many former Ba’ath party members into the police.²⁴⁹

Problems with Pay, Benefits, and Corruption

The US military and MNF-I, as well as the Iraqi government do not have anything approaching an adequate system for tracking pay, leave, transfer of money to families, health benefits, and death and disability benefits – if any. This situation is almost certainly worse in the regular police (and terrible in the various low-level security forces) than in the regular forces and National Police. It is probably inadequate to bad in most elements of Iraqi forces.

Corruption, favoritism, and nepotism are inevitable in Iraq. They are part of the political cultural and entire structure of governance. Sectarian, ethnic, and tribal divisions add to the problem, as did abolishing the secular, experienced core of Iraqi governance and forces by forcing so many low and mid-level Ba’athists out of government early in the US occupation.

This made it absolutely vital from the start of the ISF development effort to look beyond leadership and unit cohesions and create a system that can ensure that abuses are kept within reasonable bounds (those that the men in Iraqi forces can actually live with) and that recruiting, retention training, and embed efforts deal with the reality that most Iraqi officers and NCOs are inevitably caught up in the pressures of Iraq’s sectarian and ethnic differences. Most Iraqi enlisted men volunteer because they need the money, because their dependents are desperately in need of their support.

It is still critically urgent to have an effective pay system that can limit the impact of corruption. It is equally critical to look beyond actual pay (and comparability) and to determine what mix of pay, getting pay to their families, medical services, and real-world death and disability benefits can hold Iraqi forces together as they develop.

No effort that is not founded on pay and benefits, rather than leadership and motivation, can possibly succeed. The Transitional Readiness Assessments do measure tactical performance, reliability, sustainability, and leadership. If these issues are not honestly and openly addressed by the Iraqi and US governments, however, Iraqi force development cannot succeed.

Rushing Force Development and Deployment

The ISF development effort has sometimes been harmed by an overly accelerated force generation timetable. In some cases, Iraqi battalions and force elements have been into being and then into combat before they were ready. This has undercut the Iraqi force development process and sometimes gravely weakened fledgling Iraqi units that were not ready to perform such missions. Some US advisors and embedded training teams have also not been ready for the missions they were supposed to perform, compounding the problems inherent in creating new units.

Other problems resulted from trying to use force elements built for local defense missions on a national level and in far more demanding forms of counterinsurgency warfare and civil conflict missions than they were recruited for and designed to fight. There were additional problems with corruption, nepotism, creating sufficient junior officers and NCOs, and providing the levels of firepower, mobility, and communications Iraqi forces really need. Hollow units do not learn by being thrust prematurely into combat; they are crippled or wasted.

One case study of the precipitous effect of premature handover to less-than-able forces was shown in Haditha in the fall of 2004, when US troops withdrew from the city to retake Fallujah. Michael Gordon, chief military correspondent of the New York Times, also notes the important psychological effects of such premature responsibility shifts on future ISF recruiting:

What followed was a devastating setback for the American effort to carry out counter-insurgency operations in the violent al-Anbar province. While the Americans were securing Fallujah the Iraqi police in Haditha were accosted by insurgents and executed. The episode left the town without a police force that could check the operations of the insurgents and taught the Iraqis there that the Americans could not be counted on to protect their nascent institutions, whatever their good intentions.

It also made the task of recruiting a new police force all but impossible. When follow-on marine units were deployed to Haditha their efforts to mount a police recruitment drive failed, forcing the marines to think about seeking police recruits from other parts of the country.²⁵⁰

These challenges Iraq faces are further complicated by the fact that some Iraqi forces, including roughly half the division in the army and almost all of the regular police, were recruited and equipped to serve locally in limited defensive roles, not act as mobile forces trained and equipped to act as active combat units deployable throughout the country to deal with insurgency and civil conflict. This means the recruiting base must now be changed, new pay and arrangements are needed to create a nationally deployable force, and new equipment and facilities will be need for the deployable units thrust into more serious combat.

The challenges Iraq faces are further complicated by the fact that some Iraqi forces, including those in the army, were recruited and equipped to serve locally in limited defensive roles, not to act as mobile active combat units deployable throughout the country to deal with insurgency and civil conflict. Five Iraqi Army divisions were recruited from a national pool and trained with the expectation that they would deploy as needed throughout Iraq. The other five were integrated from the former Iraqi National Guard on the basis of regional deployment. It is also far from clear that many of those recruited for the “national” divisions understood that they would serve outside their area

or volunteered for any reason other than economic desperation – a motive that ties them far closer to their families and dependents than any concept of national service.

It was only in the spring of 2006, that the MNF-I and MNSTC-I began to develop deployability as a core competency of the entire Army. As a result, and the MNF-I made several major procurements, including added armor protected mobility and route clearance capability, to give the Iraqi Army better deployability.

The MoD established a deployability plan in October 2006 that has led to the successful deployment of battalions from outside Baghdad into Baghdad. It requires additional work but is the beginning of creating deployability as a core competency of the Iraqi Army. To support this deployability plan, MNSTC-I has assisted the Government of Iraq in constructing a Multi-purpose Range Complex at Besmaya Range east of Baghdad as a training center of excellence.

The MNF-I and Iraqi government are now seeking to improve the recruiting base, improve pay Since January 2007, the Iraqi Army has had a deployment bonus for those units serving outside their assigned sectors, and to make other arrangements to create a nationally deployable force. The fact remains, however, and new equipment and facilities will be needed for the deployable units thrust into more serious combat.

Problems with Equipment and Facilities Construction

It has proven far easier to throw money at equipping and facilitating the ISF than to make that spending honest and effective. The equipment problems in the ISF are described in more detail in the chapters that follow, but generally reflect two major sets of problems. First, the equipment provided has not approached that of the MNF-I forces that Iraqis are supposed to fight with, has never been adequate to deal with a developing insurgent threat, and has never been linked to plans to transition from counter insurgency warfare to national defense.

Second, the sources of the equipment have often provided low quality equipment and been corrupt. The Iraqi forces are used to replacing equipment and rear area maintenance and not to the US concept of preventive and in unit maintenance and are being rushed into action before they can successfully adapt. And, the same failure to track equipment readiness exists for all elements of Iraqi forces than exists in tracking actual manning.

The Iraqi MOD forces (Iraqi Army, Air Force, Navy, Special Operations, and Support forces) have also had better equipment than the MOI forces with the exception of the National Police, and have usually performed better. The Defense Department announced in March 2007 that, “Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MoI) forces will be trained and equipped like MoD forces.”²⁵¹ It did not define what this meant and no equipment and funding plans have as yet been issued that indicate this will take place.

The situation is no better for facilities and has been made worse by constant shifts in Iraqi locations and sudden deployments. A report released by the office of the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction in January 2007 detailed severe problems in the construction of ISF facilities.²⁵² In many of the construction projects inspected in the report, sustainability was a major problem. Spare parts, warranties on equipment, and training for Iraqis were all lacking.

Oversight from the government agencies responsible was also lacking. In one instance, the construction of a residential camp on the Adnan Palace grounds in Baghdad to house

training personnel, \$4.2 million of the approximately \$43.8 million spent on the camp was not contractually authorized at all. This money was spent on, among other things, relocating the camp to outside the palace grounds, manufacturing an additional 20 VIP trailers, and constructing an Olympic size swimming pool. As of January 2007, the camp had never been used due to security concerns.

The project to modernize the crumbling Baghdad Police College was a particularly troubling example. This facility was to house and train 10,000 cadets. The SIGIR investigation revealed severe construction and contracting problems, including:

- A design and specification review process for construction, equipment, and parts with approval/rejection/resubmission and acceptance of documentation was not implemented.
- Poor-quality and non-standard construction methods were used, which were not in compliance with required codes.
- Low-quality parts were used.
- Beneficial Occupancy forms were improperly used.
- The QM program was poor.
- The contractor did not perform invoice reviews.
- Contractor test results and as-built drawings were questionable.

These shortcomings led to several problems in the construction of the facility, such as: leaking plumbing, resulting in wastewater leaks throughout many of the buildings; live wires dangling above a shower area, urine and fecal matter seeping into ceilings and light fixtures, and expansion cracks on the exterior of a building. The problems SIGIR found with this project were so severe that a fraud investigation of the contractor was opened.

ISF Motivation Problems

All of these problems compounded the ISF's serious problems in leadership and unit cohesion. Human beings do not live in the dawn of tomorrow; they live in the noon of today. Most Iraqi officers and NCOs are inevitably caught up in the pressures of Iraq's sectarian and ethnic differences. Most Iraqi enlisted men volunteer because they need the money, because their dependents are desperately in need of their support.

At the level of officers and NCOs, the options are ultimately political conciliation and compromise, division by sect or ethnicity with a strong risk of creating separate Shi'ite or Sunni force, or a coup or strong man. The same is true of other ranks in both the regular forces and police. All desperately need an effective pay system and enough income to resist corruption and infiltration. All need family support and adequate means of getting pay to their families. Medical services are critical; so are real-world death and disability benefits. No effort that is not founded on pay and benefits, rather than leadership and motivation, can possibly succeed.

Similarly, it is impossible to treat all Iraqi forces as if they were truly national and could be deployed on a national level. Some units do behave in this manner, and many more can be created over time. The fact is, however, that most Iraqi regulars were recruited for local defense and far less demanding missions. Most police are local, and will be driven by local interest and political conditions. The local role of militias and various non-"national" security forces cannot be ignored, and must somehow be integrated into the

ISF structure or given incentives to disband. No ISF effort can succeed that does not explicitly recognized these realities.

Uncertain Success in Recruiting

Desperate young men, and those motivated by sectarian and ethnic agendas, may be easy to recruit, but manpower numbers also have to be linked to motivation. There is no way to tell how much recruiting reflected any real desire to join the ISF and how much was the result of Iraq's crippling unemployment problems. It is also unclear how many men were recruited out of a desire to join what were really sectarian and ethnic elements of the ISF.

The ISF did continue to have far more recruits than it could use, and August 21 saw the culmination of one of the year's most successful recruiting efforts. For example, more than 950 new Iraqi recruits were ready to begin a 10-week Basic Police Officer training course, after a recruiting drive that focused on screening men from communities in and around the Euphrates River Valley. Some of the new recruits were to receive their training either at the Baghdad Police College, while others would be sent to the Jordan International Police Academy.²⁵³

The problems lay in retention, willingness to fight, and commitment to the nation versus personal survival, tribe, and faction. Economic desperation made many volunteer. It did not make them stay, or build unit cohesion and effectiveness. More broadly, the Army has shown little overall willingness to become actively involved halting Iraq's civil fighting through early 2007, although a few force elements performed well in such missions in Baghdad during the summer and fall of 2006. Like all Iraqi forces, the Army was never recruited, trained, or equipped to fight sectarian and ethnic forces in civil conflict, or intervene in civil war and local civil clashes. If a major civil war does occur, or the country divides along sectarian and ethnic lines, Iraqi regular forces could divide as well. They could fragment even further if the Shi'ite coalition divides, or the Shi'ites and Kurds divide.

Overall Progress in Manning

Approximately 323,180 Iraqi soldiers and police were reported to have completed their initial training and equipping by March 2007, and MNF-I reporting indicated that the ISF had met its force generation targets.²⁵⁴ Yet large numbers of men were perpetually absent, had deserted, or left. Much of the equipment was missing and could not be accounted for. The operational capabilities of the ISF remained low. This was especially true of the regular police and other MOI forces.

Such DoD reports are misleading to the point of being actively dishonest, however, because there are such severe problems in the basic integrity of the reporting on Iraqi forces. No clear distinction is made between the number of men who went through the training process and the number still on service. The rising manpower and combat unit totals conceal many critical problems in given elements of the ISF order of battle. Gross numbers grossly exaggerate capability.

While very real progress was taking place in many elements of the army, discussions with MNF-I experts indicate that major manning and equipment shortfalls existed in given battalions and units, and that substantial numbers of combat battalions said to be "in the lead" had less than 30-50% of their authorized manning actually in the unit. As

has been noted earlier, one credible source claimed that, “The Iraqi army has about 134,000 men (trained and equipped), but about half are doing only stationary guard duty...of the half that conduct operations, only about 10 battalions are effective – well under 10,000 men.”²⁵⁵

Despite constant pronouncements of Iraqi forces being “in the lead,” Iraqi units continued to operate poorly in combat situations. “This is occurring slower than we originally projected.” stated Gen. George Casey, in an understatement typical of Defense Department reporting on ISF development.

Nevertheless, the following figures do reflect real progress, if scarcely at the exact levels shown:

- **Figure 4.1** shows the scale of the overall ISF force development effort. However, it is clear that the MNF-I and Iraqi government attempted to make very rapid progress in building up the ISF during 2005-2006 – almost certainly far more rapid progress in force quantity that could be supported by matching improvements in force quality. The resulting pressures may be eased if manpower increases are kept to minimum, as they have been in recent months.
- **Figure 4.2** shows the growth of MOI and MOD force levels by major force element, according to US reporting. It must be stressed that these numbers do not accurately show the numbers of men actually on duty. The reporting on regular military forces is said to be approximate in the actual charts. The reporting on MOI forces open states that it does not make an effort to report actual manning.
- **Figure 4.3** shows a similar GAO estimates of the number of Iraqi Security Forces trained and equipped from 2005 through late 2006. Although the actual numbers of on-duty ISF soldiers is much lower, this graph clearly demonstrates the growth trend of the ISF.

The Problems in ISF Manpower Data

It must be stressed that the Department of Defense notes to **Figure 4.1** and **Figure 4.2** provide important warnings about their accuracy.

If one reads between the lines, the March 2007 status report warns that the data for the MOI are little more than shadow figures based on total men trained and authorized strength:

As of February 19, 2007, approximately 328,700 forces (not including replenishments) have been trained. The actual number of present-for-duty soldiers is about one-half to two-thirds of the total due to scheduled leave, absence without leave, and attrition. The police have also experienced significant attrition of personnel who have been through Coalition training, but provincial and local governments have hired additional police outside the train-and-equip program. Both the MOD and the MOI have assumed control of most force generation tasks and have developed a plan to continue routine replenishment of the force.²⁵⁶

...The total number of trained-and-equipped MOD military personnel are about 136,400 (not including replacements), of which about 132,800 are in the Iraqi Army. For fielded units, about 65% of authorized personnel are present for duty at any time; this percentage varies widely among units. The greatest contributor to the difference between authorized strength and present-for-duty strength is a leave policy that places about one-quarter of all soldiers on leave at any time so that they can take their pay home to their families. This is driven by the lack of a nationwide banking system. In addition, since the first Iraqi Army combat units entered into service in November 2003, more than 20,000 personnel have been killed or severely wounded or have otherwise left the Army.²⁵⁷

The MOD is planning on replacing and expanding the overall force structure with a 30,000-person Replenishment Initiative, organized and implemented by the Iraqi JHQ. This initiative will add approximately 10,000 soldiers every two months over six months and will result in all combat units

manned at 110%. The MOD has completed recruiting for this initiative, and the first training sessions began on October 1, 2006. About 44% of the 30,000-soldier expansion is complete

...The MOI does not yet have accurate personnel accountability and reporting procedures, and it is unknown how many of the more than 306,000 employees on the ministry's payroll are present for duty on a given day. MNSTC-I estimates that, on an average day, less than 70% of MOI personnel are present for duty. This is a combination of authorized absences (leave, school, sickness) and unauthorized absences. The problem of personnel accountability is being addressed through the purchase of an automated human resources and payroll system. The equipment and software for this system were installed in January 2007, and training has begun. Full deployment of the system is expected to take 18 months. Once complete, the personnel management system will be integrated fully with employee biometrics, improving the accuracy of employment rosters and facilitating employee criminal background screening.²⁵⁸

...MOI forces consist of the Iraqi Police Service, the National Police, the Directorate of Border Enforcement, and other, smaller forces.²⁰ MNSTC-I has completed its initial training and equipping goal for the Objective Civil Security Force (OCSF) of 188,300 MOI security forces and is in the process of expanding the MOI forces to 194,800.

Although the MOI is implementing an automated personnel management system, there are currently no reliable data to indicate how many of the OCSF are still serving with the MOI. Additionally, the MOI has hired a significant number of police beyond those trained by MNSTC-I. MNSTC-I estimates attrition for the MOI as approximately 20% per year, with the Iraqi Police Service and the National Police attrition remaining higher than the Directorate of Border Enforcement and other personnel due to the variance of risks in the duties.²⁵⁹

The problems exist in the GAO data in **Figure 4.3**. According to GAO, the State Department reported the number of trained and equipped Iraqi security forces to have increased from about 174,000 to 294,000 from July 2005 to August 2006. The GAO also warned, however, that such numbers did not provide a complete picture of the units' capabilities because they do not give detailed information on the status of equipment, personnel, training, and leadership. GAO also noted that these figures probably overstated the number of forces on duty.²⁶⁰

The shortfalls in actual strength versus "trained and equipped" figures for the regular police and Facilities Protection Force are much larger than for the army and National Police. They are probably well in excess of 30% of the total of men reported as trained and equipped and possibly on the order of 50% -- although so many phantom men, absentees, and inert but manned units exist that any estimates are difficult to impossible. Many units are clearly so badly manned that they are phantom or hollow forces, but the Department of Defense has reported that there is no accurate way to track the total, and anecdotal data are far less reliable than for the regular forces.

Furthermore, such manpower totals do not show what are often severe imbalances in the manning of given units. Some units actually have excess manpower, while others have far more serious shortfalls than the average. Units may have adequate total manpower, but be critically short of officers and/or NCOs. This again makes it difficult to place much faith in the unclassified totals reported on totals of trained and equipped manpower. Without a break out of manpower that

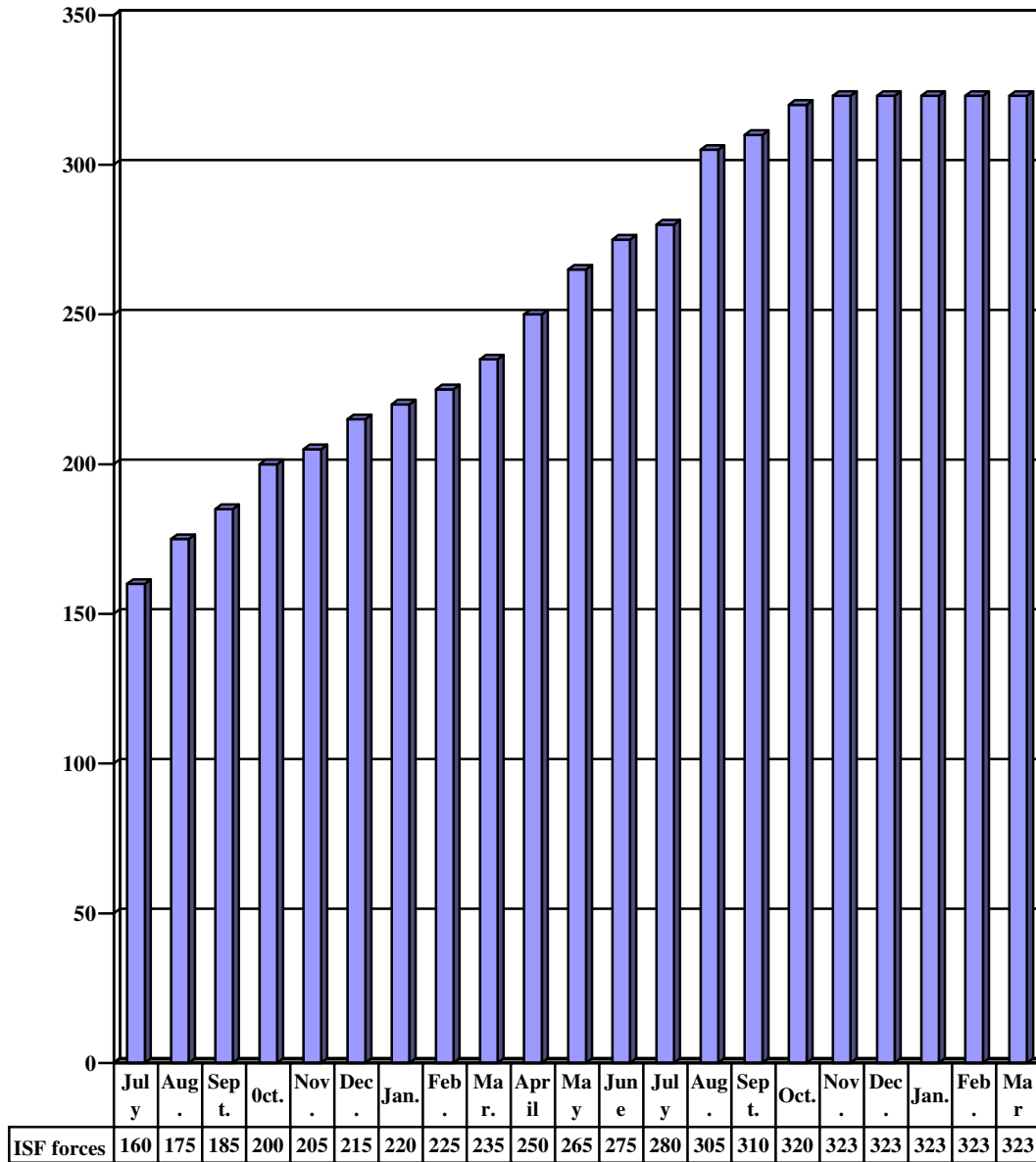
shows officers and NCOs on hand, total manning data provides little insight into force capability, the time needed to make Iraqi forces effective or for units to replace US and other MNF-I forces, and it is generally more misleading than useful. These data are collected monthly, however, through the Transitional Readiness Assessments (TRA)

process and are addressed on the Iraqi side by the MoD and MoI at monthly commanders' conferences.

Figure 4.1 *

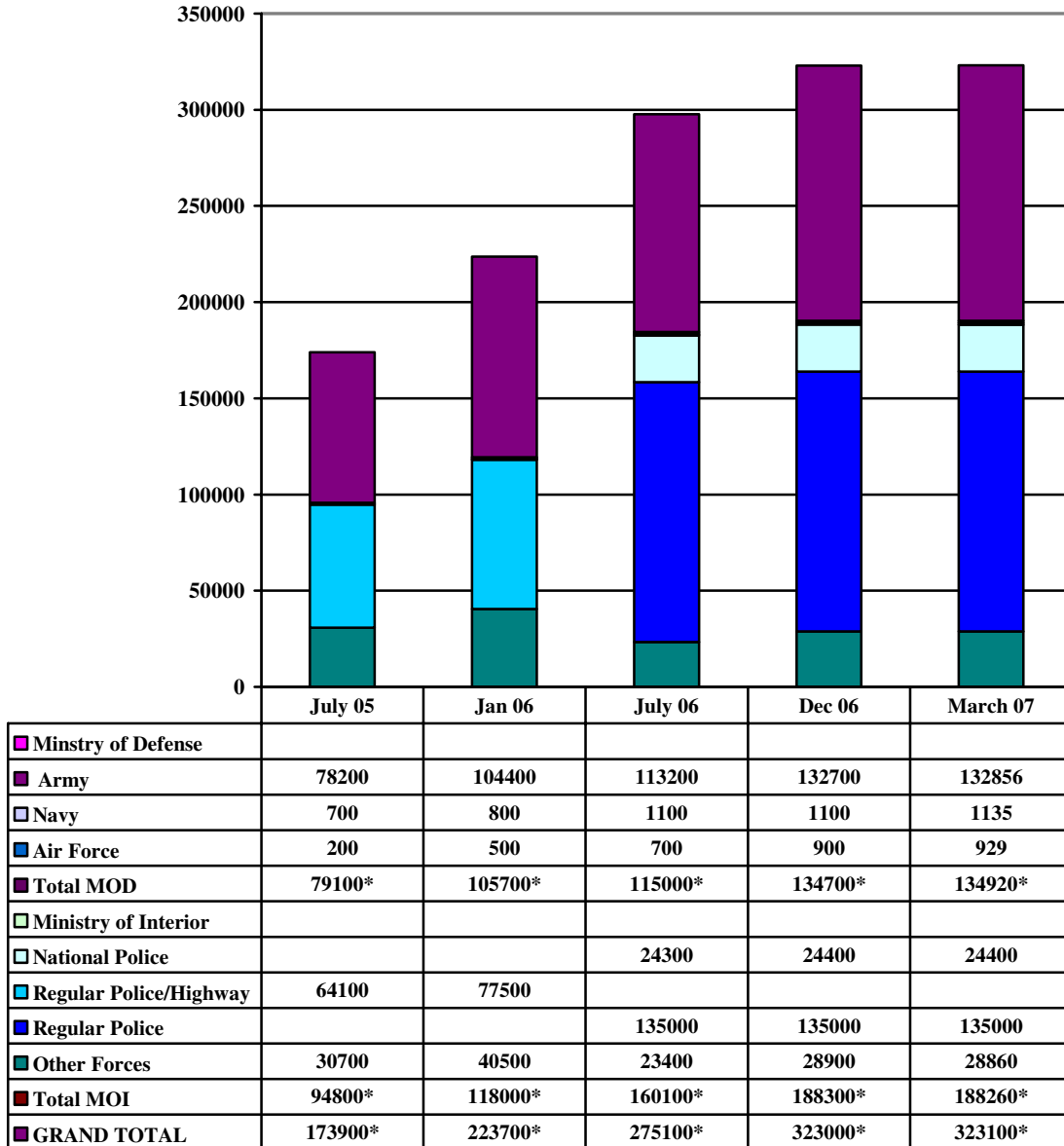
Number of Iraqi Security Forces Trained and Equipped: July 2005-March 2007**

(In Thousands)



*Source: Walker, David M. GAO Audit Approach and Findings. “Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq.” 01/18/2007. Pg. 24. and Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, US Department of State “Iraq Weekly Status Report” 02/21/2007, pg. 7.

Figure 4.2
Trained and Equipped Manpower for Major Branches of MOD and MOI Forces:
July 2005 to March 2007



Note: These figures only show the number of men trained and equipped and have nothing to do with the manpower and equipment actually in active service in the unit.

-- Unauthorized absence personnel are said not to be included in MOI figures, and to be included in MOD figures, but the reality is that the MOD figures do not reflect actual manning and are all shown as approximate.

--Army numbers include Special Operations Forces and Support Forces.

--Does not include various Facilities Protection Forces, which had an authorized strength of some 144,000 men working in 27 ministries on March 5, 2007

Source: US State Department

Figure 4.3**GAO Figures for Trained and Equipped Troops: July 2005 to August 2006**

Ministry and Component		July 2005	January 2006	August 2006	February 2007
Ministry of Defense Forces	Army	78,200	-	105,600	132,800
	Air Force	200	-	500	900
	Navy	700	-	800	1,100
	Subtotal	79,100	-	106,900	136,400
Ministry of Interior Forces	Police	64,100	-	82,400	135,000
	Other forces	30,700	-	38,000	57,300
	Subtotal	94,800	-	120,400	192,300
	Total	173,900	-	227,300	328,700

Note: These figures only show the number of men trained and equipped and have nothing to do with the manpower actually in active service in the unit.)

Source: Government Accountability Office, "Stabilizing Iraq: An Assessment of the Security Situation," September 11, 2006, p.17 and US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March, 2007 Report to Congress, pg 25

Sectarian and Ethnic Problems

Sectarian issues are less serious in the regular military forces under MoD control than in the MOI forces, but still presented a broad set of problems. According to the Director of National Intelligence's February 2006 report, many elements of the Iraqi security forces remain loyal to sectarian and party interests.²⁶¹ In cases where commanders do seek to be impartial, they may face resistance from the prime minister's office, which has been repeatedly accused of pressuring for the release of arrested Shi'ites and firing Iraqi commanders who act against Shi'ite militias.²⁶²

Sectarian divisions within the armed forces reflect the fact many units were created along geographic lines. Sunnis, Shi'ites and Kurds mostly served in geographic areas familiar to their groups. These divisions were even more notable at the battalion level, where battalion commanders tended to command only soldiers of their own sectarian or regional backgrounds.

According to the Brookings Institution's Iraq Index, Sunnis made up less than 10 percent of the existing forces in 2006. Ed O'Connell, a senior analyst with the Rand Corp., said that the Iraqi military was chiefly built along sectarian lines. He added: "There have been recent efforts to recruit the Sunni, but no one wants to die, so that has been largely unsuccessful."²⁶³

Sunnis and Kurds are over-represented in senior leadership positions. Shi'ites were adequately represented at the battalion level, but less so at higher echelons. The reason for this was primarily the military experience required for higher levels of command, which a greater number of Sunnis and Kurds had earned in the old regime's army and the *Peshmerga*, respectively.

While the nationally recruited divisions are more representative of Iraq's ethno-religious composition, the even-numbered divisions were originally formed as National Guard units, to be deployed in their respective local regions. These units continued to be more ethnically and religiously representative of their region, not of Iraq as a whole.²⁶⁴

At the same time, many Shi'ite leaders clearly believed by mid 2006 that the violence in Baghdad was rooted in the Sunni attempt to regain power through violence, and that Shi'ite militias and revenge killings were an inevitable response. These beliefs raise doubts about the loyalties of the Shi'ite dominated ISF. Sunnis, on the other hand, often believed that the Shi'ite-dominated ISF serves only Shi'ite interests. According to one Sunni resident of violence plagued Sunni neighborhood in Baghdad: "People were disgusted and were enraged by the activity of the security forces."²⁶⁵

As seen in **Figures 4.5** and **4.6**, the level of confidence in the Iraqi Army varies according to ethnic group. Sunnis had far less confidence in the ISF than Shi'ites or Kurds. This is at least partially due to the widespread perception that the ISF is composed of and sympathetic to the interests of Shi'ites and Kurds.

Sectarian and Ethnic Composition: Seriously Seeking More Sunnis?

Sectarian and ethnic issues remain a growing problem for Iraqi force development. The Department of Defense August 2006 Quarterly Status Report described the problems in creating an effective sectarian and ethnic balance in Iraqi forces as follows:²⁶⁶

The U.S. Government is committed to creating an Iraqi military that reflects the ethnic and religious fabric of Iraq, with diverse units loyal to the nation and not sectarian interests. Although competence and merit are the deciding factors when selecting recruits, particularly leaders, the ISF are developing so that they generally mirror the demographic make-up of Iraq. Sectarian lines remain drawn, however, along geographic lines, with Sunni, Shi'a, or Kurdish soldiers mostly serving in units located in geographic areas familiar to their group.

These divisions are even stronger at the battalion level, where battalion commanders of one particular group tend to command only soldiers of their own sectarian or regional backgrounds. The Minister of Defense, through an Officer Selection Committee, has used the normal transitions to continue to diversify the senior leadership in the Iraqi Army. This continuing process strives to ensure that the Iraqi Army is led by competent leaders who are representative of the national fabric. In the aggregate, Sunni, Kurd, and Shi'a are well and appropriately represented in senior leadership positions.

The Sunni and Kurds are slightly over-represented, while the Shi'a are slightly under-represented, though Shi'a commanders still hold a large majority of command positions. The percentage of Sunni leaders at each level remains constant. At the battalion level, the echelon in which the Shi'a have the highest percentage of commands, they are appropriately represented when compared to the demographics of the Iraqi population. The relatively high percentage of Sunni and Kurds in higher-level commands is a result of the requirement for experienced military leaders, of which few were Shi'a.

Generally, Shi'a and Kurds were excluded from higher-level positions in the former regime. The Kurds, however, benefited from years of experience in the *Peshmerga*. Nationally recruited Iraqi Army divisions are otherwise representative of the ethno-religious composition of the country. The even-numbered divisions were originally formed as National Guard units, with the intent that these units would serve in the respective local regions. The composition of these units tends to be representative of the region in which they serve. Over time, replacements from the national recruiting pool will increase the diversity of these divisions.

The Defense Department quarterly report for March, 2007 was less clear about the problems of sectarian and ethnic loyalties in the ISF, but did state that: "There are...indications that political forces in Iraq have influenced senior military appointments on the basis of sectarian affiliation."²⁶⁷ The detailed discussion of MOD and MOI forces also noted in several places that,

The Coalition and the Government of Iraq are committed to creating an Iraqi military that reflects the ethnic and religious fabric of Iraq, with diverse units loyal to the nation, not to sectarian interests. Although competence and merit are deciding factors when selecting recruits and leaders, ISF units mirror the demographic make-up of Iraq generally. The even-numbered divisions were assembled from former Iraqi National Guard battalions and tend to resemble the demographics of communities from which they were recruited. The odd-numbered divisions were nationally recruited and represent the national fabric. The Minister of Defense, through an Officer Selection Committee, has used normal transitions to diversify the senior leadership in the Iraqi Army. There are, however, indications that political forces in Iraq have influenced senior military appointments on the basis of sectarian affiliation. MNF-I and U.S. Embassy Baghdad are working closely with the Government of Iraq to discourage sectarian influences in the senior ranks and to encourage a balanced representation in leadership. The Government of Iraq is considering other methods to balance representation across the entire Army, Navy, and Air Force.²⁶⁸

The Iraqi Police Service is generally representative of the demographic makeup of its neighborhoods, although there are some neighborhoods in Baghdad and other cities where the percentage of Shi'a in the Iraqi Police Service is disproportionately high. Initial estimates, compiled during implementation of the National Police Transformation and Retraining program in late 2006, show that the National Police are disproportionately Shi'a. The U.S. Government is committed to helping the Government of Iraq create an MOI that reflects the diversity of the Iraqi people. The goal is to create ethnically integrated units at the national level, while still allowing local police to reflect the ethnic composition of the communities in which they serve. MNSTC-I continues to advocate recruiting initiatives targeting Sunnis to improve diversity and to provide a force that will impart even-handed law enforcement.²⁶⁹

Corruption, illegal activity, and sectarian influence constrain progress in developing MOI forces. Although the primary concern of the Government of Iraq remains the Sunni insurgency, tolerance of and influence exerted by Shi'a militia members within the MOI are troubling. Militia influence affects every component of the MOI, particularly in Baghdad and several other key cities. Recruits take an oath of office denouncing militia influence and pledging allegiance to Iraq's constitution. Whenever actionable evidence is found, it is acted on by the MOI Internal Affairs Directorate and the minister.

These warnings, however, repeated discussions of problems that the MNF-I has flagged as early as 2004, and the repeated promises of MNF-I and the Iraqi government to deal with them since that time have had little tangible result. If anything, growing national sectarian and ethnic tensions have increased the tensions within the ISF, and the Iraqi government often pledges to take action while relying on half measures at best.

The Iraqi government does claim, however, to be taking continuing initiatives to recruit more Sunnis and to correct some of the earlier problems in de-Ba'athification that had helped block political conciliation and ISF force development. On August 15, 2006, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense started a recruiting drive that featured a direct appeal to former members of the Iraqi Army. In the first 15 days of the effort, the results were as follows:²⁷⁰

- Former Officers: 1,366
- Non-Commissioned Officers: 628
- Soldiers: 9,700

The recruitment of former officers and NCOs from the former regime was potentially significant, but no hard data followed that showed a steady pattern of improvement, and most unit reporting reflected the opposite trend.

A failed Army recruiting drive in the Sunni neighborhood of Adhamiyah in Baghdad exemplifies many of the problems of recruiting Sunnis. The main recruiting center for the area is at Al-Muthana airport, which is too far from Adhamiyah for many Sunnis to safely travel to. Local council members complained to the US about the lack of Sunni recruits and it was decided to hold a recruiting drive in the Adhamiyah neighborhood itself. The local council's head, Abdul Razaq, was particularly outspoken about encouraging Sunnis to enlist in the Army and police. He was murdered in March 2007. The starting monthly salary for soldiers joining the Army is \$360, a large sum for most in Iraq. Despite this, the young Sunni men of Adhamiyah seemed to understand the dangers of joining the Iraqi Army, and only 20 showed up at the recruiting drive. Of these, only 10 were accepted. 156 other young men showed up at the drive, mostly Shi'ites.²⁷¹

Figure 4.5
Ethnic and Sectarian Confidence in the Iraqi Army among Shi'ites, Sunnis, and Kurds

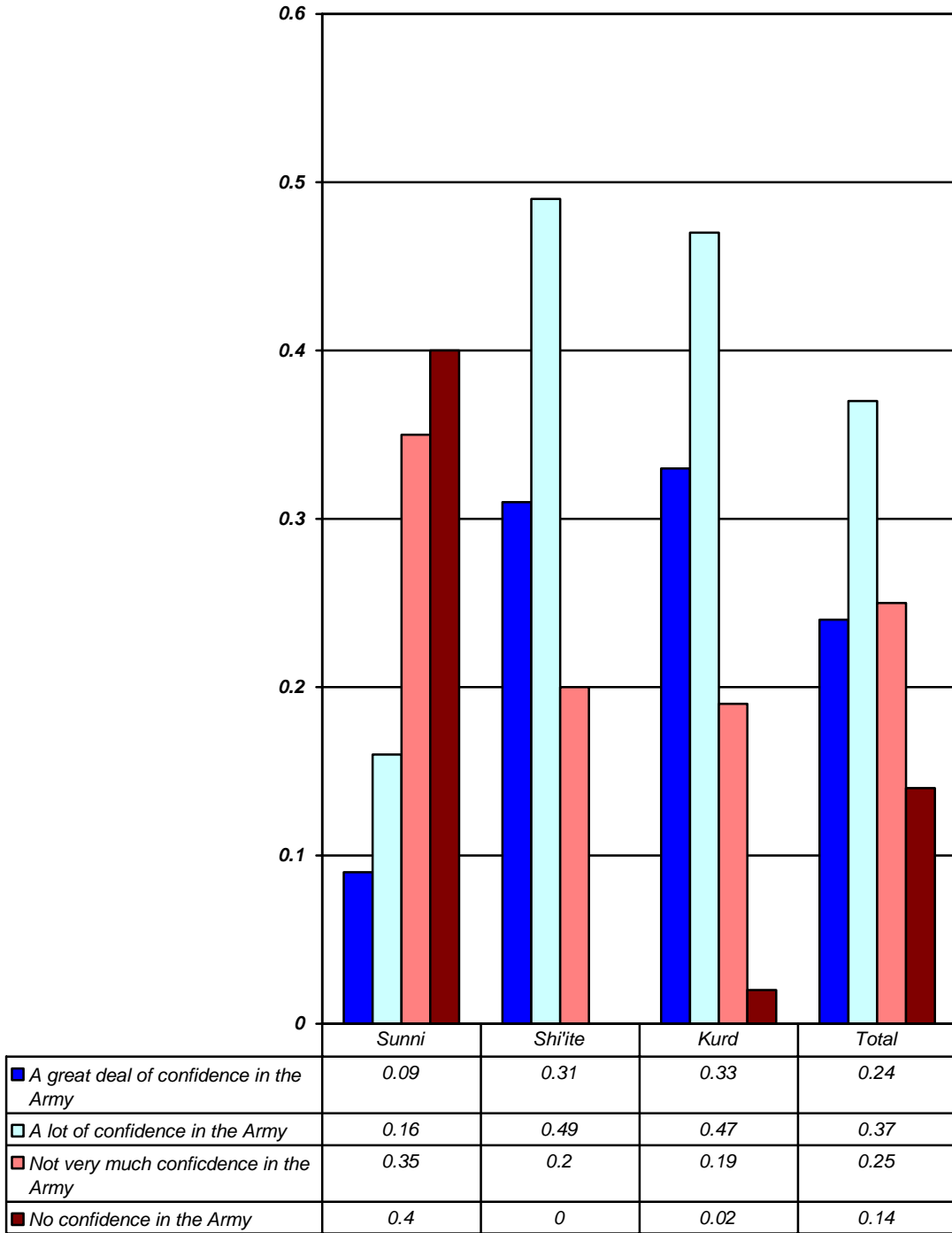
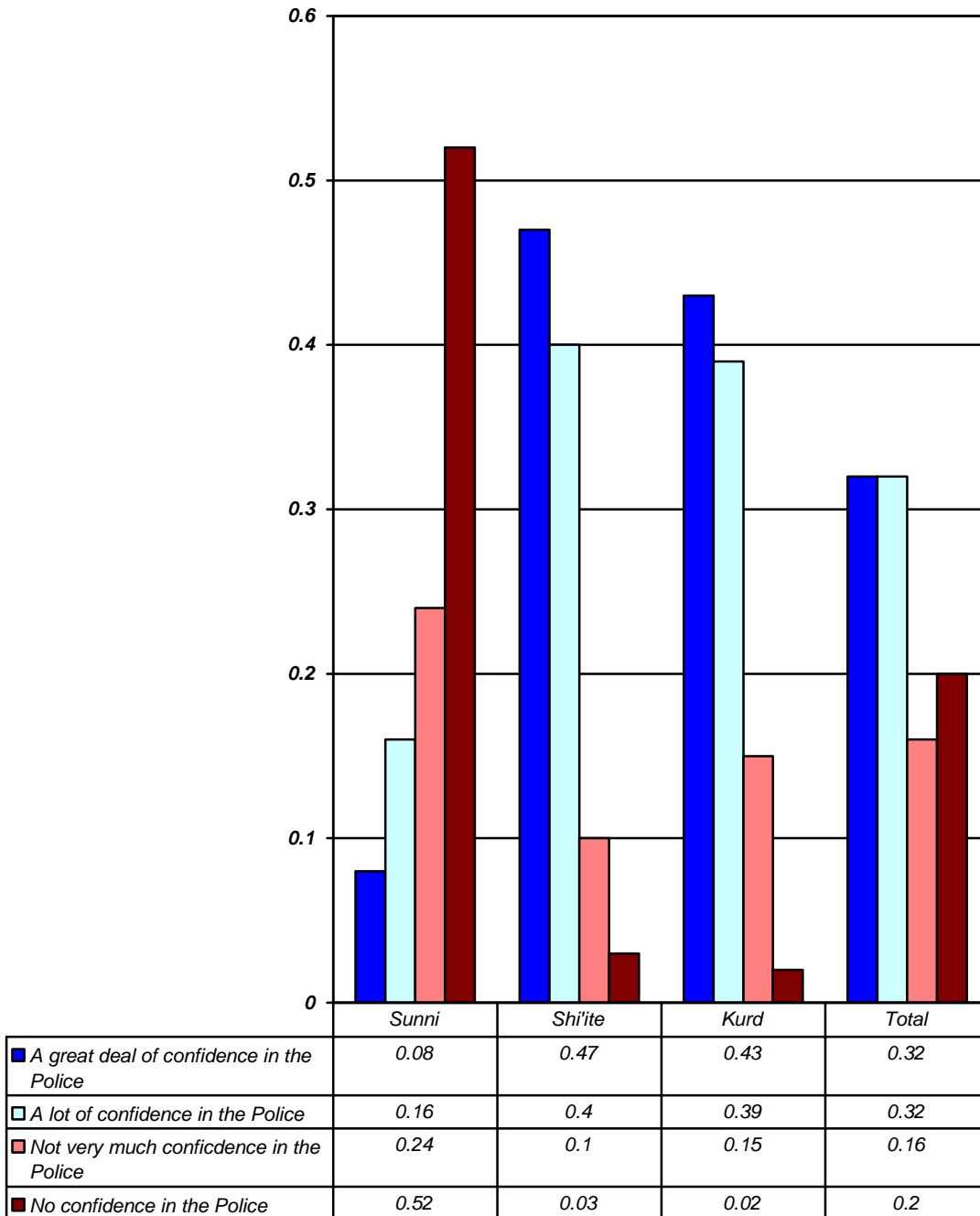


Figure 4.6
Ethnic and Sectarian Confidence in the Iraqi Police among Shi'ites, Sunnis, and Kurds



Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll. March 19, 2007. Pg. 24

Popular Perceptions of Iraqi Force Development

These sectarian and ethnic divisions also provide an important perspective on Iraqi force development. The US and MNF-I are seeking to develop effective forces. The battle in Iraq, however, is as much one to end civil conflict as it is to defeat the insurgency, and Iraqi popular attitudes towards both Iraq and US forces become very different when they are related to the violence that shapes day-to-day life in Iraq. The MNF-I, US and Iraqi government statistics on violence in Iraq fail to make a serious effort to estimate threats, kidnappings, woundings, intimidation, or sectarian and ethnic crimes. These 'lower' forms of violence have become far more common in Iraq than killings, and represent the bulk of the real-world challenge to the ISF.

An ABC News poll conducted in February and March 2007 found that,²⁷²

Widespread violence, torn lives, displaced families, emotional damage, collapsing services, an ever-starker sectarian chasm – and a draining away of the underlying optimism that once prevailed. Violence is the cause, its reach vast. Eighty percent of Iraqis report attacks nearby – car bombs, snipers, kidnappings, armed forces fighting each other or abusing civilians. It's worst by far in the capital, Baghdad, but by no means confined there. The personal toll is enormous. More than half of Iraqis, 53 percent, have a close friend or relative who's been hurt or killed in the current violence. One in six says someone in their own household has been harmed. Eighty-six percent worry about a loved one being hurt; two-thirds worry deeply. Huge numbers limit their daily activities to minimize risk. Seven in 10 report multiple signs of traumatic stress.

The poll found that while In 2005, 63 percent of Iraqis said they felt very safe in their neighborhoods in 2005, only 26 percent had said this in early 2007. One in three did not feel safe at all. In Baghdad, home to a fifth of the country's population, eighty-four percent feel entirely unsafe. Even outside of Baghdad, just 32 percent of Iraqis felt "very safe" where they lived, compared with 60 percent a year and a half ago.²⁷³

Nationally, 12 percent of all Iraqis surveyed reported that ethnic cleansing – the forced separation of Sunnis and Shiites – has occurred in their neighborhoods. In mixed-population Baghdad, it's 31 percent. This is not desired: In rare agreement, 97 percent of Sunni Arabs and Shiites alike oppose the separation of Iraqis on sectarian lines. Nonetheless, one in seven Iraqis overall – rising to a quarter of Sunni Arabs, and more than a third of Baghdad residents – said they themselves have moved homes in the last year to avoid violence or religious persecution.

As security conditions have worsened, so have expectations for future improvement in the conditions of life – an especially troubling result, since hopes for a better future can be the glue that holds a struggling society together. In 2004 and 2005 alike, for example, three-quarters of Iraqis expected improvements in the coming year in their security, schools, availability of jobs, medical care, crime protection, clean water and power supply. Today only about 30 to 45 percent still expect any of these to get any better.

The ABC poll asked about nine kinds of violence that broke the security problems Iraqis and ISF forces faced into far more detail than the Coalition and US have ever publicly reported (car bombs, snipers or crossfire, kidnappings, fighting among opposing groups or abuse of civilians by various armed forces). These results are reflected in **Figure 4.7**.²⁷⁴

Most Iraqis in Baghdad said at least one of these had occurred nearby; half reported four or more of them. Some 53 percent of Iraqis said a close friend or immediate family member had been hurt in the current violence. That ranged from three in 10 in the Kurdish provinces to nearly eight in 10 in Baghdad. Even outside Baghdad, 74 percent

reported at least one form of violence, and 25 percent reported four or more (34 percent excluding the Kurdish area, which was far more peaceful than the country overall.)

What is equally striking, however, is what Figure Three reveals about Iraqi perceptions of US, Iraqi Army, and police forces. It is clear that with the exception of the people in the Kurdish zone many Iraqis see all of the forces deployed as guilty of unnecessary violence, and this is especially true in Baghdad. The source data for the poll also show a strong correlation between force activity and the perception of unnecessary violence. These same trends emerge when Iraqis are asked what they try to avoid to improve their security. While the US and Iraqi government may focus on force development to defeat the insurgency and control civil violence, Iraqis seem such forces as a major civil-military problem and a serious threat to their daily security.

Figure 4.7**Kinds of Violence Iraqis Reported as Occurring Nearby and the Civil-Military Reaction in Early 2007**

(In percent)

	All	Baghdad	Kurdistan	Rest of Iraq	
Type of Violence Encountered (Percent reporting)					
Kidnappings for ransom		40%	58%	4%	41%
Gov't/anti-gov't fighting		34	57	1	33
Car bombs, suicide attacks		32	52	3	31
Snipers, crossfire		30	56	*	27
Sectarian fighting		25	49	1	22
Perceive Unnecessary Violence by: (Percent reporting)					
U.S./coalition forces		44	59	9	47
Local militia		31	44	2	32
Iraqi police		24	44	1	22
Iraqi Army		24	44	0	22
Any of these		80	100	12	86
Four or more of these		37	70	1	34
Friend/family member harmed		53	77	29	49
Focus of Efforts to Avoid Violence: (Percent who try to avoid)					
	All	Sunni	Shiite	Kurdish	
U.S./coalition forces		81%	95	85	40
Passing through checkpoints		66	92	64	17
Passing by police stations/ public buildings		55	91	45	10
Markets/crowds		54	74	53	17
Travel		53	71	54	18
Leaving home		51	77	48	5
Going to/applying for work		43	63	40	7
Sending children to school		39	66	32	3

Source: ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007, pp. 5-6.

Steadily Tighter Funding

There are a range of estimates of the cost of developing ISF forces, but it seems clear that ISF force development faces steadily more serious funding constraints in the future.. The CRS estimated that US spending on training and equipping Iraqi security forces grew from \$3.24 billion in January 2004 to around t \$10.7 billion as of September 22, 2006. Another \$3.0 billion was in the supplemental conference bill for FY 2006, bringing the total up to \$13.7 billion.²⁷⁵ Most of these funds came from US sources, although plans called for the new Iraqi government was expected to begin playing a greater role in the budgeting and equipment procurement process.²⁷⁶

Growing political pressure is already limiting some aspects of how much the US will contribute in the future. In February 2007, the Defense Department published a detailed breakdown of the President's FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Request. This was the first time such a detailed report had been issued by the DoD. The Defense Department report revealed the following funding levels for Iraqi security forces, as seen in **Figures 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10**. The budget request for FY 2008 reflects a steep drop in funding for the ISF, 64% less than FY 2007. This is due to an optimistic assumption that the Iraqi government will have taken on primary responsibility for funding its security forces.

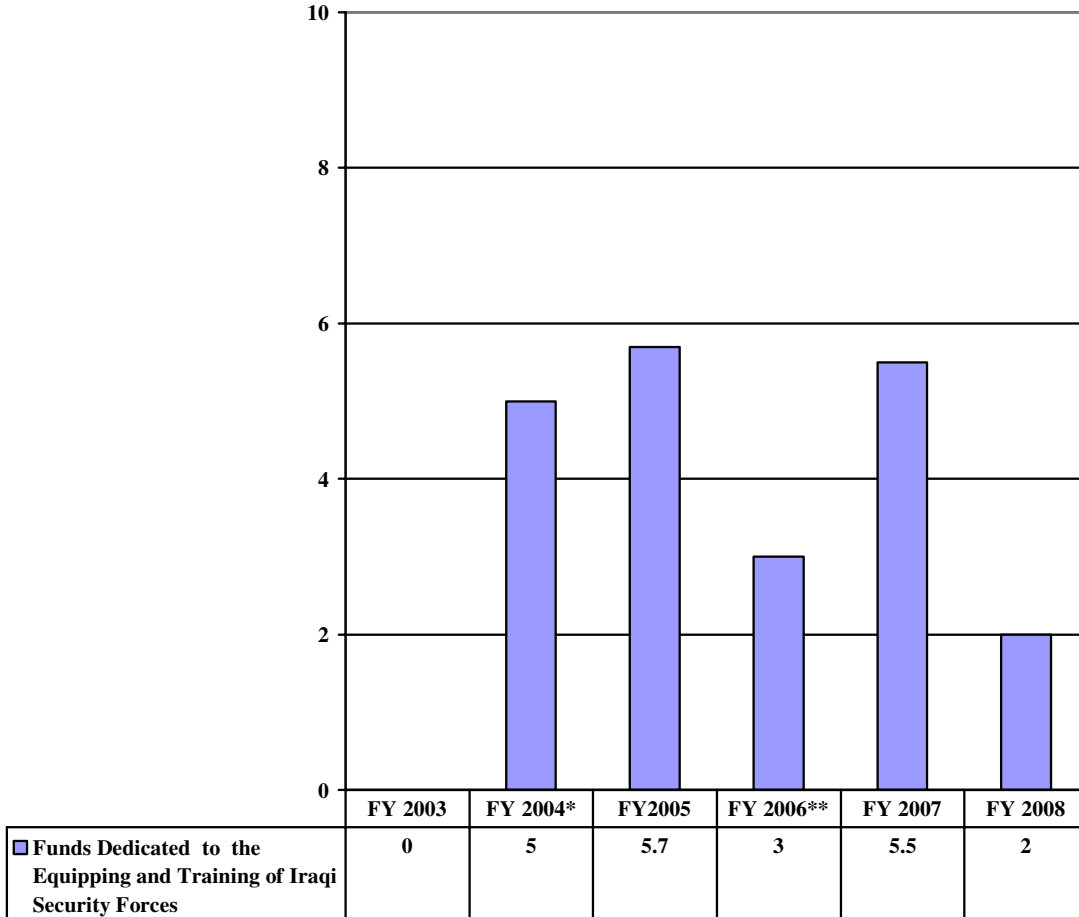
- **Figure 4.8:** This graph demonstrates the overall funding levels of the ISF between FY 2003 and FY 2006. Funding through FY2004 was allocated to the State Department. Afterwards, all funding was allocated through the Defense Department.
- **Figure 4.9:** In February 2007, the Defense Department published a detailed breakdown of the President's FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Request. This was the first time such a detailed report had been issued by the DoD. The Defense Department report revealed the following funding levels for Iraqi security forces. The largest increase between FY 2006 and FY 2007 for the Iraqi Army was in funds dedicated to sustainment operations, in keeping with the DoD's focus on creating Iraqi forces capable of sustaining themselves in the future.
- **Figure 4.10:** The budget request for FY 2008 reflects a steep drop in funding for the ISF, 64% less than FY 2007. This is due to an optimistic assumption that the Iraqi government will have taken on primary responsibility for funding its security forces.

The successful development of Iraqi Forces remains dependent on the willingness of the US government to enter into a long-term security relationship with the Government of Iraq, and the honest recognition that the US will almost certainly have to fund this effort initially and for some years to come. This does not mean that the Iraqi government cannot do more, and it plans to.

The Iraqi budget for 2007 calls for Iraq to spend more on Iraqi forces than the US government for the first time since the fall of Saddam Hussein. If these Iraqi plans are actually and honestly implemented, the Iraqi budget for 2007 funds the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior at \$7.3 billion. In addition, Iraqi is investing \$1.7 billion in end of the year 2006 funds in equipment purchases through the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. Total funding authority for the MoD and MoI is \$9.0 billion. The US government program in the Iraqi Security Forces Fund over 18 months is approximately \$5 billion, roughly 50% of planned Iraqi expenditures.

Figure 4.8

Funding Dedicated to the Training and Equipping of the ISF



*Funding through FY2004 was allocated to the State Department. Afterwards, all funding was allocated through the Defense Department.

**Includes both FY2006 Title IX bridge funds and the FY2006 Supplemental request.

Source: Belasco, Amy. *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*. CRS Report for Congress and

Department of Defense, "FY 2008 Global War on Terror Budget Request." February, 2007. pg. 35

Figure 4.9
Iraqi Security Forces Appropriations*

\$ in Billions	Title IX**	Supplemental	Total	-	Title IX***	Supplemental	Total	Percent Change
Iraqi National Army	-			-				
Infrastructure	-	0.8	0.8	-	0.3	0.3	0.6	-25%
Equipment and Transportation	-	0.6	0.6	-	0.1	1.6	1.7	183%
Training	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.1	-
Sustainment	-	0.2	0.2	-	0.2	1.0	1.2	500%
Total	-	1.6	1.6	-	0.6	3.0	3.6	125%
Iraqi National Police				-				
Infrastructure	-	0.5	0.5	-	0.1	0.2	0.3	-40%
Equipment and Transportation	-	0.4	0.4	-	0.1	0.4	0.5	25%
Training	-	0.2	0.2	-	0.5	0.1	0.6	200%
Sustainment	-	0.2	0.2	-	0.2	-	0.2	-
Total	-	1.3	1.3	-	0.9	0.7	1.6	23%
Related Activities		0.1	0.1	-	0.2	0.1	0.3	200%
Total Iraq Security Forces	-	3.0	3.0	-	1.7	3.8	5.5	83%

*Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

**Title IX, FY 2006 Defense Appropriations Act (PL 109-148)

***Title IX, FY 2007 Defense Appropriations Act (PL-109-298)

Source: Department of Defense, "FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Request." February, 2007. pg. 38.

Figure 4.10
Iraqi Security Forces Appropriations Through FY 2008*

\$ in Billions	FY 2006 Total Enacted	FY 2007 Total	FY 2008 Total	Percent Change FY 2007 – FY 2008
Iraqi National Army				
Infrastructure	0.8	0.6	-	-100%
Equipment and Transportation	0.6	1.7	1.1	-35%
Training	-	0.1	0.1	-
Sustainment	0.2	1.2	0.1	-92%
Total	1.6	3.6	1.3	-64%
Iraqi National Police				
Infrastructure	0.5	0.3	-	-100%
Equipment and Transportation	0.4	0.5	0.2	-60%
Training	0.2	0.6	0.5	-17%
Sustainment	0.2	0.2	-	-100%
Total	1.3	1.6	0.7	-56%
Related Activities	0.1	0.3	-	-100%
Total Iraq Security Forces	3.0	5.5	2.0	-64%

*Note: numbers may not add due to rounding

Title IX, FY 2006 Defense Appropriations Act (PL 109-148)

Title IX, FY 2007 Defense Appropriations Act (PL-109-298)

Source: Department of Defense, "FY 2008 Global War on Terror Request." February, 2007. pg. 35.

The GAO s released slightly different numbers regarding ISF funding requests. The GAO reports the DoD 2007 Supplemental funding requests as follows (figures are dollars in billions):²⁷⁷

Total MOD: 2.980

- Infrastructure: **0.264**
- Equipment and Transportation: **1.584**
- Training and Operations: **0.051**
- Sustainment: **1.079**

Total MOI: 0.704

- Infrastructure: **0.205**
- Equipment and Transportation: **0.373**
- Training and Operations: **0.053**
- Sustainment: **0.073**

Total ISF 2007 funding request: 3.842

The GAO reports 2008 DoD funding requests as follows (dollars in billions):

Total MOD: 1.255

- Infrastructure: **0**
- Equipment and Transportation: **1.043**
- Training and Operations: **0.077**
- Sustainment: **0.135**

Total MOI: 0.745

- Infrastructure: **0**
- Equipment and Transportation: **0.245**
- Training and Operations: **0.500**
- Sustainment: **0**

Total ISF 2008 funding request: 2.000

The Iraqi government passed its budget for 2007 on February 8th, 2007. The budget totaled \$41.1 billion, a 21 percent increase over 2006. \$7.3 is dedicated to security-related expenses, a 35 percent increase over 2006. As part of the budget, \$150 million was allocated for the demobilization of militias. This money will support economic opportunities and reintegration for militia members and potential recruits.²⁷⁸ However, it should be noted that 40% of the 2006 budget was never obligated.

Current Status of ISF Elements

Given this mix of problems, it is scarcely surprising that Iraqi forces remain anything but perfect, and will probably still take some 3-5 years to complete their development and

become independent. If one looks at the real-world readiness of the Iraqi defense effort in the spring of 2007, it may be summarized as follows:

- **Ministry of Defense:** Still very much a work in progress. Poorly organized, divided along sectarian and ethnic lines, poor planning and fiscal control capability, problems with corruption. The Ministry remains divided. Disagreements among senior leaders in the MoD are about how the Military should be developed—as in former times or in imitation of western countries].
- **The regular army, air force, and navy (132,856 claimed to be operational; real number unknown, but full time active strength probably below 100,000) as of March 3, 2007:** Some battalion sized elements of the Army (132,856 men trained and equipped) are emerging as a real force at the infantry battalion level with some light mechanized and armored elements. Real divisions and brigades are beginning to emerge , although many headquarters, command and control, combat and service support, logistic and intelligence elements are missing or having little capability. The regular Iraqi military still cannot operate without massive MNF-I support, embedded US and other coalition advisory teams, and largely US mechanized infantry, armor, artillery, fixed and rotary wing air support, air mobility, and logistic and service support,

Air Force (929 men) is at best a small cadre of forces with token reconnaissance and air transport capability. Navy (1,135 men) is slowly emerging as capable of carrying out patrol missions, but is severely limited in operational capability with little real support capability.

The MNF-I reported that as by the end of 2006, 100% of the authorized Iraqi Army battalions had been created, and that force building efforts to train and equip forces now focused on combat support forces.²⁷⁹ Such reports are misleading to the point of being actively dishonest. There are severe problems in much of the reporting on Iraqi forces, and no clear distinction is made between the number of men who went through the training process and the number still on service. The rising manpower and combat unit totals conceal many critical problems in given elements of the ISF order of battle. Gross numbers grossly exaggerate capability.

Even more serious problems exist with reports that say the regular Iraqi forces are taking the lead, and the MNF-I has been successful in transferring responsibility to Iraqi forces and command. The regular military and some paramilitary National Police units are making real progress – but most units are severely undermanned, have critical problems in officer and NCO quality and leadership, are too lightly equipped and poorly facilitated, and many are Shi'ite or Kurdish dominated.

While progress is occurring in the army, discussions with MNF-I experts indicate that major manning and equipment shortfalls exist in many battalions and units, and that substantial numbers of combat battalions said to be “in the lead” had less than 60% of their authorized manning actually present in the unit on a day-to-day basis.

The Department of Defense reported as of March, 2007, 14 Strategic Infrastructure Battalions, 2 Special Forces battalions, and 103 regular battalions were in combat,²⁸⁰ but it is unlikely that even one-third of these totals had serious independent warfighting capability and there is no way to assess their willingness to engage as truly national forces in civil conflict.

The MNF-I claimed that, “in mid-October 2006 that six of the 10 Iraqi divisions – 30 of the 36 brigades and almost 90 of the 112 battalions were ‘in the lead.’”. One respected journalist stated on November 28, 2006, however, that “The Iraqi army has about 134,000 men (trained and equipped), but about half are doing only stationary guard duty...of the half that conduct operations, only about 10 battalions are effective – well under 10,000 men.”²⁸¹

There is no way to resolve these radically different pictures of Iraqi forces, but it is clear that Iraqi forces will be highly dependent on US and other MNF-I support well into 2008, and probably through 2010. Only a truly radical improvement in political conciliation could reduce this dependence, and the present drift towards added civil conflict could sharply increase it.

- **Ministry of Interior:** Still very much a work in progress and lags behind the MoD in capability. Poorly organized, with elements more loyal to Shi'ite and Kurdish parties than nation. Poor planning and fiscal control capability, serious problems with corruption. Minister Boulani did

embark on a Ministry Reform Program in October 2006, but so far the Department of Defense has not reported that such efforts have made significant progress.

- ***The National Police (24,400 claimed to be trained and equipped as of March 5, 2007; real number of actives unknown, but closer to 20,000):*** Some elements have been properly reorganized and are as effective as regular army units. Most still present problems in terms of both loyalty and effectiveness. Still are some ties to Shi'ite and Kurdish militias. A number of units have critical problems in officer and NCO quality and leadership, are too lightly equipped and poorly facilitated
- ***Other MOI Forces (28,860 claimed to be trained and equipped as of March 5, 2007; real number of full time actives unknown, but closer to 22,000):*** Most elements, like the Border Police, are just acquiring proper training and have only light equipment and poor facilities. Some elements are capable in undemanding missions. Most are underpaid, under equipped, badly led, and corrupt. Many are poorly facilitated.
- ***The Regular Police (135,000 claimed to be trained and equipped as of March 5, 2007; real number of full time actives probably under 85,000):*** Underpaid, under equipped, badly led, and corrupt. Many will not fight or act if faced with a local threat. Desertion and absence rates high. Generally only function where security exists for other reasons, or the police have strong ties to sectarian, ethnic, and tribal forces. Many are poorly facilitated

The problems in the “trained and equipped police” forces are compounded by large number of locally recruited “police” and security forces loyal to local leaders and sectarian and ethnic factions. Various sectarian and ethnic militias are the real “police” in many areas.

- ***Facilities Protection Force, Pipeline Protection Force, and other limited security forces:*** Reported to have an authorized level approaching 145,000. Actual day –to-day forces actively performing their mission may be less than half that total. Even more so than the regular police, these forces are underpaid, under equipped, badly led, and corrupt. Generally only function where security exists for other reasons, or are tied to sectarian, ethnic, and tribal forces. Prime Minister Maliki has made a commitment to consolidate the FPS under the MoI, but until such efforts prove fully successful, the problems remain.

Expanding and “Transforming” Iraqi Forces

This summary of current capabilities is a warning about the dangers of forcing the pace in Iraqi force expansion. In all too many cases, the US and MNF have already rushed Iraqi battalions and force elements into being and then into combat before they are ready, effectively undercutting the Iraqi force development process and sometimes gravely weakening fledgling Iraqi units that are not ready to perform such missions. It often has used US advisors and embedded training teams that also are not ready for them missions they are supposed to perform, compounding the problems inherent in creating new units.

Other problems have resulted from trying to use force elements built for local defense missions on a national level and in far more demanding forms of counterinsurgency warfare and civil conflict missions than they were recruited for and designed to fight. There are additional problems with corruption, nepotism, creating sufficient junior officers and NCOs, and providing the levels of firepower, mobility, and communications Iraqi forces really need. Hollow units do not learn by being thrust prematurely into combat; they are crippled or wasted.

One case study of the precipitous effect of premature handover to less-than-able forces was shown in Haditha in the fall of 2004, when US troops withdrew from the city to retake Fallujah. Michael Gordon, chief military correspondent of the New York Times,

also notes the important psychological effects of such premature responsibility shifts on future ISF recruiting:

What followed was a devastating setback for the American effort to carry out counter-insurgency operations in the violent al-Anbar province. While the Americans were securing Fallujah the Iraqi police in Haditha were accosted by insurgents and executed. The episode left the town without a police force that could check the operations of the insurgents and taught the Iraqis there that the Americans could not be counted on to protect their nascent institutions, whatever their good intentions.

It also made the task of recruiting a new police force all but impossible. When follow-on marine units were deployed to Haditha their efforts to mount a police recruitment drive failed, forcing the marines to think about seeking police recruits from other parts of the country.²⁸²

These challenges Iraq faces are further complicated by the fact that all Iraqi forces, including the army, were recruited and equipped to serve locally in limited defensive roles, not act as mobile forces trained and equipped to act as active combat units deployable throughout the country to deal with insurgency and civil conflict. This means the recruiting base must now be changed, new pay and arrangements are needed to create a nationally deployable force, and new equipment and facilities will be need for the deployable units thrust into more serious combat.

Prime Minister Maliki's New Force Initiative: Creating More Iraqi Forces Before Existing Efforts Pay Off

The Iraqi government and MNF-I are now committed to expanding the Iraqi Army at what may well be an impractical rate. The 2004 campaign plan, which had elaborated and refined the original strategy for transferring security responsibilities, was revised in April 2006 by MNF-I. In conjunction with the US embassy in Baghdad, a new Joint Campaign Plan was issued with the goal of transferring security responsibility to Iraqi security forces

Both the Iraqi government and MNF-I developed a consensus towards the end of the summer of 2006, however, that the total number of Iraqi Security Forces would have to be increased in order for Iraqis to assume more serious security responsibilities. The ISF then numbered some 298,000 as of late August, and was expected to grow to 325,000 by year's end.

Both the MNF-I and Maliki government became committed to raising this number.²⁸³ In late August 2006, the MNF-I reported that the Iraqi government was developing a long-term plan to shape the type of armed forces needed 5 to 10 years in the future.²⁸⁴

On October 10, 2006, Prime Minister Maliki approved the implementation of the national counter-terrorism capability concept. This concept is scheduled to reach "Full Operational Capability" by December 2007. According to the DoD, "Full Operational Capability" consists of:

Development of a national Bureau of Counter-Terrorism, separate from the ministries, that serves as the principal advisor to the prime minister on counterterrorism matters

Establishment of a coherent, nonsectarian, counter-terrorism "tiering" strategy that determines the level of the terrorist threat, assigns appropriate responsibility for action, and defines approval authority for execution; this strategy was established as part of the overall counter-terrorism concept

Establishment of a separate major command, equivalent to the ground, air, and naval forces commands, that provides support to the Bureau of Counter-Terrorism in intelligence and targeting areas.²⁸⁵

On October 31st, Defense Minister Abdul-Qadir announced at a Baghdad news conference that Iraq would expand the army beyond previously planned limits. He said that this was done in consultation with Gen.'s Dempsey and Casey, but reporters on the scene felt that the effort was really an "initiative undertaken by the PM to increase the size of the Iraqi Military...."

Abdul-Qadir stated on October 31st that that the Prime Minister's Initiative for the growth of new Iraqi Army units had been approved in September. This would expand the Army by eight brigade-equivalents (approximately 18,700 soldiers). Major General Caldwell supplemented this briefing on November 2nd, and the two briefings provide the following description of the Prime Minister's "long war" plan for transforming Iraqi forces:

Add additional combat power in the most heavily contested areas of Iraq (Baghdad, Basra, Diyala, Al Anbar).

Provide additional units to allow tactical commanders to establish a tactical reserve that can be deployed around the country.

Provide an additional brigade to the 9th Iraqi Army Division to establish an operational reserve that can be moved around the country. This would be the first unit specifically recruited to act as a mobile force, rather than one designed largely for static local defense. It would begin the transformation of the Iraqi forces to act as a mobile, rather than static force. No details, however, were provided on the pay incentives, changes in equipment, changes in training, and changes in facilities necessary to begin what amounts to a "transformation" of Iraq forces.

Recruit and train 18,000 men -- in addition to the 18,700 men to create new Iraqi units to provide individual replacements for Iraqi units. The first 10,000 men for this force element were recruited in early October and will be ready in November.

Provide sufficient redundancy within the Iraqi Army Divisions to allow them to remove units from the battlespace periodically for rearm, refit, and retrain as part of a "long war strategy." This is essential to allowing units to recover, go back to their home areas, and be retrained and reequipped. The goal is a 10% "overage" in manning. This means recruiting 12,000 more men to act as a pool of recruits to fill in existing Iraqi units by "overmanning" their authorized strength to keep a suitable number of soldiers actually in place in such units.

The Prime Minister's Initiative called for the following new Iraqi forces and force elements, only some of which had specific unit designations and missions:

Three (3) Division Headquarters:

Add 11th Division headquarters, which will split the span of control for battalions in Baghdad between Karkh and Rusafa

Add two (2) Strategic Infrastructure Division headquarters to improve command and control of the SIBs

Five (5) Brigade Headquarters and 20 more Battalions

Add 4th Bde to the 9th IA Div to provide the division to serve as the Operational Reserve for the IA with four total brigades.

Add 4th Bde to the 5th IA Div, which will allow a brigade for Diyala.

Add 6th Bde to the 6th IA Div, which will provide three brigades to each IA division in Baghdad.

Add 4th Bde to the 7th IA Div, which will add a brigade to western Al Anbar province.

Add 5th Bde to 10th IA Div.

Add one battalion to the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Bde of the 8th IA Div, which will add a brigade-equivalent to Diwaniya.

Add one battalion to the 2nd and 3rd Bde of the 10th IA Div, which will add nearly two brigade equivalents to Basra (with the additional 5th Brigade addition noted above)

Add one (1) Special Forces Battalion to ISOF

The total estimated cost was \$800 million, all to be funded by the Iraqi government. It was not explained where this money would come from, how this requirement was shaped, and where the figure of 18,700 individual replacements came from or whether it would come close to dealing with even the existing manpower shortfalls in the regular army. Then Defense Secretary Rumsfeld endorsed a proposal on October 31, 2006 to spend at least \$1 billion as part of an add-on to the 2007 budget to expand the size of Iraqi security forces beyond the goal of 325,000 and accelerate their training and equipment process.²⁸⁶ The US had already spent about \$10 billion on developing Iraqi forces. Gen. George Casey also recommended expanding Iraqi forces.

It was far from clear that any aspect of Iraqi force development could successfully be rushed forward. It is extremely difficult to judge the quality of the Iraqi forces development effort at any level of detail using unclassified data. The Pentagon has reported that it was now using three sets of factors to measure progress in developing Iraqi security forces capabilities and responsibilities:

- The number of trained and equipped forces.
- The number of Iraqi army units and provincial governments that had assumed responsibility for security in specific geographic areas. In August 2006, 115 Iraqi army units had assumed the lead for counterinsurgency operations in specific areas, and one province had assumed security control.
- The capabilities of operational units, as reported in unit-level and aggregate Transition Readiness Assessments (TRA). In August 2006, the General Accounting Office had still not obtained the unit-level TRA reports.²⁸⁷

The resulting assessments remain classified, however, and the Department of Defense no longer reports on even overall force building in terms of Level I-IV readiness.

The Status of Plans to Increase Iraqi Forces in 2007

The fact that the fighting has intensified while the US has lost domestic political support for the war has since threatened to make things worse. Pressure has grown to further expand Iraqi forces and rush them into the field.

In March 2007, the DoD announced that More than 60,000 ISF personnel would be added in 2007.²⁸⁸ This expansion included:

- **Replenishment of 30,000.** MNSTC-I is funding the training and equipping of 30,000 soldiers to replace personnel losses and to increase the manning of combat units to 110% to improve present-for-duty strength. This expansion was 44% complete as of February 2007.

- **Prime Minister's Army Expansion Initiative.** In consultation with the U.S. Government, the Government of Iraq decided to increase the size of the Army by approximately 24,000 soldiers. The additional forces will increase the MOD's ability to command and control its forces, enhance its operational and tactical flexibility, and allow battle-weary units to be pulled off-line to retrain and refit. This Government of Iraq initiative also came with fiscal resources from the MOD budget.

- **Replenishment of National Police Brigades.** The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team (CPATT) is working to replenish all National Police units with personnel and key pacing items of equipment in support of the Baghdad Security Plan and Phase II training at Numaniyah.

- **Expansion of National Police to 10 Brigades.** The CPATT is supporting the prime minister's initiative to build a multicomponent (Iraqi Army and National Police) division-sized force to protect the Samarra Shrine reconstruction project. The team is generating a 10th National Police Brigade in support of this effort.²⁸⁹

The Challenge of Force Transformation

Executing a real-world handover and expansion of Iraqi forces requires a major force transformation from a static, local defense force. It means creating large numbers of nationally deployable forces with different training, pay, equipment, mobility and support, and facilities.

This makes it highly questionable as to whether Iraqi force development can be effective in replacing US and allied forces 12 to 18 months, and that Iraqi forces can credibly expand some 36,000 to 48,000 actual men in place beyond their current size, without Iraqi success in reaching a political compromise that sharply reduces the demands for Iraqi effectiveness and the unity of the Iraqi security forces (ISF) in dealing with insurgents, militias, and death squads.

The challenge is also made more difficult by the fact that threat levels have continued to rise. It is meaningless to keep claiming that the security problems are limited to small areas, and ignore intra-Shi'ite fighting and Arab-Kurdish tensions. For example, General Casey stated in a press conference on October 26, 2006 that, "...we are in a tough fight here in the center of the country and in Anbar province. But I think it's important to remind people that 90 percent of the sectarian violence in Iraq takes place in about a 30-mile radius from the center of Baghdad; and that secondly, 90 percent of all violence takes place in five provinces. This is not a country that is awash in sectarian violence. The situation is hard, but it's not a country that's awash in sectarian violence."

This statement was more than self contradictory, it clashes with previous claims in the Department of Defense quarterly status report for August 2006 that 81% of the violence took place in these provinces, and that statement ignored all of the softer forms of sectarian and ethnic "cleansing" and intra-Shi'ite fighting and Arab-Kurdish tensions.

This does not mean that real progress is not being made in ISF force development, and there are many reports of individual Iraqi units carrying out local missions, taking risks, and taking casualties. The fact remains, however, that far too many Iraqi army units are being credited with taking the lead or being effective in the field. Effective units are also being lumped together with units that will not perform their missions, which are tied to sects and factions, and which often have only 50-60% of their manning.

The Costs of Rushing Iraqi Force Development

At best, even currently planned efforts will take years to be effective. They are also taking place at a time the political demands on Iraqi force development are becoming steadily less realistic, and Iraqi forces continue to be pushed into service before they are ready and with US embedded training teams that often have readiness and qualification problems of their own

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the pace of Iraqi force development is partly being dictated by political necessity without due regard to what can really be accomplished and the inevitable loss of life to Iraqi forces that are pushed too hard, too soon.

The net effect is sometimes to use unready or over-committed units up in spite of adding US embeds and partner units. Men who did not volunteer for demanding combat missions, particularly in complex sectarian or ethnic environments or outside their home areas are being pushed into combat. They often have poor facilities, equipment and weapons that are sharply inferior to their US counterparts, are at least partly excluded from the command and intelligence loops to preserve security. They are treated as second best or unreliable partners.

Some Iraqis are truly motivated. Most are not, but are asked to fight as if they were truly motivated to support the national government rather than signed up to earn a living and survive. As was the case with the ARVN in Vietnam, their advisors often are not trained and lack the language skills to monitor pay, equity in promotion, conditions in quarters, food supply, and the other material conditions critical to real world morale and motivation. Many advisors choose to ignore the reality of sectarian and ethnic differences and motivation, do not track why Iraqi personnel actually go on leave, and do not monitor family conditions or attitudes towards military personnel in their home areas.

Serious problems in leadership by inexperienced and/or inadequate Iraqi officers and NCOs are downplayed or ignored. These problems are compounded by a US command ethic whose de facto impact is to seek good news, and not receive bad news, from embeds and the advisory teams.

In many cases, Iraqi combat troops are asked to take on an unfamiliar concept of maintenance and support at the same time. They lack the experience to maintain their weapons and equipment, and lack the in unit capability and outside support to do so, A flood forward and replacement oriented military culture is asked to sustain its equipment as if it were Western or American.

Coupled to ongoing pay problems, corruption, lack of adequate facilities and equipment, lack of proper medical care, lack of proper support for families, and death and disability payments, the end result will often be to the poverty and unemployment of Iraqi young men, and create major effectiveness, desertion, morale and motivation, and future retention problems.

This situation has grown worse since late 2006. Statements by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki, and the impact of the US election, seem to have accelerated US scheduling and allied withdrawal, and expanding Iraqi forces, become a political necessity. It seems to be the only way for the US to stay for a significant period, and the only way to make an Iraqi takeover seem credible. Little about Iraqi performance in the field, however, indicates that the army, security forces, and police are "75% complete" as

some US spokesmen had claimed in talking about an 18-24 month time period for a full scale shift of responsibility to Iraqi forces. A realistic timeframe is closer to 3 to 5 years.

V. The Challenge of Training and Creating Effective Iraqi Leadership

Creating well-trained and equipped soldiers is only half the battle. In order for the ISF to be truly valuable, it must have effective leadership. The creation of an Iraqi security force that can operate successfully and ethically in the field is a difficult process. Creating an efficient Iraqi fighting force may even be counter-productive if it is co-opted by sectarian elements or used to oppress the Iraqi people.

Progress and Problems with US Embeds and Training Teams

One of the key lessons of the Iraq War is that basic training is only one element of effective force development. Units require embedded trainers and advisors as they go into service, and partner units to help them learn how to fight, protect them, and provide the firepower, IS&R assets, and any other capabilities they lack. The failure to fully implement this lesson through 2005, at least in the case of the police forces, was a major factor limiting Iraqi force development and using up and wasting new units in the field.

Since that time, however, at least the Iraqi regular military forces have gained proficiency through three sources including, Iraqi schools, MITT Teams, and partnership units. The US and MNF-I have developed and deployed five different types of Transition Teams. These include: Military Transition Teams; Border Transition Teams; National Police Transition Teams; Police Transition Teams; and MNSTC-I Transition Teams. As their name implies these teams advise an array of different types of forces.

In all cases, these nearly 500 teams are embedded with their Iraqi counterparts. For example, the CMATT training teams are embedded with every Iraqi training unit and school as well as the MNC-I direct fire MiTT Teams that are overwatched by the Iraq Assistance Group (IAG). Both of these organizations have been involved in the training of Iraqi units for the past two years. (2005-2007). While the CMATT training teams help the Iraqi training schools train Iraqi soldiers the direct fire MiTT teams carry on the training of Iraqi soldiers in line companies, battalions, brigades, and divisions.)

Since early 2005, both the strengths and weaknesses of the US embed and training program have been critical in shaping the development of the ISF. The US has shown that does have considerable capability in such force development efforts, but also that it has a number of important limitations.

The US Training Effort Winter 2006/2007

All five types of team were in place by late 2005. These teams received preparatory training in US at a number of training sites and were validated as trained and ready prior to deploying for additional training in Kuwait and Iraq before deployment into sector. For example, the decision to stand up responsibility to train MITTs was made in late 2005 and preparations at Fort Riley began in the late spring and continued into the summer of 2006. Fort Riley built on the experience of the 2nd Brigade, 91st Training Support Division at Fort Carson, commanded by COL Ray Lamb). The soldiers deployed to Ft. Riley received 60 days of training with the team they will deploy with. The next step was additional training in Kuwait before moving to Taji, Iraq and attending the IAG's

Phoenix Academy for 10+ days. Only then did a MiTT Team move into sector and begin their left and right seat ride with the team they were replacing. The total preparatory time amounted to nearly 100 days of training and experience before assuming control of the mission.

By late 2006, the US training effort employed 5,000 US trainers who lived and worked year-round with their Iraqi units. Iraqi units from the division down to the battalion level had a team of 11-15 embedded US trainers attached to them. (11 at the battalion and brigade level and 15 at the division level)²⁹⁰

There were 435 transition teams throughout Iraq in December 2006, with about 5,000 personnel. This number does not include additional staff received from local commanders. The numbers by Iraqi service were as follows:

- Military Transition Teams – approximately 140
- Border Transition Teams – approximately 25
- National Police Teams – approximately 35
- Police Transition Teams – approximately 175
- Other Transition Teams – approximately 60 (“Other” teams provided basic training, education etc. There were also Transition Teams embedded at the MoD and the MoI to assist Iraqi command and control officers.²⁹¹

Their relative numbers are compared in **Figure 5.1**.

As the training effort grew, this part of the mission increasingly shifted from Special Forces to regular Army and Marines units. The Army’s 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley was given the responsibility of training the Military Transition Teams and the Police Transition Teams.²⁹² Maj. General Carter F. Ham stated that each team trains at Fort Riley for approximately 60 days. Each team member receives over 50 hours of formal classroom language training conducted by Defense Language Institute instructors. Approximately 75% of the trainers have combat experience, most of which has occurred in the past two years.

By early 2007, the US/Iraqi training effort had grown to considerable size. Iraqi militaries academies were graduating 600 to 700 lieutenants every 6 months. In addition to the field training carried out by the US embed effort, on any given day there were about 15,000 Iraqi soldiers in training at an institutional training base.²⁹³

Initial Problems in the Embed Effort

One problem was that US embeds were “good contacts at the command and control level, but more limited in providing constant access to the fighting soldier at the company and platoon level.” The central issue surrounding the decision whether or not to increase the number of trainers was the question of having trainers who would operate with these smaller units.

Another issue confronting US commanders organizing the training effort was the danger US soldiers faced when embedded into Iraqi units. Embed assignments in 11-15 man teams were considered “high risk” according to testimony from Maj. General George J. Flynn, commander of the Marine Corps Training and Education command. “In many

ways, these individuals are out there alone and unafraid” and this speaks “to the quality of the men and women who are in uniform.”²⁹⁴ Since military and police advisor first came to Iraq in 2004, 33 have been killed. Almost half of these deaths occurred in late 2006 / early 2007, as Iraqi forces have begun taking a more active role in combat.²⁹⁵

General John Abizaid told the Senate Armed Services Committee in November 2006 that the objective of increasing the number of trainers was for them to work at the company and platoon level. He favored a solution in which the additional trainers would be drawn from existing forces in Iraq.²⁹⁶ Local commanders in Iraq have already augmented transition teams with other soldiers already in Iraq, but these soldiers, while often called “trainers,” often act in support roles for the actual trainers, providing logistical or specific area support. One example were the “2,500” trainers in General Benjamin Mixon’s area of responsibility in northern Iraq. These 2,500 trainers were actually a smaller number of trainer teams that had been augmented to allow the trainers to broaden their reach.

According to a senior military official overseeing the trainers, it would not be a problem to increase the ranks of the training mission because current trainers could “provide leadership” to the larger teams. This official did believe, however, that the current training levels for future trainers in country and stateside would need to be increased in order to boost the mission with more trainers.²⁹⁷

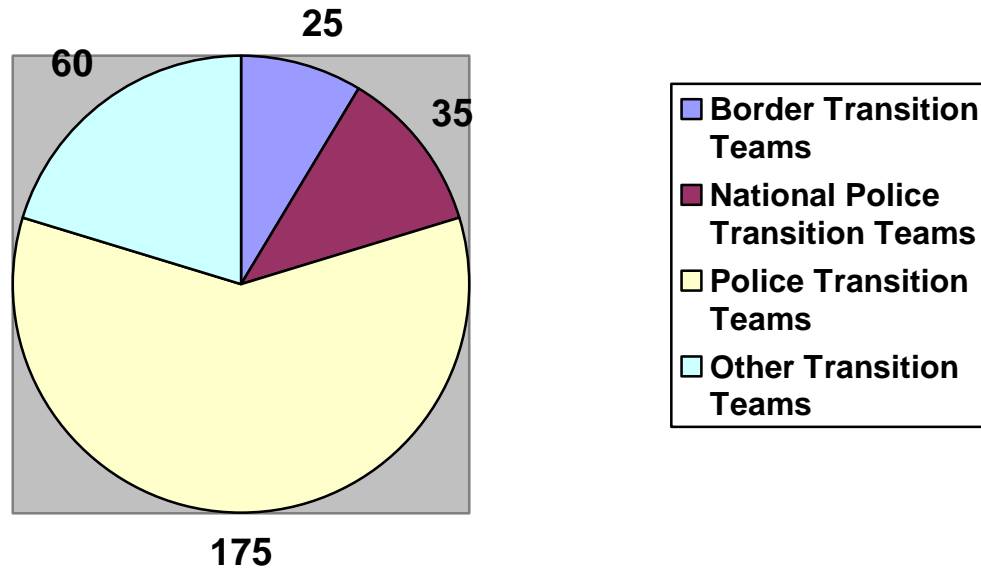
Efforts to Sharply Increase the Embed Effort

In the three weeks before December 5, 2006, American commanders shifted about 1,000 US soldiers in Baghdad from traditional combat roles to serve as trainers and advisers to Iraqi units. These troops did not go through the special program for trainers but, according to commanders in Iraq, are working in their areas of expertise. US commanders did not request replacements for these troops for their regular combat units.²⁹⁸ In early December 2006, Brig. Gen. Dana J.H. Pittard, commander of Iraqi Advisory Group, stated, “we’re going to double, triple, quadruple the size of the transition teams.”²⁹⁹

The Iraq Study Group suggested in December 2006 to dramatically boost the number of embedded trainers for the ISF from 4-5,000 to 10-20,000. Apparently, these increases would only be training the Iraqi army, not the police. The reason was that the Iraq Study Group wanted to shift training responsibility for the Iraqi police from DoD to the Justice Department. This is interesting not least because the military originally took over police training responsibility from the CPA because of the slow pace of training.³⁰⁰

The President’s 2007 security plan called for further increases in the embedding of American advisers in Iraqi Army units – partnering a Coalition brigade with every Iraqi Army division, and giving US commanders and civilian’s greater flexibility to spend funds for economic assistance. However, no substantive changes to the training and embedding program were announced.

Figure 5.1

Transition Teams for the Different Iraqi Security Forces

Source: ABC News, December 1, 2006. Note that numbers are approximated.

Deploying More Trainers Than Can be Trained?

The fact is, however, that the U.S. training and embed effort has expanded far more quickly than the US could possibly find capable trainers to embed in Iraqi forces, find and retain translators, and create the core of a training effort to build paramilitary police forces – an effort for which the US military has little recent experience, internal training or core competence.

Congressional interest in this aspect of the war has been rather low, and the US Army's studies of its effectiveness have not been publicly released. Even basic information, such as the number of National Guard and Reserves personnel involved in the US training effort, were unusually difficult to attain. The majority of these embedded Soldiers came out of the reserve component as individual replacements. Linking up on the battlefield to form a team. The 39 days of training a year did not adequately prepare them for the complexity of the task and sophistication and required to accomplish the mission. However, MNF-I experts feel reserve component teams from established units such as the 80th and 104th Training Support Divisions have performed well as direct fire MiTTs, and have excelled as advisors at the 21 Iraqi Training Centers and Schools.

The US Army's Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth has provided one of the few publicly available sources on the training program. It has conducted interviews for with US advisers to Iraqi forces for the Army's oral history archives since shortly after the invasion in 2003. It sounds a warning that the US military, Administration, and Congress need to take with deadly seriousness in examining options to expand Iraqi forces.

The US advisers were often under the impression that their mission was given low priority and that it was not well integrated into the overall US military mission in Iraq. Lt. Col. Paul Yingling, a staff officer with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment who trained Iraqi forces through February 2006 commented:

The thing the Army institutionally is still struggling to learn is that the most important thing we do in counterinsurgency is building host-nation institutions, yet all our organizations are designed around the least important line of operations: combat operations.³⁰¹

Many Iraqi officers seem to agree with their US counterparts that the US military and advisory presence in Iraq is still essential to prevent the collapse of the Iraqi government and all-out civil war. They generally viewed US military advisers as sources of great military expertise. That said, the relationship between US military advisers, “their” Iraqi units and the US partner unit is often strained, inhibiting the Iraqi unit’s progress.³⁰²

Lt. Col. Carl D. Grunow, former trainer of the 2nd Armored Brigade, 9th Mechanized Division, warned:

One of the most frustrating points of friction I observed was caused by mistaken beliefs about [Iraqi units being part of Coalition forces.] Many U.S. commanders thought that the Iraqi force was part of the Coalition and OIF was another exercise in Coalition warfare. Numerous examples demonstrate how this misunderstanding created confusion and discord: An Iraqi platoon leader refusing to participate in a combined patrol because he had not received an order from his battalion commander; Iraqi patrols leaving their assigned area to respond to an MOD order to escort a convoy from Baghdad to Taji; an Iraqi brigade commander ordering a squad to remain in an ambush position, effectively masking a U.S. unit that had already occupied a position nearby; and Iraqi soldiers refusing to follow American orders to search a mosque until the order was cleared by an Iraqi division commander. [...] While the American commander’s first impulse was to be furious with the Iraqis, from the perspective of building new units, there was clearly good news in this evidence of a strengthening Iraqi chain of command.³⁰³

Other former military advisers are more critical of the relationship with regular US units, highlighting such basic flaws as major problems with the Army supply chain. Maj. Pete Fedak, an adviser near Fallujah in 2004, said:

As an adviser, I got the impression that there was an ‘us’ and ‘them.’ In other words, there was an American camp and then, outside, there was a bermed area for the Iraqis, of which we were part. Guys would come under fire so they could get computer supplies, paper and things like that. It was a surreal experience.

Another major problem hampering the training effort has been the lack of US and local interpreters, particularly ones that can deal with local dialects and the special semantics and language skills needed for military training and operations.

Maj. Robert Dixon reported that during his tour in 2004, his team had no interpreters at all. Maj. Mike Sullivan, who also advised native forces in 2004, recounted how he would run from the headquarters to a company to “borrow an interpreter, run him over to say something, and then send him back.” The interpreters that were available were often “substandard,” speaking little or no English. This sometimes resulted in the interpreters getting fired, but the Center for Army Lessons Learned also released a study that found one unit that only learned after 10 unproductive months how badly its translators conveyed their instructions to their Iraqi students. The translations were so poor that the Iraqis had trouble understanding even the basic concepts taught by the Americans.³⁰⁴

Many US military advisers were unimpressed with their peers and their own training. While Maj. Sullivan described the US Army’s instruction for the mission as “very

disappointing,” Maj. Jeffrey Allen, an active-duty soldier, noted that all other members of his team were from the National Guard. The team was supposed to have 10 members, but was only allocated five. Allen evaluated it as “weak...in particular the brigade team chief.”

Learning Hard Lessons Along The Way

An internal review by the Center for Army Lessons Learned, based on 152 interviews with soldiers involved in the training and advisory program, found that there was “no standardized guideline for preparing military advisers, despite the fact that “a majority of advisers have little to no previous experience or training.”³⁰⁵ Trainers in 2006 received 60 days of training at Fort Riley, Kansas, over a week in Kuwait, an additional two weeks training in Taji, Iraq, and then time in sector learning the ropes with the team they were replacing.³⁰⁶

Iraq’s forces also received less partnership support from US units as US forces became more heavily committed during the course of 2006. At the same time, Iraqi Force Development and “placing Iraqis in the lead” officially became strategic goals, US brigade and battalion commanders had to concentrate their efforts mainly on fighting the insurgency. This left the training responsibility mainly to Iraqi commanders and their US advisers, an arrangement that “can work only if the U.S. force provides enough stability to allow the Iraqis to train and practice tactics, techniques and procedures inside and outside the wire.”

When it came to combined missions, the Iraqi Army involvement was sometimes no more than “a ‘drive-by’ pick-up of an Iraqi squad while the U.S. unit is on the way to the objective.” This type of behavior by US commanders was, of course, understandable. Training Iraqi units during combat operations involved cumbersome translation problems and distracted from the tactical objective at hand; conducting an operation as a purely US or “pick-up Iraqis on the way” mission was the easiest way to avoid these problems. It was, however, not helpful for the development of independently capable forces.³⁰⁷

Nonetheless, there appeared to be a slow, but tangible change in US commanders’ attitudes. Especially the practice of having periodic meeting between the American commander and his Iraqi counterparts proved to be helpful.

In November 2005, an OIF III brigade commander staunchly defended his formal authority over Iraqi formations by refusing an IA division commander’s request to allow a company team to participate in a ceremony marking a donation of NATO armored vehicles. During preparation for the December election, this same colonel emphasized that ‘if we want our Iraqi units to play in our battlespace, they better be ready.’ [...]

During OIF IV, after the sea change directing that Iraqis be put in the lead, U.S. commanders deferred to the ‘Iraqi solution’ from MOD down to the company level. As the 2d Brigade took over its AO in May 2006, the U.S. commander respected the Iraqi commander’s prerogatives. Although misunderstandings continued to occur, the overall direction was very positive, thus reinforcing the Iraqi chain of command.³⁰⁸

Key Challenges to US Advisors

It is interesting to note in this context that Grunow listed several key challenges for US military advisers in his 2006 Military Review article, although at least some of these challenges seem to have been overcome by spring of 2007.

Recruiting, retraining and accountability: Iraqi soldiers were under effective contract, and always had the option to leave. The only instruments to keep them in the military were money and the soldiers' sense of duty, and the military had no credible way to punish absent soldiers. Meanwhile, there were numerous incentives for soldiers to quit: from a simple fear that training was too hard to threats against their families. Grunow, who trained an Iraqi Arm armored brigade, recounts that

They have assumed roles in the new Iraqi Army at great personal risk. In my brigade alone, the litany of personal tragedy grew with depressing regularity. The commander's brother was kidnapped and killed. The deputy commander's cousins, hired to protect his family, were found murdered and stacked up on his doorstep with a note saying he was next. Two of four battalion commanders had to move their families because of death threats. A deputy battalion commander's son was kidnapped and has not been found. Staff officers, soldiers, and interpreters spoke of murdered relatives or told harrowing personal stories of close calls with terrorists.

Grunow assesses that "without steadfast American support, these officers and soldiers will likely give up and consider the entire effort a lost cause."

Another issue was personnel accountability. There were no routine accountability formations, and units usually waited until payday to get a more or less accurate picture of who was assigned to the unit. US advisers actually started counting soldiers at checkpoints to get an idea of their units' manpower.³⁰⁹

- **Motivation:** Iraqi commanders were very reluctant to deploy a large percentage of their combat power on missions. US advisers tried to change this by confronting Iraqi commanders with numbers of soldiers and/or vehicles on mission, with no discernable effect. What did change the commanders' motivation, according to Grunow, was the imminent prospect of the brigade taking the lead in its area of operations.³¹⁰
- **Understanding of the mission:** Saddam-era Iraqi commanders were still attuned to the strategy and tactics of the high-intensity Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, "a war with clear battle lines fought with mass military formations, and one in which civilians on the battlefield were a nuisance, not the center of gravity." Officers and soldiers tried to solve current, low-intensity tactical problems with 1980s methods. "I frequently heard the refrain that if the Americans would only 'turn them loose,' the Iraqis would defeat the insurgency in short order," Grunow recalls.³¹¹ His trainees had trouble understanding the strategic importance of governance, infrastructure, and the economy. They rather relied on the liberal application of force, even when it was unjust and/or ineffective. "Iraqi leaders understand our reverence for the rule of law in theory, but not in practice." Also, officers below the grade of lieutenant colonel were reluctant at initiating and planning small-unit operations.³¹²

Grunow also warned that the Iraqi reaction to enemy fire was more appropriate to large-scale attacks than to insurgent tactics.

Unfortunately, the Iraqi 'death blossom' is a common tactic witnessed by nearly every U.S. Soldier who has spent any time outside the wire. Any enemy attack on the IA, whether mortar, sniper, or an improvised explosive device, provokes the average Iraqi soldier to empty his 30 round magazine and fire whatever belt of ammunition happens to be in his machine-gun. Ninety percent of the time, there is not target, and the soldiers always agree that this is extremely dangerous, in addition to being a grievous waste of ammunition. But they continue to do it.

A similar phenomenon occurs when Iraqis react to the death of a comrade on the battlefield. The reaction is very dramatic. I once observed overwrought Iraqi soldiers start to rampage through a civilian community, an event that could have been tragic if an adviser had not stepped in to stop it. At another time, an enemy sniper attack triggered a reaction that had Iraqis 'returning fire' nearly 90 minutes after the enemy had delivered one deadly shot. This 'burst reaction' may be attributed to Iraqis experiencing denial, anger, and grief all at the same time.³¹³

- **Infrastructure:** Grunow's assessment was that some materiel and infrastructure problems could be overcome rather quickly: spare parts would become more available as the National

Maintenance Contract would go into effect, soldiers would be paid more regularly, and there would be a routine system to recruit, train, and allocate new soldiers.

More time and effort were needed in order to mold the schools and training centers into a coordinated and effective military education network. Regional support centers could not immediately establish an effective logistics system. Personnel management would also need improvement. The lesson here was that “U.S. support provide[d] critical credibility while these systems [became] available.”³¹⁴

Cultural Differences and US-Iraqi Interactions

The cultural challenges affecting US and other MNF-I efforts to train Iraq’s forces are less tangible, but equally important. Once again, Grunow provides important insights on the cultural factors that impact on US training of Iraqi units:

- A more pronounced **unwillingness to recognize misconduct or failure** on the part of Iraqi soldiers and officers. “Advisers have found that photographic evidence is essential to achieve a constructive after-action review.”³¹⁵
- **Less diligence and attention to detailed planning.**
“Iraqis eschew operational calendars and typically forecast little beyond the next 48 to 72 hours. One example of this lack of regard for planning occurred prior to the handing over of operations to the 2d Brigade. The American commander’s battle rhythm included representation at local government meetings each week. When the Iraqis took charge of this schedule, they continually re-tasked responsibility for attendance, selected officers at random to attend and take notes, and generally failed to make the most of this opportunity to engage local leaders. The morning operations and intelligence update, a staple at every American tactical operation center (TOC) and an opportunity to synchronize operations, usually drew only token Iraqi attendance.”³¹⁶
- **Reactive, not proactive behavior.** Grunow relates how the unit he advised did not live up to US standards of long-term planning, but was far more comfortable with improvising on-the-spot solutions than its US partner unit.³¹⁷

These underlying cultural factors interacted with US and MNF-I efforts that rushed many Iraqi units into battle and very tangible differences in capability:

- Iraqi soldiers only received 5 weeks of basic training before they are faced with actual operations and combat. Many soldiers receive an additional 3-7 weeks of Military Occupation Specialty Qualification training, to include specialties such as infantry, transportation, and medical.
- The fast deployment into the battlespace also applied to entire units. In one instance, a new brigade conducted independent operations with Coalition support only 10 months after receiving its first soldiers.
- Iraqi officers had to make do with much less technical and manpower support than US commanders. “The battle captain in a brigade combat team (BCT) runs a TOC shift of 15 officers and soldiers while his Iraqi counterpart typically has 2 radio operators and a cell phone to call the commander.”³¹⁸

More broadly, such differences affected both the advisory effort and actual operations in complex ways, and led to different perceptions of tactics, rules of engagement, targeting, and limits to the use of force. As the previous chapter has shown all too clearly, the operations of both US and Iraqi forces alienated many Iraqis and helped fuel sectarian and ethnic differences. Neither the US nor the ISF seemed able to find methods of operations that kept popular anger and resentment (and fear) to a practical minimum.

There many variables that affected this situation, including Iraq’s failures in political conciliation and lack of unity, and the broader weaknesses in its structure of governance.

MNF-I experts feel that the top three from the military dimension were skill, will and team work. Where US officers made a major effort to work closely with Iraqis, adapted to their needs, and prepared them through team efforts to mitigate the known or suspected hazards using steps like ROC drills, map recons, sand table rehearsals, the end results were more successful.

At the same time, many in the ISF had been raised in a culture and political climate that encouraged the use of excessive force against perceived enemies and sectarian, ethnic, tribal, and clan loyalties to perceived friends. US advisors tended to train Iraqis according to US national norms that assumed Iraqi their values focused largely on serving the government as if there was not civil conflict or deep underlying set of sectarian and ethnic differences. Some Iraqis did operate on the basis of such norms. Most did not.

Seen from an Iraqi side, however, US and MNF-I trainers, embeds, and partner units often operated with far too little intelligence to understand Iraqi values and norms. They often appeared to disregard Iraqi concerns and sensitivities, and task Iraqi forces with missions that emphasized purely military goals in what was a developing mix of civil conflicts where politics, faction, and cultural sensitivity were critical.

This interacted with the fact that US and MNF-I personnel were on limited tours, while Iraqi personnel had live in the country indefinitely. The sharp differences in pay, equipment and weapons, facilities, medical care, family security often led ISF personnel and units to be far more cautious and less willing to act than US and Coalition units. So did the fact that many advisors regularly communicated distrust in Iraqi personnel, and sometimes a lack of empathy and respect. This was particularly true in the field and combat operations,

None of this meant that many Iraqi units were not willing to fight. In fact, the MNF-I estimates that Iraqi Security Forces suffered losses at a rate over three times higher than US and Coalition Units. Nevertheless, the problems in ISF force development, and US efforts to transfer responsibility to the ISF, must be seen from the perspective of US as well as Iraqi limitations.

The Role of US Special Operations Forces in Training Iraqi Security Forces

At a different level, US special forces again demonstrated their capabilities in the training and advisory mission. A total of 3,768 US Special Forces, Navy SEALs, and Air Force combat controllers were operating in Iraq by September 2006. They were partnered with a third of the Iraqi Army battalions and 13 SWAT-like police units.

Colonel Kenneth Tovo, commander of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula, described their role as follows:³¹⁹

One, they are working with battalion staffs to integrate intelligence and operations and teach them how to target. Two, they are training scout platoons to find and fix the enemy. (...) This task force understands that we cannot kill our way to victory. That said, we live in the security side of the house. We are building Iraqi security force capacity and using that to attack insurgents.³²⁰

SF Teams have done an expert job of working with Iraqi Special Operation Forces. They have been embedded since these units were stood up several years ago. This lasting relationship has resulted in the effectiveness that ISOF continues to experience. MNF-I

trainers often led as well as advised: From January until September 2006, Iraqi units with special operations advisers detained 2,065 selected targets, including 460 high- and mid-value ones, killed 222 enemy combatants, and wounded 92. Both their targeting and evidence preparation seemed successful, resulting in the continued detention of 70% of those captured. Especially impressive was the 85% conviction rate of those brought to trial, compared to the 40-50% rate of other Iraqi units.

Elite units also helped develop Iraqi forces in the field. In Mosul, a 12-man Special Forces team worked with the 172nd Stryker Brigade, but managed to make the city's mostly Sunni police force cooperate effectively with the Kurdish Army brigade, which controls Mosul's eastern half. Special Forces took Iraqi detectives along to raids to collect evidence. Ironically, the reluctance of Mosul judges to bring cases to trial or to impose sentences made part of these successful operations ineffective. The presence of Special Forces soldiers in Mosul also helped compensate for the reduction of MNF-I forces from a division to two battalions reduction in the city over the past two years,.

Kirkuk provides another example of Special Forces and 101st Airborne Division training, although no comparable figures on operations were found. A leadership course for Iraqi lieutenants, platoon leaders, and sergeants was set up, where Iraqi officers and sergeants swapped roles, learned to plan operations, and improved basic soldiering skills. Special Forces soldiers were also used as advisers to each Iraqi company. A problem here appeared to be equipment, with Iraqi units using old pickups and Special Forces relying on old Humvees.

As always, however, personalities did matter. Relations between Special Forces and the local US conventional commander appeared worse than in Mosul, however, with the latter not incorporating the whole team into the planning and execution of a sweep through three towns west of Kirkuk, days before the team was scheduled leave. As in Mosul, the Special Forces team expressed concern that their work needed to be sustained by the units following them, so that local forces would not revert to their old ways.³²¹

Real and False Progress in Assuming Leadership in Field Operations

Iraqi forces did play a steadily improving role in many areas, or that a growing number could not take the lead at the tactical level as long as they have MNF-I support and could count on MNF-I reinforcement in an emergency. Iraqi units played a larger and more important role in field operations. The problem in evaluating Iraqi capabilities is not that the ISF development program has failed, but that it has had far less real world success and independence than the Administration and Department of Defense have claimed in unclassified statements and reports and testimony to Congress.

Far too many of such claims have been more cosmetic than real. Many units "in the lead" have demonstrated little or no real mission responsibility or capability, and were extremely dependent on MNF-I command, planning, and support. In practice, they could only act under the leadership of embedded advisers and/or in cooperation with partner units. Moreover, the US ceased to report on the readiness of the units involved in any way that related to their real-world mission readiness and performance. The good were lumped together with the mediocre, bad, and inactive.

Exaggerated Progress in 2006

This was disguised by claims that approximately one-third of company-sized operations in Iraq from May until August 2006 were conducted independently by Iraqi forces, and there was a 35% increase in the number of Iraqi Army battalions that assumed the lead for counter-insurgency operations.

Department of Defense reporting and testimony also downplayed the grave problems in MOI forces. DoD reported that all 27 National Police battalions conducted counter-insurgency operations, and six battalions had the security lead in their areas of responsibility. 203 National Police Transition Teams (10 provincial, 44 District, and 149 Station) support the training of these units.³²² Additionally, 10 Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) were transferred to the Government of Iraq during May through August, bringing the total to 52 of a total 110 FOBs under Iraqi control. Three more FOBs were scheduled to be transferred to Iraq by January 2007.³²³

The MNF-I's refusal to tie its reporting to real-world unit effectiveness led it to report that a total of 5 Iraqi Army divisions, 25 brigades, and 85 battalions and 2 National Police battalions had assumed the lead responsibility for their respective areas of operation by August 7, 2006. By this time the Iraqi Army was said to have a total strength 106 combat battalions. There were eight Strategic Infrastructure Battalions (SIBs) at varying levels of capability with another three combat battalions in the process of forming. The SIBs and other enabling units were seen to be critical for improving the overall quality and independence of the Iraqi forces. Given the fact, outside experts were reported that as few as 10 battalions were effective in late November 2006, such reports presented major credibility problems.³²⁴

The August 2006 Quarterly Status report to Congress stated:³²⁵

The Coalition's primary force development objective to date has been to produce trained, equipped, and capable combat units; there has been less emphasis placed on enablers, including logistics and command and control. Now that more than two-thirds of the Iraqi Army combat units are in the lead, the Coalition's focus will shift more toward helping the Iraqis develop these enablers.

A September 2006 report by the GAO was only marginally more realistic, but provided the additional data shown in **Figure 5.3**, which compares figure from January 2006 to August and December 2006 for Iraqi units taking the lead on security operations. This figure drew on DoD and State Department reports and the GAO noted that DoD reported more detailed information on security transition in a classified format.

The GAO also stated that when an Iraqi army unit assumed the *lead*, this did not necessarily mean that the unit was capable of conducting *independent* operations, since additional capabilities provided by Coalition forces may still have been necessary. The DoD November quarterly report also stated that, "Although these units lead security in their respective areas of operations most still require substantial logistics and sustainment support from Coalition forces."³²⁶ Developing these capabilities and certify Iraqi units as fully independent required far more time since this involved the further development of logistical elements, ministry capacity and capability, intelligence structures, and command and control.³²⁷

DoD provided GAO with classified data on the aggregate number Iraqi units at each "Transition Readiness Assessment" level for the GAO September 2006 report, as well as

with more detailed information on which Iraqi units had taken the lead in counterinsurgency operations.”³²⁸

It is important to note, however, that the DoD did not provide unit-by-unit data, which would have provided a clearer overall picture since the individual unit reports contain readiness assessments in several sub-categories (personnel, command and control, training, sustainment/logistics, equipment, leadership) as well as a narrative assessment of key shortfalls and impediments of the unit to assume the lead for operations. The individual reports also estimate the time needed for the unit to assume the lead.

These failures to honestly tie claims Iraqi forces were “in the lead” to real-world effectiveness cast serious doubt on one of the most critical aspects of public MNF-I and US reporting. In fact, the GAO listed three key reasons why an accurate assessment of ISF readiness and progress could only come from the unit-by-unit reports:³²⁹

- The usefulness of TRA reports as an instrument to measure combat readiness could have been tested.
- The aggregate data could have been verified.
- Shortfalls in specific areas, such as personnel, equipment, logistics, training, and leadership, could have been identified.³³⁰

The GAO also stated that ultimate goal of continuing to strengthen ISF combat forces and the support units was to eventually eliminate the Iraqi force’s dependence on coalition forces.³³¹

Figure 5.3**Iraqi Units Leading Operations and Provinces with Security Responsibility as of December 2006**

Type of Security Transition		January 2006	August 2006	October, 2006	December, 2006	DoD goal
Iraqi army units leading counterinsurgency operations in specific areas	Divisions	2	5		7	10
	Brigades	8	25		30	36
	Battalions	37	85	90	93	114 (includes Iraqi army and special operations battalions)
Number of Provinces that have assumed security responsibility		0	1		3	18

Source: General Accounting Office, "Stabilizing Iraq: An Assessment of the Security Situation," September 11, 2006, p.17 and Walker, David M. , "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq." General Accounting Office January 18, 2007, pg. 23-24

Reported Programs as of Early 2007

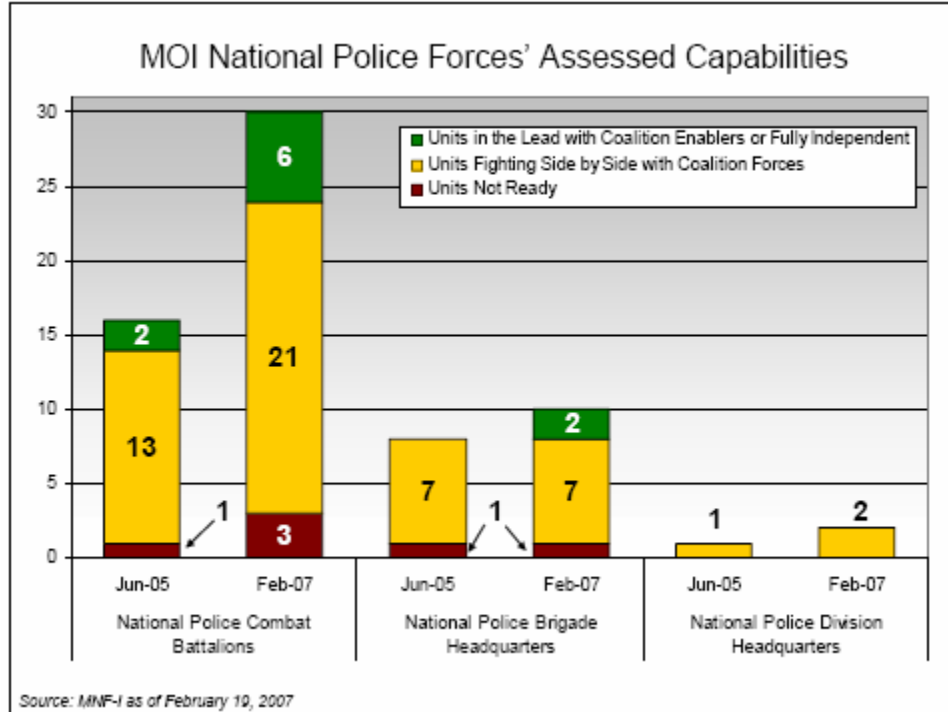
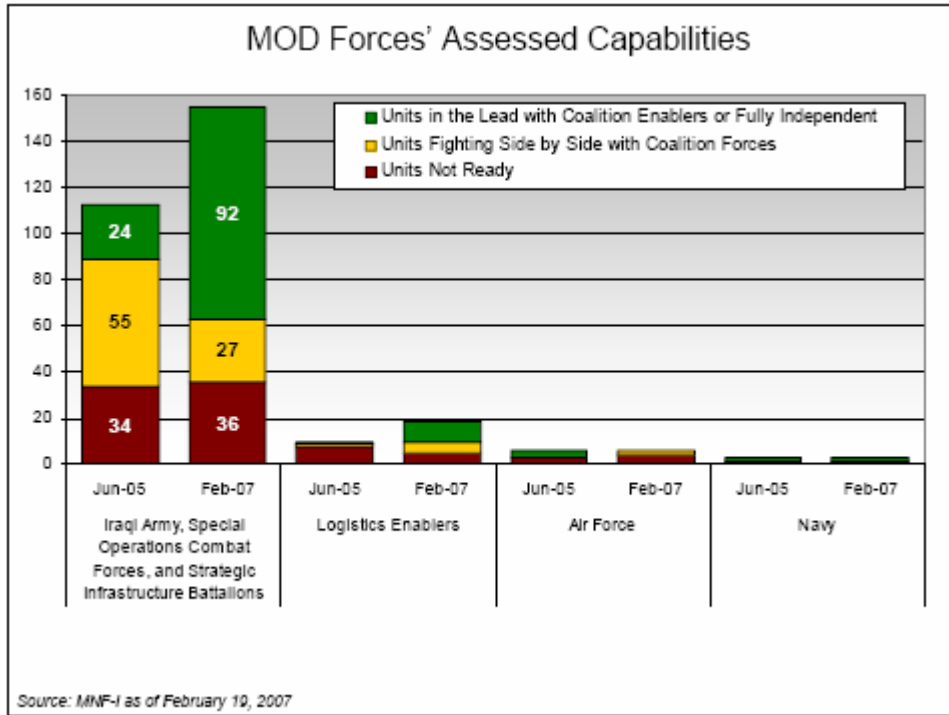
Figure 5.4 compares the growth of assessed MOD and MOI National Police force capabilities at the unit level from June 2005 to February, 2007 in terms of units not yet ready, units fighting side by side with Coalition force, and units in the lead with Coalition enablers or fully independent. Once again, however, DoD has defined the term “in the lead” as being “with Coalition enablers or fully independent,” and neither shows how many of these units are really “fully independent” or defines this term in ways that have any relation to actual combat units.³³²

In fact, the units counted as “in the lead” in **Figure 5.4** range from highly effective to virtually passive and incapable of any kind of meaningful mission on their own. Once again, meaningful readiness data would require unit-by-unit data that contained readiness assessments in several sub-categories (personnel, command and control, training, sustainment/logistics, equipment, leadership) as well as a narrative assessment of key shortfalls and impediments of the unit to assume the lead for operations. They would also estimate the time needed for the unit to assume the lead.

Useful combat capability data would also have to be based on actual unit performance in given types of missions, not readiness data or estimates devoid of combat experience. It is one of the odd tragedies of current intelligence and force assessment reporting that it generally is far less meaningful than the World War One era assessments that focused more on unit history in combat than efforts to find directly comparable statistic indicators or assessments by category.

Moreover, “fully independent” is almost meaningless if the units cannot engage in any form of demanding combat operation without support from US airpower, artillery, and or logistics; they lack the armor to operate in demanding missions; and require emergency back up from Coalition forces if anything goes wrong. Even the best forces cannot use weapons they do not have, or perform missions for which they are not equipped. This is particularly true when Iraqi forces have very limited IS&R capabilities, which are grossly inferior to those of US forces, and security considerations restrict how much data many “in the lead” units can be given.

Figure 5.4
MOD Forces' Assessed Capabilities



Adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2007 Report to Congress, p. 26; Note: +/- 5% margin of error

Little progress has been made in providing more objective reports. Gen. George Casey reported in mid-October 2006 that six of the 10 Iraqi divisions – 30 of the 36 brigades and almost 90 of the 112 battalions were “in the lead.” He still described the task as training and equipping units, then “putting them in the lead,” to finally make them independent.³³³ Roughly the same claims were made in testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in mid-November, and in the March 2007 DoD quarterly report..

Virtually all independent reporting by major media, however, has presented a very different picture of readiness as have many officers returning from Iraq. For example, an LA Times article in early December 2006 described an operation in Baghdad with Iraqi units supposedly “in the lead,” that showed some of the difficulties Iraqi Army units had under the stress of combat. While this evidence is at best anecdotal, it is still significant because the unit in question was Iraq’s 9th Mechanized Division; one of Iraq’s best trained and equipped divisions (mentioned earlier as the unit trained by Lt. Col. Carl D. Grunow). US Army Col. Douglass S. Heckman, recalls how “In August, when we started Operation Together Forward to secure Baghdad, we called on a bunch of units to assist. This division was the only one that moved into the operation. The others balked.”

The problems even this unit had in performing against insurgents in Baghdad did not bode well for the state of Iraqi security forces and suggested that Iraqi force development would take patience. The operation’s objective in Baghdad’s Fadhil neighborhood was to capture 70 high-value targets. In the end, 43 insurgents, including three foreign nationals, were captured, and an estimated 100 killed, with only one Iraqi soldier killed and six wounded, albeit with significant collateral damage.

The course of the 11-hour operation revealed several weaknesses of the 9th mechanized division. After the unit had walked into an ambush and were stopped by a coordinated rocket, grenade, and mortar attack, “fear took over” among the Iraqis, according to Staff Sgt. Michael Baxter. “They refused to move. We were yelling at them to move.” While the Iraqis were supposed to take the lead in the operation, “it started out that way,” Baxter said. “But five minutes into it, we had to take over.”

The LA Times article recounted how

[...] confusion swiftly reigned as insurgents in Fadhil pummeled dismounted Iraqi troops and their American advisors. U.S. radio jammers seeking to hinder communications between insurgents ended up blocking the Iraqi soldiers’ walkie-talkies, forcing them to use unreliable cell phone signals to stay in contact. Voice commands were lost [...]

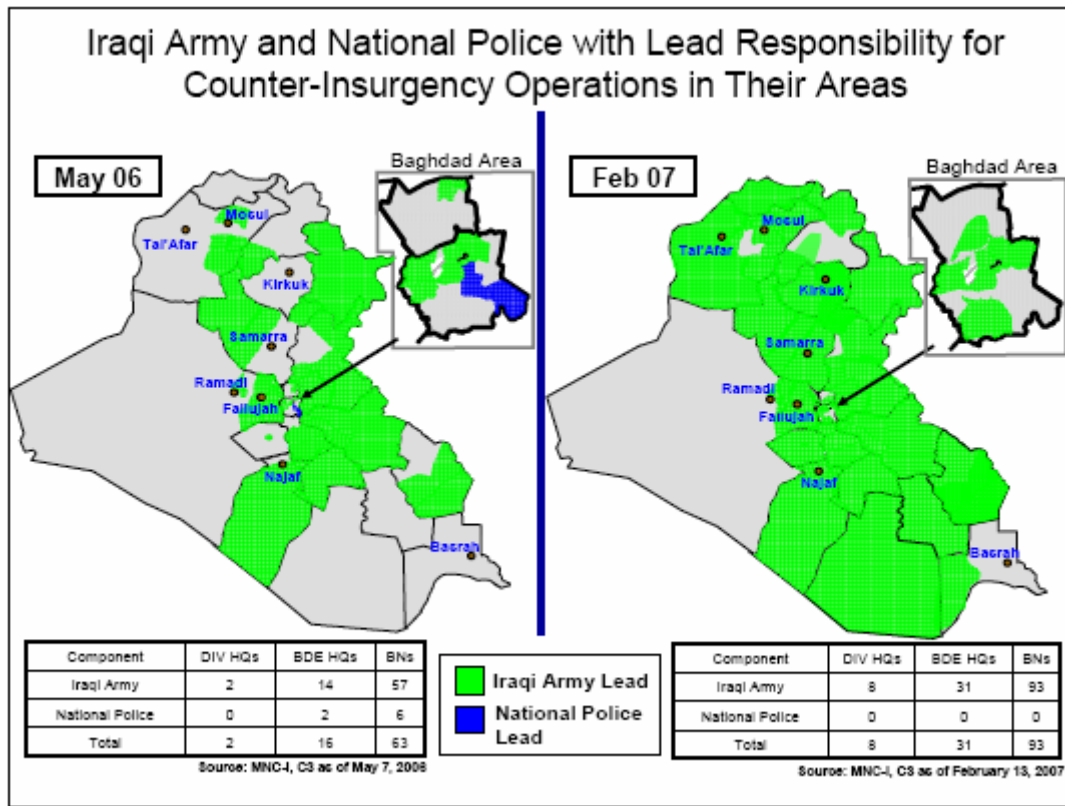
(The 9th Iraqi Division and its 1st Brigade were employed in combat operations in East Baghdad for the first time in August. The division was required to control multiple brigades and US advisers witnessed the same lack of weapons discipline Grunow described in his Military Review article: At times, the overwhelmed Iraqi soldiers fired wildly, sweeping their machine-gun barrels across friendly and insurgent targets alike, witnesses said. “I had to throw bullet casings at them to get their attention,” said Sgt. 1st Class Agustin Mendoza, another U.S. trainer who manned a Humvee gut turret during the battle. “They had no weapons discipline.” [...]

Other reporting casts serious doubt on the value of the kind of reporting provided in The March 2007 Department of Defense Quarterly report. This report provided a map

showing that Iraqi Army units were in the lead in counterinsurgency operations in Iraq in every area in Iraq except Al Anbar, roughly half of Baghdad, a Kurdish area, and the Basra area in the far southeast. This same map also claimed that the Iraqi Army had experienced extraordinary levels of development from May 2006 to February 2007. These data are somewhat different from those reported in Figure 5.3 and are shown in **Figure 5.5**:

Figure 5.5

Iraqi Army and National Police with Lead Responsibility for Counter Insurgency Operations in Their Areas



	Division HQs		Brigade HQs		Battalions	
	May 06	Feb 07	May 06	Feb 07	May 06	Feb 07
Iraqi Army	2	8	14	31	57	93
National Police	0	0	2	0	6	6
Total	2	8	16	31	63	93

Source: US Department of Defense, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq." Report to Congress, March 2007, p. 22

The data in **Figure 5.5** also show the high level of dependence still placed on the uncertain capabilities of the National Police. The Department of Defense reported that all 27 National Police battalions conducted counter-insurgency operations, and six battalions had the security lead in their areas of responsibility. 203 National Police Transition Teams (10 provincial, 44 District, and 149 Station) support the training of these units.³³⁴ Additionally, 10 Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) were transferred to the Government of Iraq during May through August, bringing the total to 52 of a total 110 FOBs under Iraqi control. Three more FOBs were scheduled to be transferred to Iraq by January 2007.³³⁵

The Impact of Manpower Quality

As is discussed in more detail in the chapters that follow, manpower quality affects every aspect of Iraqi force development. It has, however, been a major factor limiting how quickly responsibility can be transferred to Iraqi forces, and the real-world capability of units to take the lead in combat.

Issues with Junior Officers and NCOs

Leadership quality and experience take years to develop and a lack of junior officers and NCOs continued to be one of the largest factors hampering development of MOD forces. There were not enough trained officers and NCOs to fill the lower-level staff and leadership positions.

Addressing these leadership problems could only be solved over time as officers were trained and NCOs gained experience. To provide educational opportunities, the Regional Training Centers (RTCs) and the NCO Academy focused on training personnel for senior leadership positions. In addition to the schools, Coalition Military Assistance Training Teams provided additional guidance. The military leadership also began to interact more with civic leaders in their areas of operation, moving toward the possibility of Iraqis becoming more responsible for a comprehensive approach to their own security and interests.³³⁶

The Department of Defense, in August 2006, summarized the situation as follows and in ways that further illustrated the problems concealed in the reporting on the transfer of responsibility and the number of Iraqi forces in the lead:³³⁷

The lack of junior officers and NCOs continues to be one of the biggest factors impeding development of MOD forces. There is a shortage of school-trained officers and NCOs to fill lower-level staff and leadership positions. The shortage of leaders will abate as officer recruits are commissioned and they join their units. For NCOs, qualified soldiers are being “grown from within” through development and schooling to achieve promotion to NCO leadership positions. The Regional Training Centers (RTCs) and the NCO Academy focus on junior leader development that is critical to building a professional force. The RTCs conduct Squad Leader and Platoon Sergeant Courses. Newly formed Sergeants Major and Chief Warrant Officer Courses have been added to the NCO Professional Education System. Specialized leadership courses, such as Logistics Supervisor, are being conducted at the Iraqi Army Service and Support Institute at Taji. Three Iraqi Military Academies at Zahko, Qalachwalan, and Ar Rustimiyah continue to train future officers.

According to Gen. George Casey, one limiting factor to meaningful growth of the Iraqi Army was a dearth of qualified commanders:

“Frankly, some of our guys will say it’s still kind of the limiting factor. (...) If you want to grow two more divisions, the real question is: Can you come up with two divisions’ worth of good Iraqi leaders?”³³⁸

Another problem was links between Shi’ite militias and high-level officers at military headquarters as well as government officials, who cancelled a number of operations, protecting friends or certain neighborhoods.³³⁹

Like the problems in the MOD, the loyalty and competency of those in MOI leadership positions continued to be of even more serious concern. To address these problems and to develop more effective leaders in the IPS three two week long leadership courses were designed: the First Line Supervisor course, the Intermediate Level Course and the Senior Level Course were intended to train company grade, field grade and General Officers respectively. The courses were designed to address topics in police methods, ethics, leadership, management and problem solving at a level appropriate to the various levels of leadership.

Additionally, plans were in place to expand the Intermediate-Level Officers course beginning in the fall of 2006. Among officers with experience in the old regime, forming a substantial part of those in higher leadership positions, the matter of conflicting or uncertain loyalties continued to be problematic. Overall, officers trained solely through the IPS courses were thought to be more committed to their mission and it was hoped that as they rose in the ranks displacing higher level officers the officer corps as a whole would become more effective and more loyal.³⁴⁰

Educating the Overall Force

Continued progress has taken place in turning over the training mission of Iraqi soldiers to Iraqi trainers. In July and August 2006, for example, soldiers from the 24th Scout Platoon, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, conducted a three-week training course that covered an array of topics, including weapons maintenance, basic rifle marksmanship, reflexive fire training, basic infantry skills, and urban combat tactics.³⁴¹ The presence of Iraqi military trainers was a significant piece of the effort to endow Iraq with the indigenous abilities to build and maintain a force for the long-term.

So was the growing institutionalization of the Iraqi training effort. The Iraqi Army came to utilize over 21 schools and centers. The Iraqi Police were trained at nine different police academies. On any given day the Iraqi Army had as many as 15,000 soldiers training at their training bases.

On August 10, 2006, for example, Iraq’s Ministry of the Interior graduated 16 students from the first Inspector General’s investigation course. The Office of the Inspector General was created as an independent, objective office within the MOI, charged with investigating charges of corruption, fraud, waste, abuse, and other complaints regarding MOI officials. Additionally, the unit was set up to conduct audits and evaluations “to review effectiveness, efficiency and integrity of all MOI personnel and operations.”³⁴² Charges of corruption, abuse, fraud, and waste had plagued the MOI since its inception. The creation of an internal accountability mechanism was seen as at least one step in the right direction toward combating these deficiencies.

On September 12, 16 Iraqi police officers boarded planes bound for the United States to receive training. The men, members of the Iraqi River Patrol, headed to the US to receive riverine training at the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. The six-week course was

designed to give the selected group skills in such areas as basic seamanship skills and covert night operations. The effort was part of the US military's "train-the-trainer" effort, whereby these men would go back to Iraq and be responsible for future training of personnel in these techniques.³⁴³

There were, however, continuing problems with the quality of training, and the rush to create new capabilities led to other problems. During late the summer and early fall of 2006; some military officials began to express discontent with the number of US military personnel being employed in the training and mentoring effort. At the time, there were 4,000 US military advisers serving on Military Transition Teams (MiTTs). The number of partnered units was, however, beginning to drop as of August 2006, with advisers being concentrated on fewer and fewer bases. Moreover, most advisers now operated that at the battalion level and above, while the type of counterinsurgency warfare being taught is actually fought, for the most part, at the company, platoon and squad level.³⁴⁴

More tangibly, the rush to create new facilities sometimes created major problems of a different kind. The new Police Academy, for example, was so badly constructed that parts quickly became virtually uninhabitable.

Dealing with Injury, Illness, and Retirement

Additional problems occurred when Iraqi forces were killed, wounded, or retired. In March 2007, the government of Iraq was still formulating a law to reform the system of retirement and death benefits payments. According to the DoD: "The current system is based on an upfront lump sum payment and a pension of 80% of the total basic pay and allowances. This provided adequate financial support to families. These benefits have received significant attention from the MOI, and potential changes that would have undermined these initiatives have been strongly resisted. This effectively means that the MOI's employment rolls are enlarged; this is currently seen as being the most effective means of 'looking after their own.'"³⁴⁵

The ISF system for caring for severely wounded service members remained badly in need of reform. Currently, most wounded simply remain on the rolls in their old units in order to receive pay and benefits. The MOD recently created medical "follow-up" units across the country, to which severely wounded soldiers are assigned. According to the DoD: "This allows soldiers who are physically incapable of conducting their duties to be dropped from their unit rolls while still retaining pay and benefits." A similar plan will be implemented in the MOI.³⁴⁶

Progress in the Transfer of High Level Command and Responsibility

The US and MNF-I have worked with Iraqis, its allies, and outside powers to move towards a full transfer of authority over military operations to the Iraqi government under Iraqi command, subject to suitable conditions. The US and MNF-I have already taken many steps to facilitate the actual transfer authority for military operations and Iraqi force building to Iraqi hands.

At the same time, some transfers occurred before Iraqis were fully ready, and some involved combat units that could not perform serious missions. Such transfers were also limited to the degree they focused on dealing with the insurgency, rather than creating a

fully combat capable national force, and left ISF units dependent on MNF-I forces in many ways:

- Iraqi forces do not have offensive airpower and have only limited operational air mobility. They have no near to mid-term prospect of getting precision air strike capability.
- They are indefinitely dependent on the US for armor and artillery support.
- They are critically short of force enablers like logistics and sustainability. It is dependent on the US for much of the shipping it needs to bring supplies and equipment into the country, and on services that require US bases to be active in Iraq.
- They are indefinitely dependent on US intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R) capabilities.
- No plans as yet exist to create Iraqi forces heavy enough to defend Iraq against Iraq's neighbors and create forces capable of defending Iraq's sovereignty.
- Iraq cannot finance the force posture it is creating.

Plans and Progress in Transfers of Responsibility in 2006

By 2006, the MNF-I and Iraqi governments had developed a formal process for transferring responsibility. The US and MNF-I stated that such transitions in provincial security were based on monthly reviews of the situation in the provinces and in the provincial capitals by the MNF Division Commander and Provincial Governor, assisted by representatives of the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Defense, and US and UK Embassies. "The Joint Committee to Transfer Security Responsibility (JCTSR) working group presented its monthly recommendations to the JCTSR principals about the readiness of individual provinces. Once such a decision to hand over responsibility was made, the JCTSR working group was responsible for providing oversight of the handover process, to develop a public affairs plan, and to arrange a security arrangement for the time after the transfer of control."³⁴⁷

It also involved a four phases that MNF-I said emphasized the role of the Iraqi government and visibility to the Iraqi people:³⁴⁸

- **Implement Partnerships.** MNF-I and its Major Subordinate Commands establish and maintain partnerships across the entire spectrum of ISF units, from battalion 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 required to assume control and to 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.

US Reporting stated that,³⁴⁹

These phases are not strictly sequential. For example, the Iraqi Army does not have to assume the lead in a province before Coalition forces may begin transfer of provincial control. This was the case in Muthanna. Phase 1 of the security transition concept—implementing partnerships—is already complete. As described above, the second phase, Iraqi Army lead, is well under way in many provinces. The third phase, establishing provincial Iraqi control over security, will be implemented on an area-by-area basis. The Government of Iraq, jointly with military and political leadership of the United States and Coalition partners in Iraq, will assess when conditions permit handing over security

responsibility for specific areas from Coalition forces to the Iraqi civil authorities. The Joint Committee to Transfer Security Responsibility (JCTSR) has developed criteria to guide the transfer of security responsibility. Recommendations for transfer include an assessment of conditions in four categories:

- Threat Assessment
- ISF Readiness
- Local Governance Capability
- MNF-I Ability to Respond Quickly to
- Major Threats, if Needed

The recommendation to transfer security responsibility is based on the specific situation in any one province or provincial capital in the context of the overall security environment. The appropriate Multi-National Force Division Commander and Provincial Governor, assisted by representatives of the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Defense and U.S. and United Kingdom Embassies, conduct monthly assessments of provinces and of provincial capitals. The JCTSR working group meets monthly to review the assessments and to present recommendations to the JCTSR principals regarding which provinces are ready to be transferred. Once a decision is made, the JCTSR working group will provide oversight of the development of transition directives, develop a public affairs plan, and arrange a post-transfer security agreement between MNF-I forces and provincial governors. Every transfer will ensure an effective and successful handover of security responsibilities. Moreover, the transition and reduced presence of MNF-I forces will be plainly visible to the Iraqi people.

The US, MNF-I, and the Iraqi government announced a wide range of steps to transfer responsibility to Iraqi forces in 2006. Some represented real progress, but many tried to rush Iraqi force development forward at rates driven more by politics than actual readiness and capability. The pace became far too fast in terms of real world ISF effectiveness and illustrates the danger of rushing still additional measures to transfer control to Iraq. Several years, not months, are required in some cases to make such transfers complete and effective.

The key developments in 2006 can be summarized as follows:³⁵⁰

- Giving 115 Iraqi army units the lead for counterinsurgency operations in specific areas as of August 2006.³⁵¹
- In July three northern provinces – Dahuk, Irbil, and Sulamanlyah – were evaluated as ready for transition. Anbar and Basrah were considered as “not ready”, while all other provinces, including Baghdad, were evaluated as “partially ready for transition.” Three southern provinces –An Najaf, Wasit, and Maysan – are projected to assume security responsibility by February 6, 2006.³⁵²
- Control of Muthanna province was transferred to the Provincial Governor and the civilian-controlled Iraqi Police Service on July 13th.³⁵³
- On August 14, the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division took control of security operations in the Mahmudiyah and Lutufiyah areas of Baghdad. The transition gave the brigade responsibility for of security operations in the area in one of the safest areas in Iraq, but this was still real progress over the past and allowed Coalition forces to shift to more of a support role.
- On August 30, US Army General George Casey told reporters in Baghdad that, “over the next 12 to 18 months, I can see the Iraqi Security Forces progressing to a point where they can take on the security responsibilities for the country with very little Coalition support.”³⁵⁴ By late August, half of Iraq’s 10 army divisions were said to in charge of their own territories or in the process of taking over from Coalition forces.³⁵⁵
- On September 7, 2006 the Iraqi government said it was starting to formally take control over the highest echelons of the command its armed forces, beginning with the 8th Army Division, the Navy, and the Air Force. A US military spokesman speculated that further control transfers could

take place at a pace of about two divisions per month.³⁵⁶ The transfer of command included the creation of a chain of command for controlling the armed forces running from the Prime Minister to the defense minister, then to joint headquarters in Baghdad, and finally to the Iraqi ground-forces command. The United States said this self-sufficient line of authority was crucial for the independence of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).³⁵⁷

- On October 28, President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki announced they had set up a working group to speed the transfer of security responsibilities in Iraq to Iraqi government. It included the Iraqi national security advisor, minister of defense and minister of interior, the US ambassador, and the commander of MNF-I. The goals of this group would be “accelerating the pace of training the Iraqi Security Force, Iraqi assumption of command and control over Iraqi forces, and transferring responsibility for security to the government of Iraq.” The plan was presented as a response to Maliki’s wish to speed up the transfer of responsibility.³⁵⁸
- On September 21 the Italian forces in Dhi Qar Province handed security responsibilities over to Iraqi forces making it the second province to come under local Iraqi control.³⁵⁹ This paved the way for the departure of most of Italy’s 1,600 troops by the end of 2006.³⁶⁰
- In mid-October, Gen. George Casey estimated that there would be six or seven provinces under provincial Iraqi control by the end of 2006.³⁶¹
- On November 13, 2006, the Iraqi Army assumed responsibility for one of the most dangerous sections of Baghdad. The 6th Iraqi Division, Fourth Brigade, Fifth Battalion, took charge of the 23 square mile section in the south of the capital. It includes Dora, a Sunni neighborhood dominated by hard-line supporters of the old Ba’ath party regime, and also parts of the “triangle of death,” also a volatile area. The battalion is almost equally divided between Sunnis and Shi’ites and commanded by 32-year-old Colonel Ali Fadil. The US Army’s 25th Infantry Division’s Fourth Brigade will stand by and help the Iraqi unit if needed. The 4th brigade has also placed combat advisers among the Iraqi soldiers.³⁶²

In December 2006, responsibility for security in An Najaf Province was transferred from MNF-I to the provincial government and civilian-controlled Iraqi Police. An Najaf is the third of Iraq’s 18 provinces to be designated for transition to PIC. The joint decision of the Government of Iraq and MNF-I to hand over security responsibility is the result of the An Najaf civilian authorities’ demonstrated ability to manage their own security and governance duties at the provincial level.³⁶³

- Security responsibility for 3 southern provinces - Qadisiyah, Ninewah, and Maysan - was scheduled to be ready to assume security responsibility in the spring of 2007.³⁶⁴ The transfer of responsibility in An Najaf occurred in December 2006.
- On December 17, 2006, the Prime Minister and the Ministerial Committee for National Security approved the transfer of security responsibility for Dahuk, Irbil, and Sulaymaniyah to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). These provinces will transition to PIC on completion of negotiations between the Government of Iraq and the KRG to resolve a national budgetary issue concerning the defense budget. These three provinces and three others—Qadisiyah, Maysan, and Ninewah—are expected to transition to PIC by the spring of 2007. The remaining provinces are expected to achieve PIC in 2007 except for Anbar, which is projected to transfer to PIC in early 2008.³⁶⁵

Progress in Early 2007

The Department of Defense announced further steps to accelerate the transfer of responsibility to Iraqi forces in its March 2007 Quarterly report, as well as new efforts to plan and coordinate an accelerated transfer. The Department of Defense reported that the US and MNF-I reported that 8 Division Headquarters, and 93 Iraqi Army battalions had assumed “the lead” for counter-insurgency operations within their assigned areas of operations as of February 13, 2007, and that Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) had assumed command and control of 6 of 10 Iraqi Army divisions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 8th, and

10th). In contrast, the National Police, which was rated as having 6 battalions “in the lead” in May 2006, was rated as having none in the lead in February 2007.³⁶⁶

The March 2007 Quarterly Report claimed that:³⁶⁷

Events in January 2007 validated the post-transfer security concept. When the local An Najaf police were unexpectedly fired upon, they assessed the situation to be beyond their means to control. The provincial governor then requested assistance from the National Command Center (NCC), which alerted and deployed additional units from outside the province. Once those units arrived, an additional call for support was sent. The NCC requested helicopter and airplane support from Coalition forces, which also sent a Quick Reaction Force to assist. The outcome was a decisive victory by the ISF.

The British reported additional developments in the south. Major Ormond-King stated that British forces would be ready to turn over full control of Basra by the spring of 2007. However, he also stated that there were no British plans to disarm the Shi’ite militia groups that operate in the city. The feasibility of fully transferring control of security to Iraqi forces while large and well-armed militias continue to operate remains to be seen.

The Department of Defense also described potential improvements in US and Iraqi coordination in planning and implementing the transfer of responsibility in the course of late 2006 and early 2007,³⁶⁸

The President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Iraq met in Amman, Jordan, in November 2006, to review the recommendations regarding the transfer of security responsibilities to the Government of Iraq. These recommendations included the establishment of nine committees focused on the following issues: MOD training and equipping, MOI training and equipping, transfer of operational control of Iraqi Army Divisions to the Government of Iraq, transfer of provincial control to the Government of Iraq, development of ministerial capacities, improved security coordination between MNF-I and the Government of Iraq, development of an Iraqi counter-terrorism capability, development of an Iraqi National Intelligence system, and development of a National Security Architecture. With the approval of the Iraqi Prime Minister, implementation of this effort is under way.

...The first series of reports from the nine committees was completed on February 19, 2007. The committees will continue their efforts toward acceleration and transference of security responsibilities until completion. After the transfer of security responsibilities is complete, a long-term security relationship serving the interests of the United States, Iraq, the region, and the rest of the world can be established.

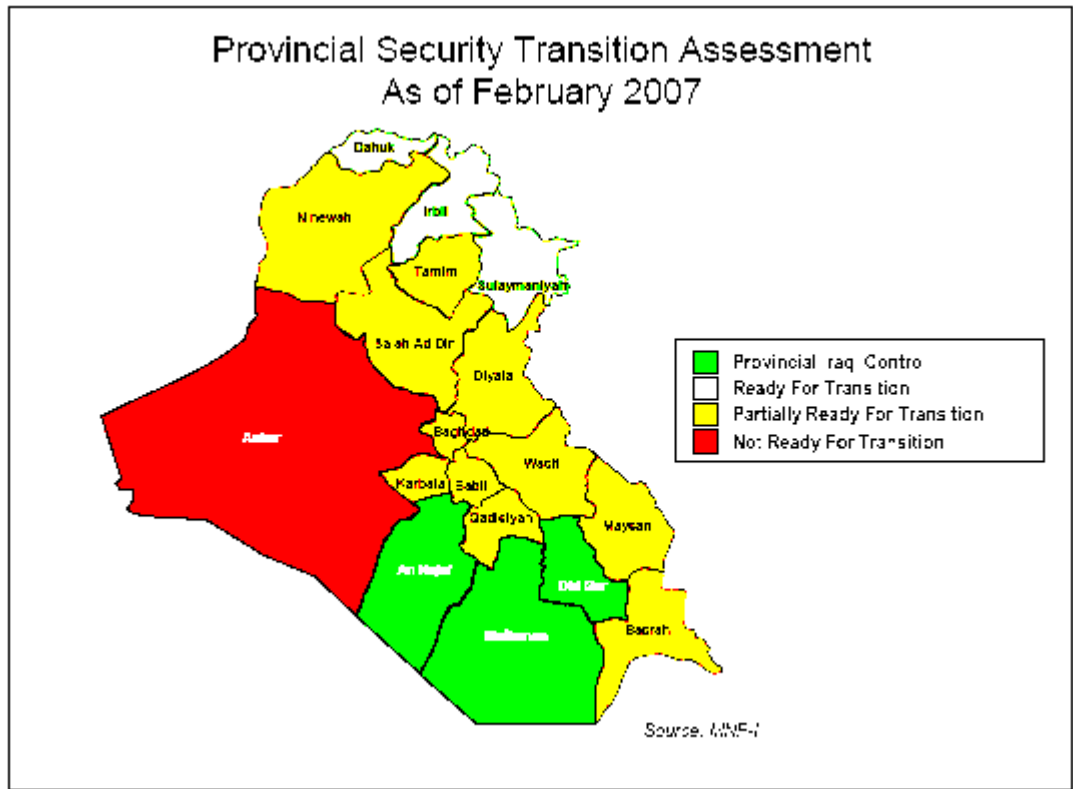
...The Coalition is focusing on improving the proficiency of all military and police units, primarily through the efforts of Transition Teams. These teams, composed of 6,000 advisors in more than 480 teams, are embedded at all levels of Iraqi units in all major subordinate commands.

...The transfer of security responsibility from Coalition forces to the Government of Iraq reflects Iraq’s ability to protect its citizens and safeguard its territory. As Iraqis take on more responsibility for security, Coalition forces move into supporting roles, while maintaining sufficient forces on the ground to help Iraq consolidate and secure its gains.

The Joint Committee to Transfer Security Responsibility (JCTSR) has developed criteria to guide the transfer of security responsibility to Iraq. Recommendations for transfer include an assessment of conditions in four categories: Threat Assessment, ISF Readiness, Local Governance Capability, and MNF-I Ability to Respond Quickly to Major Threats (if needed). The appropriate Multi-National Force division commander and provincial governor, assisted by representatives of the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Defense and U.S. and United Kingdom Embassies, conduct monthly assessments of provinces and provincial capitals. Once a decision is made to transfer security responsibilities, the JCTSR provides transition directives, develops a public affairs plan, and arranges a post-transfer security agreement between MNF-I and provincial governors.

The overall progress reported in transferring responsibility at the provincial level is shown in **Figure 5.2**.

Figure 5.2
Transfer of Responsibility to ISF as of February 2007



Source: Department of Defense, Quarterly Report to Congress, March 2007. p. 23

Uncertain Political Cosmetics

Unfortunately, transfer efforts continued to be attempted at a rate where they could not be realistic. For example, the Department of Defense August 2006 Quarterly Status report on Iraq stated that the ISF might be able to transition to control nine of the 18 provinces by the end of 2006. It did not explain why this would be possible or provide any risk assessment. It also did not state what level of continued US support would be needed after the transfer.³⁶⁹

The Department of Defense Quarterly status report for August 2006 warned that,³⁷⁰

The new Minister of Defense, Abd al-Qadr Muhammad Jassim al-Mufraji, is confronting the challenges he faces and is already making his mark...Close and effective relationships are being forged by team members with all senior MOD headquarters officials, and the confidence, and thus capacity, of these officials is strengthening. The ministries and the Joint Headquarters are expected to be in the lead with Coalition support by the end of 2007. However, a partnership with these institutions will be required through at least the first peaceful transfer of power in 2010.

Media report after media chronicled the fact that many, if not most, Iraqi forces were not actually capable of taking full responsibility. The ISF was not capable of fully independent operational and intelligence planning in command in any province and had severe qualitative limits in most. Divisions and brigades were still forming, and at the battalion level, the March 2007 Department of Defense Quarterly report still warned that virtually all of the Iraqi units involved “still require substantial logistics and sustainment support from Coalition forces.”³⁷¹

Transfer of US and MNF-I Bases to the ISF

The transfer of bases from US and other MNF-I forces to the ISF has also made progress, and helped defuse Iraqi fears that the US and MNF-I sought to be permanent “occupiers.” The Coalition had closed 48 of 110 Forward Operating Bases by August 2006, handing over 31 to different Iraqi security forces, and 17 to the Ministry of Finance.

The Department of Defense reported in August that, “MNF-I will efficiently consolidate its footprint in Iraq to reduce its military basing requirements progressively. Specifically, MNF-I seeks to minimize its presence in major cities while building the flexibility required to support other elements in Iraq, including Coalition partners, PRTs, Transition Teams, Department of State activities, and other supporting units and entities. This process will culminate in the transition through Operational and Strategic Overwatch, which will leverage and maximize support through a minimum number of strategically located FOBs and Convoy Support Centers.”³⁷²

Three more Forward Operating Bases were closed and transferred by January 2007.³⁷³ Furthermore, the US reported that continued transfer of bases to the ISF was a significant element of its strategy,³⁷⁴

MNF-I is consolidating its locations in Iraq to reduce its temporary basing requirements using a “bottom-up” conditions-based process to synchronize basing requirements with Coalition forces requirements and the projected command-and-control structure. The timeline for this process is being adjusted to support the short-term surge for the Baghdad Security Plan. However, MNF-I has already reduced its presence in major cities while developing the flexibility and maintaining the force level required to support other elements in Iraq, including Coalition partners, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Transition Teams, other supporting entities, and the Department of State. This process will maximize support through a minimum number of strategically located forward operating bases and convoy support centers. Because most of the ISF have been strategically

based on former Coalition bases, MNF-I is actively engaging the Ministry of Finance and other entities in the Government of Iraq in order to identify future tenants to take possession of the remaining bases.

Transfer of Detainees

Progress in another critical aspect of ISF development -- transferring detainees from MNF-I to ISF control -- has been severely impacted by sectarian and ethnic divisions. The US has reported that that MNF-I had begun training Iraqi guards for a potential transition of the Coalition detention facilities and detainees. It stated that transitioning detainee operations was a three-phase process, and showed the detainee population shown in **Figure 5.6**.³⁷⁵

In June 2006, MNF-I, in coordination with the Government of Iraq, conducted a large-scale release of detainees in support of the newly formed national unity government. The release served as a visible symbol of the government's commitment to national unity and reconciliation in the progress toward democratic governance and the rule of law. MNF-I released 2,500 low-risk detainees over a period of three weeks. Coupled with the 500 detainees from the normal Combined Review and Release Board process, MNF-I had a net reduction of more than 2,000 detainees in June. A MNF-I special board reviewed approximately 6,500 records to identify the low-risk detainees. Each file was also reviewed by the MNF-I Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence to consider any additional intelligence reports. Detainees involved in violent acts, IED making/placement, financing insurgent operations, identified as key insurgent leaders, or who have been recaptured were not considered for release...

- Phase 1 consists of individual and collective training of Iraqi guards and leaders, including training alongside their U.S. counterparts inside the facility.
- Phase 2 consists of the removal of U.S. guards and establishment of a U.S. transition team to supervise Iraqi Security Forces and to maintain legal custody of detainees.
- Phase 3 consists of the final removal of all U.S. personnel and turnover of the facilities and legal custody of the detainees to the Government of Iraq.

The criteria for transfer includes the requirement for the Government of Iraq to possess the legal authority to hold security detainees, each facility demonstrating the ability to meet the care and custody standard, and the MOJ having effective oversight of the program.

The MNF-I worried, however, that such efforts were still in Phase 1 as of August 2006. It stated that, "significant challenges exist to ultimately meeting these criteria. The Iraqi Corrections System has not demonstrated since that time that it has the capacity to effectively resource and run a major facility, such as Camp Bucca."³⁷⁶

The MNF-I did begin training Iraqi guards for a potential transition of the Coalition detention facilities and detainees, and transitioning detainee operations in a three-phased process

- Phase 1 consists of individual and collective training of Iraqi guards and leaders, including training alongside their U.S. counterparts inside the facility.
- Phase 2 consists of the removal of U.S. guards and establishment of a U.S. transition team to supervise Iraqi Security Forces and to maintain legal custody of detainees.
- Phase 3 consists of the final removal of all U.S. personnel and turnover of the facilities and legal custody of the detainees to the Government of Iraq.
- The criteria for transfer includes the requirement for the Government of Iraq to possess the legal authority to hold security detainees, each facility demonstrating the ability to meet the care and custody standard, and the MOJ having effective oversight of the program.

Given the sectarian and ethnic composition of the guard forces, however, “serious questions remain as to whether they will be able to develop the required standards of care and custody. The most significant obstacle remains establishing the legal authority to hold security detainees. There is widespread opposition inside the Sunni political leadership to providing this authority to the Government of Iraq.”³⁷⁷

Some aspects of the problem are clearly getting worse. The UN reported in November 2006 that police and military security operations continued to be based on massive sweeps that resulted in growing numbers of individuals detained and without access to adequate judicial review.³⁷⁸ According to the Ministry of Human Rights, the total number of detainees for the entire country was 29,256 (13,571 of whom are in MNF I detention facilities) at the end of October, a slight decrease from the number of 30,104 detainees reported at the end of September 35,543 reported at the end of August, and 28,378 in July. The UN report noted the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights reported the following breakout of detainees by jurisdiction. These results are summarized in **Figure 5.7**:

Figure 5.7**Iraqi Holdings of Detainees by Jurisdiction"³⁷⁹**

	September	October
MNF – I	13,571	13,571
MOJ	8,450	8,528
MOI	4,181	3,613
MOD	873	873
MOLSA	480	456
Totals except KRG	27,555	27,041
Totals in Kurdistan	2,549	2,215
Totals all over Iraq	30,104	29,256

The UN also reported serious problems in this aspect of ISF force development:³⁸⁰

Arbitrary detention, grievous conditions of detention, allegations of torture and mistreatment continue to remain an issue of serious concern in Iraq. The absence of judicial guarantees is a pattern and individuals are often arrested without warrant, not informed of the charges against them, and not brought promptly before an investigative judge. Most of the arrests emerge from various factors: the “state of emergency,” extended by the Council of Representatives for an additional 30 days on 2 October, as well as the Anti-Terrorism Law promulgated in 2005 and continuous security sweeps resulting from the various security plans in Baghdad. All those factors continue to swell the number of detainees and overwhelm the judicial system. HRO is also of the view that protracted internment of detainees for “imperative reasons of security”, without judicial oversight, is de facto arbitrary detention.

The synchronization of Iraq’s key justice sector institutions (computerized sharing of data and improved collaboration of police, prisons and courts) is crucial to enhance the effectiveness of administration of justice, as well as remedy arbitrary detention. HRO hopes that the increase in the number of judges will facilitate processing a growing number of judicial cases and avoid impunity for major human rights violations. 86. The process of hand over of MNF-I prisons to Iraqi control continues with the transfer of authority for Abu Ghraib prison to the Iraqi Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Iraqi Army on 2 September. The Suse prison was handed over to the Ministry of Justice on 16 September in an attempt to create enough space for the detainees at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) custody to be transferred to MoJ. UNAMI also finds encouragement in the continuous release of MNF-I security detainees by the Combined Release and Review Board (CRRB).

The Joint Detention Committee (JDC) aimed at reviewing the cases of individuals held for over 18 months continues to meet regularly. The situation of juveniles in detention is particularly

worrisome. According to Iraqi law, juveniles are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) since March 2005, although due to a lack of facilities, juveniles held outside Baghdad are still in the custody of the Ministry of Justice. According to the figures provided by MoLSA, on 12 October 2006, 406 juveniles were being detained in 3 facilities in Baghdad, among them 22 females. Due to the fact that there is only one investigative judge in Baghdad dealing with juvenile cases, judicial oversight is not guaranteed. An increase in juvenile arrests has been noted by MoLSA officials as the result of the new security plan in Baghdad.

A recent joint MNF-I and Iraqi experts' inspection of Al-Kharkh juvenile prison, carried out at MoLSA's request, revealed that there were 284 inmates, aged from 7 to 22 years, in deplorable hygiene and medical conditions with signs of physical and sexual abuse allegedly committed by the prison guards and/or by their fellow inmates. Some were being detained without charges or convictions.

Inhumane conditions of detention were noticed during the inspection: overcrowding (4 cells holding approximately 70 juveniles each); lack of food, potable water and ventilation and inadequate medical care (3 cases of tuberculosis). Moreover, the convicted were not separated from pre-trial detainees. Of all inmates, 41 inmates were handed over from the Ministry of Interior to the MoLSA bearing signs of mistreatment/torture and sexual abuse. 89. Poor detention conditions have been revealed in the past, during joint MNF-I and Iraqi inspections in places of detention under the control of the Ministry of Interior, Defense and Special Forces throughout the country. HRO welcomes the revival of those inspections following a formal authorization to conduct those inspections issued by the Prime Minister.

Plans for a forthcoming amnesty, as part of the National Reconciliation Plan announced by Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki on 25 June in an attempt to boost national reconciliation, are being articulated. According to information communicated to HRO, draft legislation has not yet been circulated. The future amnesty in Iraq will, however, benefit primarily individuals currently in detention (mostly neither charged nor convicted) as well as individual members of the insurgency, militias and other armed groups, who renounce violence and, consistent with international standards, have not been responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

HRO recommends that the category of offences to be covered by the proposed amnesty be clearly defined so as to establish legal certainty and to eliminate ambiguities in implementation and to have national final lists of those to be excluded from the amnesty so as to avoid individual institutions drawing up their own lists. As a general principle, an amnesty shall be without effect with respect to the victims' right to reparation and shall not prejudice the right to know. Amnesty should also exclude those suspected of having committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and torture.

In Kirkuk, HRO continued to receive reports alleging that Kurdish militias detain individuals and transfer them to the Kurdistan Region without notifying governorate authorities or the police. There have been allegations that officials in Kirkuk are aware of such practices, yet no effort has been made to halt them. According to official reports, on 30 October, at the request of the Human Rights Committee, the Legal, Health, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Women Parliamentary Committees of the Kurdistan National Assembly met with several KRG ministers.

These Committees have visited prisons in Dahuk, Suleimaniyah and Erbil and have concluded that a large number of prisoners have been arrested without judicial intervention; most were arrested under violent circumstances; they have been held without trial for long periods and there have been complaints by family members that prisoners were held in unknown locations. The Committees presented their findings and recommended prison and corrective centre reforms.

Long Wars Require Long Efforts: Real-World Iraqi Dependence Through 2010

The MNF-I and US have sent mixed signals as to how successful the security-transfer process really is. The internal reports on ISF readiness are more critical than the public statements made by the US. Public statements have not tied transfers to effectiveness, did not explain the level of continuing Iraqi dependence, and do not address any aspect of

the need to expand ISF capabilities from light counterinsurgency forces to forces fully capable of defending the country against foreign threats. Some statements have also been too optimistic. For example, General Casey speculated in late August 2006 that Iraqi forces might achieve self-sufficiency within 18 months, although he made it clear that the US remained committed to event-driven US force reductions:

“I don’t have a date, but I can see over the next 12 to 18 months the Iraqi security forces progressing to a point where they can take on the security responsibilities for the country with very little coalition support. (...) The future coalition presence, 12 to 18 months from now, is going to be decided by the Iraqi government”³⁸¹

In September, President Talibani suggested a similar schedule, saying that the Iraqi Army would be ready to face its challenges on its own “within two years”.³⁸² In an early September meeting with visiting British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett, Iraqi President Jalal Talibani predicted a shorter timeline, stating that he believed fighting in Iraq would abate by the end of 2007, and that Iraqi forces would be able to handle any remaining violence.³⁸³

In the real world, however, it is apparent that proper training of the ISF will take years and require a serious advisory and aid effort well beyond 2008. This reality is reflected uncharacteristically frank in passages often hidden in the midst of larger Defense Department reports. The FY 2008 Global War on Terror budget request states that “**Over the coming years**, the U.S. military, along with our Coalition partners will continue to build, enhance and develop the ISF to full operational capacity.”³⁸⁴ Another passage buried deep in the Department of Defense status report for August warned that,³⁸⁵

The new Minister of Defense, Abd al-Qadr Muhammad Jassim al-Mufraji, is confronting the challenges he faces and is already making his mark. Previous logjams in acquisitions and contracting are being eased, and he is working closely with MNSTC-I to proceed on force development, force expansion, and logistics support. The MOD Transition Team grew to meet this accelerated pace of business and expanded to more than 50, half of whom are Military Professional Resources Incorporated contractors.

Close and effective relationships are being forged by team members with all senior MOD headquarters officials, and the confidence, and thus capacity, of these officials is strengthening. The ministries and the Joint Headquarters are expected to be in the lead with Coalition support by the end of 2007. *However, a partnership with these institutions will be required through at least the first peaceful transfer of power in 2010.*

VI. Developments in the Ministry of Defense

“This is occurring slower than we originally projected.”

-Gen. George Casey.³⁸⁶

The Iraqi Ministry of Defense controls most of the Iraqi forces with serious warfighting capability. As of March 2007, its forces consisted of the IGFC, the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF), the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy (including Marines), with the Joint Headquarters and the MOD HQ providing strategic direction and support. The Iraqi military forces under its control consist of an authorized strength of approximately 177,000 personnel, and are centered on an Army with nine infantry divisions, one mechanized infantry division, and associated combat support/combat support units. Two additional infantry divisions were in development as part of Prime Minister Maliki’s Expansion Plan. The Iraqi Air Force consisted of six squadrons; the Navy had two squadrons and a Marine battalion.³⁸⁷

The MOD has also taken over most of the training mission. The Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command Headquarters reached initial operating capability in July 2006 and it was planned that it would eventually command and control all Iraqi institutional training facilities. The Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command, under the command of the JHQ, consisted of the Tactical Training Command and the National Defense University. The Tactical Training Command will begin to assume control of the institutional tactical training facilities—six Regional Training Centers and three Iraqi Training Battalions—in 2007. The National Defense University has reached initial operating capability and has started to operate institutions of professional development (e.g., Iraqi Staff Colleges, the National Defense College, and the Strategic Studies Institute).

The MoD advisory effort was strengthened during 2006. At the headquarters level, the Ministry of Defense Transition Team grew to more than 50, half of whom were contractors from Military Professional Resources Inc.³⁸⁸ The capabilities of the Ministry also continued to increase. It spent over 85% of its 2006 budget; and it developed a coherent 2007 budget submission, and generated, codified and prioritized its plans and problems. It began to introduce elaborate checks and balances into the contracting system to try prevent the previous level of corruption.

Nevertheless, there are still serious deficiencies in the Ministry, in particular an immature acquisition process and a complex approval process for the commitment of funds. As a result, the MOD is now pursuing the bulk of its requirements for equipment, services and infrastructure through the US Foreign Military Sales office, using funds transferred from the MOD budget.

The political climate also remained difficult. By August 2006, a number of Shi’ite leaders were calling for the dismissal of both the Minister of Defense and Minister of the Interior. Prime Minister Maliki resisted such efforts. He also sought to find ways in which Arab Sunnis, Arab Shi’ites, and Kurds could cooperate in reviewing ISF operations of all kinds, and help reduce the constant charges that operations favored one side over the other.

There was little tangible progress in many aspects of national conciliation through the spring of 2007, although there was progress in some aspects of local security politics. On October 2, 2006, Maliki announced a plan that called for committees of neighborhood

leaders in their own community to try to deal with sectarian and ethnic violence by working with the ISF and Iraqi authorities to plan operations like checkpoints, identify high risks, and clear identify legitimate ISF operations from rogue or deception operations.³⁸⁹ Under the direction of the Minister of Defence, this outreach policy has continued and is beginning to pay dividends in areas such as Anbar and Diyala, where local and tribal leaders are working with the Iraqi Army against the terrorists.

Problems in the Ministry

Leadership and management remain poor to uncertain at the ministerial level. All of Iraq's ministries face serious problems with sectarian and ethnic differences, understaffing, a lack of key skill sets, facility and equipment problems, and corruption. The Department of Defense report from March 2007 summarized these problems as follows,³⁹⁰

The Minister of Defense has had some success in stabilizing the MOD, which suffered through a string of assassinations, widespread intimidation and death threats against employees, and a major corruption scandal in the year following its establishment in March 2004. The current minister recognizes the importance of forging a close partnership with the Coalition and is emphasizing joint initiatives, such as force replenishment, generation, and deployability. MOD's capacity to determine priorities and translate them into procurement requirements is improving.

However, competence levels in certain parts of the MOD remain low. The MOD suffers from a lack of strategic policy development and implementation and an inefficient procurement and budgeting process. A culture of distrust coupled with incompetence in certain key areas has made committing and obligating funds very difficult. The Coalition's MOD Transition Team is providing mentoring support to all senior MOD officials in developing their capacity to manage key ministerial functions, such as personnel management, budgeting, logistics, intelligence and security, acquisitions and contracting, plans and policies, communications, and inspections and investigations.

The current MOD team consists of approximately 50 advisors as well as 6 U.S. military personnel advising MOD civilians and 12 civilian advisors from other Coalition countries. There are no U.S. Government civilian advisors at the MOD, which is problematic in that MOD civilians are not provided direct mentorship by their U.S. counterparts. A similarly scaled effort occurs at the JHQ, with U.S. military personnel comprising about half of the advisors and the rest roughly split between U.S. civilian contractors and military personnel from other Coalition countries.

Some MNF-I experts feel, however, that such comments overstate the MoD's deficiencies. They feel that strategic policy direction has improved considerably. They note that a sophisticated exercise to determine and order 2007 capability requirements has been completed; and the majority of procurement orders are now being pursued through FMS. At the same time, they warn that the intense scrutiny of MOD activities by the Commission of Public Integrity, prompted by the legacy of previous MOD corruption, has created a climate of fear that is slowing the MOD internal decision process.

At the same time, they feel that this has reinforced the importance of the Coalition's MOD Transition Team role in providing mentoring support to all senior MOD officials in developing their capacity to manage key ministerial functions, such as personnel management, budgeting, logistics, intelligence and security, acquisitions and contracting, plans and policies, communications, and inspections and investigations. They also note that there are no US civilian advisors at the ministry, which is problematic because MOD civilians are not provided direct mentorship by their US counterparts.

Iraqi Intelligence Agencies

Iraq's developing intelligence agencies have tangled with the same ethno-sectarian problems afflicting the Iraqi police and Army, leading to a serious split along sectarian lines. Iraq's primary intelligence agency is the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS). This organization was created in spring 2004 by the CPA. According to an anonymous US military official, the INIS is "funded completely by the Central Intelligence Agency and not by the Iraqi government."³⁹¹ US funding for the INIS amounted to \$3 billion over a three year period starting in 2004.³⁹² The INIS is headed by Gen. Mohammed Shahwani, a Sunni Arab.

Deep divisions existed within the new Iraqi government over how much various elements of the INIS could be trusted since the agency's creation. Mohammed Shahwani was involved in the CIA-backed coup against Saddam Hussein years ago, owns a home in the US and maintains a very close relationship with US officials. The INIS officially reports directly to Prime Minister Maliki, yet for most of 2005 and part of 2006, Shahwani was banned from cabinet meetings. The agency employs many agents from the Hussein era, further hurting its reputation in the Shi'ite led government. The INIS also did little to earn favor with the Shi'ite elites in 2004 and 2005, arresting some prominent Shi'ites and accusing SCIRI of being on Iran's payroll. Ministers in the Iraqi government charged that the US and CIA were still controlling the service and would not turn it over to Iraq.

The deep distrust of the INIS resulted in top Shi'ite officials attempting to have Shahwani removed in 2005. He remained in his job due to strong American support and the US fear of top Shi'ite official's close ties with Iran. Failing this, a parallel intelligence agency was set up under the auspices of the minister of state for national security, Sherwan Waili, a Shi'ite. The ministry is technically a second-tier organization with a small budget. However, the ministry hired its employees on contracts to get around its budget. This allowed the agency to expand dramatically in the 2006, and it boasted 1,200 agents as of April, 2007. According to an anonymous Western diplomat, the agency has "representatives in every province. At the moment, it's a slightly shady parallel organization."³⁹³

The parallel Shi'ite-led intelligence agency has provided a hard-line Shi'ite view in national security meetings. The agency has also been accused of pursuing investigations based on sectarian motivations. In its most controversial operation, the agency spied on a Sunni Member of Parliament, Abdel Nasser Janabi. The agency submitted evidence to the Iraqi judiciary, accusing Janabi of being behind the killings of more than 150 Shi'ites. The agency has not, as of May 2007, pursued any investigations into Shi'ite-led sectarian killings.³⁹⁴

Weaknesses in Iraq's Regular Military Forces

The Defense Department noted that in early 2007, force generation of the Iraqi Security Force had been "nearly completed."³⁹⁵ In fact, however, weaknesses do exist in both the MOD and overall structure of Iraqi forces. For example, the January 2007 NIE on Iraq states that, "Sectarian divisions erode the dependability of many units, many are hampered by personnel and equipment shortfalls, and a number of Iraqi units have refused to serve outside of the areas where they were recruited." The NIE on Iraq also characterized the weakness of the ISF as "persistent."³⁹⁶ The fact that all units have been

issued 100% of their equipment requirements does not mean that they retain them, or that their equipment is adequate.

Readiness is uncertain at best. Unfortunately, the Department of Defense has stopped issuing public reporting on Level I-IV reporting and substituted vague and undefined levels of readiness and capability. The MNF-I reports that "Readiness and capability reporting systems have been implemented and are progressively being developed," but cannot provide any details.

The Iraqi Army is still a relatively a fragile structure that may well be able to succeed over time, but whose development cannot be rushed, and which is not ready or equipped to fight without substantial US support. The Iraqi Special Operations Forces is 1,000 strong, organized into a CT battalion, a commando battalion, a support battalions and a special reconnaissance unit, with plans for further expansion. The combined strength of the Army and ISOF, however, is far too small to bring security to the entire nation, particularly if this means ongoing urban warfare or "pacification" in Baghdad, and spreading civil violence in the great Basra area, Kirkuk, and Mosul

Key elements of the Iraqi regular forces were not able to take on the necessary missions in Baghdad, and "Operation Together Forward" exposed other failings that Iraqi and MNF-I commanders are now addressing and seeking to correct. As of early 2007, Iraqi forces could not operate in hostile areas in Anbar without massive US support. Initial problems in deploying Iraqi troops to Baghdad as part of the 2007 security crackdown are now being overcome, but they do illustrate the continuing problems in ISF forces. .

The Iraqi air force still has around 900 men, although plans exist to expand it to over 3,000 by the end of 2007. It is equipped for counter-insurgency operations, with ISR and transport aircraft and a growing rotary wing fleet, but does not have any aircraft that can provide combat support or attack capability.

The 1,200-man navy is organized into two afloat squadrons and four marine companies and is expanding its capability with the acquisition of offshore support vessels, patrol ships and boats and a number of smaller vessels. It is taking on combat missions, but is far from being capable of securing Iraqi waters or being able to deal with potential threats like Iran.

A Force Too Light and Too Undeveloped to Succeed On Its Own

The US and its allies have made a massive contribution to Iraqi force development. MNSTC-I has spent nearly \$19B over 3 years, over half of which has been in support of the MOD, to train and equip Iraqi Joint Forces. This financial support is in addition to Government of Iraq funds: the MOD spent nearly \$3B last year and its 2007 budget is over \$4B.

The fact remains, however, that manning, motivation, leadership, and pay are only part of the problem. The Army - the key focus of MOD activity - lacks armor, heavy firepower, tactical mobility, and an Iraqi Air Force capable of providing combat support. No Administration official has presented a plan to properly equip the Iraqi forces to stand on their own, or give them the necessary funding to phase out US combat and air support in 12 to 18 months. (

The Department of Defense quarterly status report issued in August 2006 dodged around some of these issues, but still provided important warnings about how long effective force development would take:

Army battalions is said to be 97% complete, and the support forces are only 65% complete. However, other parts of the report note that absenteeism is an average rate of 15%. It notes that, "there is currently no judicial punishment system with the Iraqi Army. Therefore, Iraqi Army Commanders have little legal leverage to compel their soldiers to combat, and soldiers and police can quit with impunity." (p. 58)

The MNF-I reports that a Service Discipline Law will come into effect by summer 2007, giving commanders the legal powers to clamp down on unauthorized absenteeism. This may make a difference, but the effectiveness of such a law has yet to be demonstrated.

Says the army has 92% of authorized equipment, but fails to describe lack of armor, artillery, heavy squad weapons, and mobility. (pp. 55-56) The focus on numbers trained and equipped ignores the fact that the equipment and facilities were often inadequate and left Iraqi forces dependent on MNF-I support. (p. 41) The figures on page 42 portray major gaps between training and equipment in several categories of Iraqi forces, even ignoring their lack of heavy weapons and support equipment.

- Notes that the, "lack of junior officers and NCOs continues to be one of the biggest factors impeding the development of Iraqi forces..." Efforts are being made to correct this, but no clear picture of timelines and capabilities are provided. (pp. 55-56)
- States that the training effort for the MoD has been expanded. However the statements that the ministries and Joint Headquarters are expected to be in the lead by the end of 2007 are too heavily qualified to be meaningful. (p. 56): In fact, the report warns that, "A partnership with those institutions will be required at least through 2010." (p. 57)
- The data on "Coalition Support Requirements" focuses on logistics, and ignores the need for intelligence, armor, artillery, and air support. It touches on only one part of a major continuing issue where no clear plan seems to currently exist. (pp. 57-58).
- No assessment of naval capability, no force plans. (p. 54)
- Says there is plan to double air force manning from 750 to 1,500 by end 2007. Then describes major continuing operational and readiness problems with existing aircraft that do not include combat aircraft. (pp. 54-55).
- The report does address the major sectarian problems in the regular forces. It does not give any figures or detailed data, but is much franker than in the past about the fact that most units tend to mirror the ethnic and sectarian areas where they operated (although the report fails to mention this is not true of Sunnis). Emphasis is put on the number of Sunni and Kurdish officers in higher command slots, but growing problems for Sunni officers are not addressed. (p. 58)

The DoD quarterly report for November 2006 also pointed out a range of serious shortcomings in the development of the portions of the ISF under MOD control:

The number of Iraqi Army personnel who are present for duty at any time, however, may well be less than the authorized strength due to casualties, desertion, and leaves. The greatest contributor to the difference between authorized strength and present-for duty strength is a leave policy that places about one-third of all soldiers on leave at any time so that they can take their pay home to their families. This is driven by the lack of a nationwide banking system.

For divisions facing sustained combat operations within their normal operational area, the Iraqi Army reports AWOL rates of 5%-8%. These rates have risen to more than 50% when units were directed to deploy to areas of combat outside of their normal areas of operations.

Personnel Shortages – Marginal overall manning exacerbated by a liberal leave policy, lack of officers and NCOs, no existing Military Occupational Specialty tracking system, and personnel assignment mismanagement.

Inadequate Logistics Infrastructure – Shortcomings in fuel supply and distribution; lack of repair parts, tools, and capability to conduct all lines of maintenance; poor and inconsistent life support; and shortage of medical specialty personnel.

Equipment Shortages – Existing shortages in vehicles, weapons, and essential equipment readiness items, such as tools and medic bags; no capability to replace battle-damaged equipment; and little equipment accountability.

Enablers – Limited Iraqi Army capability to mitigate the loss of Coalition-provided fire support and dedicated medical evacuation assets.³⁹⁷

The MOD has tried to address some of these issues. For example, it launched a major program to recruit and train an additional 30,000 troops, to improve Army manning in October 2006. As of April 2007, the initiative had produced 25,000 extra troops and the program was being extended through September 2007 to provide a further 16,000 beyond the initial 30,000 target. Nevertheless, many of these same themes were repeated in the Departments March 2007 Quarterly Report, although the report stated that significant progress had been made in the MOD's high command:³⁹⁸

MOD logistics and sustainment is still a relatively immature system that requires significant Coalition assistance, especially in warehouse/depot operations and transportation. Development and implementation of MOD strategic logistics policy is particularly immature. The Iraqi Army has been slow to support sustainment, and there is limited indigenous capability and capacity to replace battle-damaged equipment.

MNSTC-I has oversight of approximately 60 transition teams (of the 400 total teams for the MOD and the MOI) assigned to assist in logistics and sustainment issues. Throughout 2007, the focus will be on developing the areas of fuel, maintenance, budget, sustainment, ammunition, medical equipment and supply account- ability, and national warehouse. Coalition forces continue to provide Combat Service Support by backstopping life support and fuel during times of emergency. In April 2006, the MOD assumed management of life support and its contracts, but Coalition forces are still assisting *in extremis*. Overall, support to the Iraqi Army provided by Coalition forces has decreased dramatically.

Approximately 90% of the planned Head- quarters and Service Companies have been formed and are at some level of operational capability. MNSTC-I has distributed all key equipment to the Headquarters and Service Companies. Although the Headquarters and Service Companies are gaining some capability, Coalition forces and MNC-I logistics units will continue partnering and mentoring them as they assume their roles and in case of emergency or failure within the new Iraqi logistics system.

...The MOD and the JHQ are developing processes to reduce the reliance on MNF-I to direct, support, and sustain MOD forces. The transition of Iraqi Army divisions and the IGFC to MOD control marks the first time since the removal of the former regime that any Iraqi Army combat forces are under complete Iraqi command and control.

The transition also means that the MOD, through the JHQ, has assumed responsibility for support and sustainment planning for these divisions as well as for forces transferring to JHQ command and control in the future. The JHQ planning and coordination processes are immature and are currently hampered by bureaucracy, lack of trust and understanding, lack of experience with strategic planning, and dependence on Coalition support and funding.

Once again, the MNF-I view is more favorable. Its experts note that the MOD is taking financial responsibility for the National Maintenance contract, under which this service will provided through external contractor support while the MOD develops an indigenous

maintenance capability. They also note that the MOD has taken over full responsibility for the provision of life support and no longer has to call on emergency coalition aid. They report that the requirement for coalition provided fuel supplies has decreased dramatically.

There are severe dangers, however, in exaggerating the progress in developing the MoD and regular Iraqi forces. For example, General Casey stated at a press conference on October 26, 2006 that, "During the battle of Fallujah, we had a handful of battalions in the Iraqi army, and they operated in support of us. Today, six of the 10 Iraqi divisions are in the lead; 30 of the 36 Iraqi brigades. Almost 90 of the 112 Iraqi battalions are in the lead, and we operate in support of them."

This statement was technically true, but only because of the virtually meaningless definitions now used for transferring responsibility and "taking the lead." The reality is that transferring responsibility for security and saying that Iraqi units "are in the lead" hides serious disparities in the quality and effectiveness of many of the forces involved, many of which are far from being ready to fight in any meaningful way on their own.

The problems in the Ministry of Defense and regular forces are less serious than those in the Ministry of the Interior and police, but they again are going to take at least several years to correct. The MoD and Iraqi regular forces are not going to be ready to operate on their own in 2008, and will require a continuing Coalition military, advisory and aid effort.

Exaggerating Iraqi readiness can make it easier for some US politicians and experts to demand that Iraq assume responsibility, and take over the burden of its own defense, but the MOD is no more ready to do so than any other element of the Iraqi security structure. It also faces problems because of the lack of a strong and effective leadership within the Iraqi government as a whole, and because institutional capability and competence is still developing.

VII. Army and Special Operations Forces: Increasing, but Mixed Capabilities

The Iraqi regular forces were little more than a few light battalions in 2004. By the beginning of 2007, Ministry of Defense Forces consisting of the Army (including Special Operations Forces), Air Force, and Navy (including Marines) totaled 136,400 personnel.³⁹⁹ The Iraqi Army had also become both the key to effective Iraqi force development and to US and allied ability to withdraw forces from Iraq without creating a military power vacuum.

As of early March 2007, the Army had 131,300 soldiers and officers in 36 brigades and 112 battalions. The Prime Minister's Expansion Plan was in the processing of increasing the Army by 2 division HQs, 6 brigade HQs, and 24 battalions. The Army had Nine Motorized Transportation Regiments (MTRs). The last two MTRs had been generated and released to MNC-I by the end of 2006. Although a lack of trained maintenance personnel and equipment had delayed full capability, the Department of Defense reported that MTRs could now provide mobility and sustainment for Iraqi forces.⁴⁰⁰

The Army supported a Special Operations Forces Brigade. This ISOF Brigade was the operational component of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Command and was composed of approximately 1,500 soldiers organized into a counter-terrorism battalion, a commando battalion, a support battalion, and a special reconnaissance unit. It was being expanded to include an additional commando battalion with forward-based commando companies in Basrah, Mosul, and Al Asad.

The Iraqi Army had 3 Strategic Infrastructure Brigade headquarters commanding 17 SIBs. These units are deployed to protect oil pipelines and electricity infrastructure.⁴⁰¹ Efforts to improve the capability of these units were led by Military Transition Teams, with U.S. and other Coalition officers and soldiers embedded in each battalion, brigade, and division headquarters; at IGFC headquarters; and at JHQ. The force goal was 4 Strategic Infrastructure Brigades

The Army also had 4 logistics battalions, 2 support battalions, 5 Regional Support Units, and 80 Garrison Support Units provide logistics and support for divisions, with Taji National Depot providing depot-level maintenance and re-supply. Headquarters and Service Companies provide logistical and maintenance support for each battalion, brigade, and division.

The top force generation priorities for the MNSTC-I were: the development of the Iraqi Army Objective Counterinsurgency Force and the Objective Civil Security force; and the establishment of Logistics enablers. These Logistics enablers include improvements in sustainment, maintenance support, supply support, transport support, and health support.⁴⁰²

Growing Too Fast to Achieve Force Quality

The Iraqi Army had, however, grown too quickly to achieve the proper level of effectiveness. It expanded from 4 brigades and 23 battalions in November 2005, to 36 brigades and 118 battalions that had assumed responsibility by February 2007.⁴⁰³ The authorized (not actual) manpower in the Iraqi Army rose from 115,000 "trained and

equipped” in August to 136,200 as of February 2007.⁴⁰⁴ These figures included SIB personnel and about 9,600 support forces. The Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) were composed of 1,500 soldiers making up the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Task Force, the Iraqi Commandos, a support battalion, and a special reconnaissance unit.⁴⁰⁵

It needed time to bring this structure to suitable levels of readiness, continued support from Coalition forces, and help from Coalition embeds and partner units. It needed a clearer force development plan to provide the firepower and armor it lacked, and better equipment in many areas. It needed time and patience to mature its new units into an experienced force. The problem was not that the Iraqi Army was failing, but rather that it needed several years in which to consolidate its rapid growth.

Manning Levels at 65%

In practice, however, only average manning rates of 65% of authorized personnel were normally at duty at any given time, and manpower distribution was skewed so that a few units were overmanned, while many had even less average manpower or were short significant numbers of officers and NCOs.⁴⁰⁶

The total number of trained-and-equipped MOD military personnel is about 136,400 (not including replacements), of which about 132,800 are in the Iraqi Army. For fielded units, about 65% of authorized personnel are present for duty at any time; this percentage varies widely among units. The greatest contributor to the difference between authorized strength and present-for-duty strength is a leave policy that places about one-quarter of all soldiers on leave at any time so that they can take their pay home to their families. This is driven by the lack of a nationwide banking system. In addition, since the first Iraqi Army combat units entered into service in November 2003, more than 20,000 personnel have been killed or severely wounded or have otherwise left the Army. The MOD is planning on replacing and expanding the overall force structure with a 30,000-person Replenishment Initiative, organized and implemented by the Iraqi JHQ. This initiative will add approximately 10,000 soldiers every two months over six months and will result in all combat units manned at 110%. The MOD has completed recruiting for this initiative, and the first training sessions began on October 1, 2006. About 44% of the 30,000-soldier expansion is complete.

These problems had forced the government of Iraq to conclude that a larger force was needed. As has already been discussed in Chapter IV, more than 60,000 ISF personnel were to be added in 2007.⁴⁰⁷ This expansion included: 30,000 soldiers to replace personnel losses and to increase the manning of combat units to 110% to improve present-for-duty strength; an increase in the size of the Iraqi Army by approximately 24,000 soldiers; and the expansion of the National Police to 10 Brigades, in order to protect the Samarra Shrine reconstruction project; and the establishment of Three Emergency Response Unit Battalions of auxiliary policemen in Anbar, primarily in the greater Ramadi area.

The March 2007 Quarterly report also noted that,⁴⁰⁸

The high operational tempo faced by many units makes it difficult to sustain this initial training proficiency. This is particularly true in the area of logistics specialty training. Approximately 2,500 additional personnel are needed to allow both daily operations and focused training at the small-unit level.

Across the Iraqi Army, Iraqi divisions facing sustained combat operations within their normal operational area report absent-without-leave rates to be between 5% and 8%. Passage of the *Military Court Procedures Law* on January 24, 2007, will provide Iraqi commanders with a tool to deal fairly and effectively with absenteeism and desertion.

Maintenance and support had lagged behind the effort to create combat units from the start of the ISF development effort, and continued to encounter problems. Although the Motorized Transportation Regiments (MTRs) were said to be approaching full operational capability, a continued lack of competent maintenance personnel limited their ability to reach full capability.⁴⁰⁹

As has been noted earlier, however, significant progress had been made in creating training units. The three planned Iraqi Training Battalions had been formed. This allowed Iraqis to train soldiers independently in sufficient quantities. Army recruits attended a 13-week program of basic instruction followed by military occupational training of a length varying from three to seven weeks, depending on specialty.

Specialty schools included the Military Intelligence School, Signal School, Bomb Disposal School, Combat Arms Branch School, Engineer School and Military Police School. These schools were intended to both contribute to professionalism in the Iraqi Army and teach the necessary skills for fighting counter-insurgency campaigns. The Iraqi Armed Service and Supply Institute (IASSI) at Taji provided training for service and support officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). By August 2006 IASSI had trained more than 5,000 officers and NCOs.⁴¹⁰

Sectarian and Ethnic Problems: A Force Never Designed to Fight Civil Conflicts and Civil War

These problems were compounded by the impact of Iraq's growing civil conflicts. Sectarian and ethnic issues were less serious in the regular military forces under MoD control than in the MOI forces, but – as discussed in Chapter IV – they still presented serious problems within the Army. According to the Director of National Intelligence's February 2006 report, many elements of the Iraqi security forces remained loyal to sectarian and party interests.⁴¹¹

More broadly, the Army showed little overall willingness to become actively involved halting Iraq's civil fighting through early 2007, although a few force elements performed well in such missions in Baghdad during the summer and fall of 2006. A battalion commander with the 1st brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, Maj. Hussein al-Qaisi, said government officials often called him when he tried to arrest suspected high-/ranking militia leaders, Sunni as well as Shi'ite. Al-Qaisi, stationed in Baghdad, said: "Sometimes they'll back them up no matter what. We have to let them go."⁴¹²

Iraqis were scarcely alone in detecting mixed loyalties in Shi'ite-dominated Iraqi army units. Lt. Col Edward Taylor, embedded with the Iraqi Army's 6th Division in Baghdad, reported that: "I have to operate under the assumption that within this unit there are people loyal to Jaish al-Mahdi [known in the US as the Mahdi Army]. I have to make that assumption so I have the proper security measures in place to protect my soldiers."⁴¹³ During January 2007 operations in Turki, east of Baghdad, US commanders, fearful of leaks, kept operational details from Iraqi army units until the last minute. Although this measure may have increased operational security, it didn't allow Iraqi units much time to prepare: "I didn't have time to organize supplies, vehicles or ammunition for the soldiers" reported one Iraqi company commander.⁴¹⁴

While some US soldiers praised their Iraqi counterparts, there were reports of US soldiers complaining about their Iraqi counterparts as being "among the worst they've ever seen"

during combined US and Iraqi army operations in Baghdad in the summer and fall of 2006. Their loyalties appeared unclear as they let militiamen pass checkpoints unhindered during raids and allowed barriers and concertina wire meant to bolster defensive positions to be dragged away. Even the notification of the senior officer at the checkpoint by US troops did not help. US military advisor Lt. Col. Greg Watt attributed this behavior to sectarian loyalties:

From my perspective, you can't make a distinction between Iraq army Shi'ites and the religious militias. You have a lot of soldiers and family members swayed and persuaded by the religious leadership. (...) There's no doubt in my mind that (an Iraqi division commander in Baghdad) has soldiers who are followers of religious leaders. Are they loyal to the division commander? Yes. But they may be loyal to both.

He added that another problem was violence against Iraqi soldiers when they were off duty, and threats against their families.⁴¹⁵ This highlights the need to look beyond force development in the narrow sense, and ensure that Iraqi families have some protection, that Iraqi soldiers can safely provide funds transfers to their families, that suitable death and disability payments not only exist but will actually be paid, and that leave policies exist which meet the real-world needs of Iraqi soldiers, Important as leadership, motivation, and training may be; they are no substitute for an effective overall approach to giving Iraqi forces the mix of capabilities and support necessary to give them material motives and incentives.

Lt. Col. Avanulas Smiley, a battalion commander in Baghdad, commented on local police acting on tribal or political loyalties:

"I wouldn't say I find it often, but I suspect it often. You can't always prove it. And that can cause some frustration on the street with soldiers."

Another example of the operational effects of sectarian allegiances in the Iraqi Army took place in Baquba in October 2006. The security situation in the religiously mixed city apparently deteriorated when the Fifth Iraqi Army Division staged raids that led to the arrest of 400 people, nearly all Sunni Arabs. (Note that this is an odd-numbered division, which were supposed to be more representative of Iraq's population than their even-numbered counterparts) Local Sunni leaders believed this showed the division's bias against Sunnis and that they were singled out while Shi'ite criminals had been ignored. Subsequently, local Sunni and Shi'ite groups put out calls for help, and fighters from the Shi'ite Jaish al-Mahdi militia as well as Sunni groups, including Al Qa'ida elements, moved into the area.⁴¹⁶

Army officers who do seek to act impartially in regards to the militias may face opposition from within Nouri al-Maliki's government. A report surfaced in April 2007 that a department in the prime minister's office had played a key role in the arrest or removal of 16 top Army and National Police officers.⁴¹⁷ Although commanders are removed fairly frequently in Iraq for legitimate reasons (the MOI alone has removed 14,000 employees), these removals raised concerns of sectarian influence. Nine of the commanders removed were Sunni, and several were considered to be among the better Iraqi officers in the field. The reason behind the removals appeared to be the commander's willingness to confront Shi'ite militias.

According to Brig. Gen. Dana J.H. Pittard, commanding general of the Iraqi Assistance Group: "Their only crimes or offenses were they were successful. . . I'm tired of seeing good Iraqi officers having to look over their shoulders when they're trying to do the right

thing.”⁴¹⁸ The Office of the Commander in Chief is seen as being behind the removals. This office works largely behind-the-scenes on military issues on behalf of the prime minister.

One adviser in particular, Bassima Luay Hasun al-Jaidri, appeared to be responsible for many of the firings. An anonymous American official stated: “Her office harasses [Iraqi commanders] if they are nationalistic and fair. They need to get rid of her and her little group.” Maj. Gen. Abduhlla Mohammed Khamis al-Dafi, the Sunni Commander of the 9th Iraqi Division, responsible for Eastern Baghdad, threatened to resign on April 23rd due to repeated “interference” from the prime minister’s staff.⁴¹⁹ The Bush administration’s only comment on the matter was “We’re aware of the reports, we’re concerned about them, and those are the kinds of things we do discuss with the Iraqis that will be a focus of conversations.”⁴²⁰ US commanders are considering installing a liaison officer in the department.⁴²¹

Like all Iraqi forces, the Army was never recruited, trained, or equipped to fight sectarian and ethnic forces in civil conflict, or intervene in civil war and local civil clashes. Counterinsurgency or COIN training and organization do not create the capability to deal with struggles where there is no enemy, and where every action tests the unity of a force in terms of ethnic and sectarian alignment. If a major civil war does occur, or the country divides along sectarian and ethnic lines, Iraqi regular forces could divide as well. They could fragment even further if the Shi’ite coalition falls apart, or the Shi’ites and Kurds divide.

Combat Effectiveness, Readiness, Desertions and Mission Capability

The Army’s role in combat increased did increase steadily during 2006 and early 2007 in spite of these problems. Department of Defense reporting provided the following measures of this increase in the March 2007 Quarterly Report to Congress:

- **Figure 7.1** compares the number of Iraqi army battalions in combat and Strategic Infrastructure Brigades. It shows just how rapid the growth in battalions was as well as the lag between generating combat and support capabilities.
- **Figure 7.2** shows the percent of combat operations being carried out at the company level and above by combined forces, Coalition forces, and ISF. It is clear from this Figure that ISF forces were virtually never in the lead, and were almost always tied to MNF-I forces that were. Most of the ISF-only operations in this figure seem to have been relatively undemanding operations with embed and outside support. Additionally, the number of ISF-only operations dropped off sharply towards the end of 2006, despite the completion of ISF force-generation targets.
- **Figure 7.3 shows the number of Iraqi battalions supposedly in the lead,** The claims for growth in the number of Iraq battalions in the lead are clearly not supported by the number of mixed operations shown in Figure 7.3.

Once again, however, the data sharply exaggerated what was actually happening Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 do reflect a very rise in Iraqi Army readiness and capability, but many of the units involved were seriously undermanned, under equipped or under facilitated, and lacked experience and capable leadership. Many Iraqi units would not take the initiative and some would not fight. US advisers warned that Iraqi forces, both soldiers and officers remained reluctant to initiate contact with the enemy.⁴²² The steady rise in ISF operations portrayed in these Figures also does not reflect the need ISF units had for external

support, the often undemanding nature of ISF operations, and continued dependence on cadres of MNF-I advisors

CENTCOM commander Gen. John Abizaid painted a franker picture in early September, praising the special operations forces as “some of the best units anywhere in the Middle East,” but admitting disappointment in other units.⁴²³ Gen. John Abizaid also stated that while Iraqi army forces were fighting, they were not yet capable of ensuring Iraqi security.⁴²⁴ He also said that Iraqi and MNF-I efforts to increase the independence of Iraqi Army units continued to focus on combat enablers.

Some units simply did not function. When British troops left Camp Abu Naji, just outside Amarah, the ensuing clashes between Iraqi army forces and unknown attackers caused the mutiny of the 2nd Battalion of the 4th Brigade.⁴²⁵ During the last weekend in August 2006, 100 soldiers of a 550-strong battalion in the southeastern province of Maysan refused to deploy to Baghdad, partly because of concerns about confronting fellow sect members. US Army Brig. Gen. Dana Pittard, commander of the Iraq Assistance Group in Baghdad, portrayed the incident as isolated, but admitted to the difficulty of creating truly national forces in Iraq:

What it tells me is that, primarily, the Iraqi army has been a regionally recruited organization, which really means if you are from a particular area, that's where you're recruited from, and that's where your roots are. Now as other units are asked to go to other places, it becomes more difficult because, for many of those soldiers, they just thought that they would be operating in their homeland areas.⁴²⁶

Deployability

It also was still difficult for both the MNF-I and Iraqi units to know which units would actually deploy, and manage deployments with any efficiency. The March 2007 Quarterly report noted,⁴²⁷

As a result of the inability of the Iraqi Army to deploy units to Baghdad in August 2006, the Minister of Defense formed a committee to determine how to improve the deploy-ability of the Iraqi Army. The recommendation of the committee was to identify a battalion from each Iraqi Army Division to serve as the rapid deployment force for that division, and provide incentive pay for soldiers who volunteer to serve in this elite battalion. To increase the predictability of deployments for soldiers, the committee also recommended a four-phase, 150-day deployment cycle that all units complete prior to movement from their home base. In February, five of the seven battalions recently ordered to Baghdad were successfully deployed, with the rest expected within the month.

Army Unit Manning and Attrition

Attrition was a problem in combat as well as in causing chronic undermanning. Approximately 15% attrition was the norm during initial training. During deployment, absent-without-leave rates were typically about 1-4% for most Army divisions, although deployment to combat let these rates climb to 5-8%, according to DoD.⁴²⁸ According to Jane's Defense Weekly, however, many reports from Iraq suggest higher figures.⁴²⁹ According to former coalition personnel, these rates depended on whether units deploy in their home areas or not and whether they were tasked to operate against insurgents of their ethnic or religious background.⁴³⁰ The Defense Department put desertion rates at 50% or higher in late 2006 for units deployed outside of their normal areas of operation,⁴³¹ although deployment rates to support the 2007 Baghdad security plan were higher.

Iraqi Army leaders in Al Anbar province complained about desertion rates in some units being as high as 40%.⁴³² US advisors to Iraqi forces pointed to a Catch-22 situation with regard to local recruiting: soldiers would care more about the security of their home town than about an unknown area, but locally recruited soldiers sometimes also found themselves in a conflict of loyalties between family, tribe and friends on the one hand and their unit's military operations on the other.⁴³³ DoD noted that there was no judicial punishment system within the Iraqi Army, giving commanders little legal leverage to compel their soldiers to combat, so soldiers and police quit with impunity.⁴³⁴ The Council of Representatives passed the *Military Court Procedures Law* on January 24, 2007 and the *Military Punishment Law* on February 5, 2007.⁴³⁵ These two laws formally established Iraq's system of military justice, and may help to give commanders some legal tools to curb desertion rates.

The MOD was still attempting to create a comprehensive personnel system for the army in early 2007. This new, digital system was being designed to eventually give every soldier an MOD ID card. According to the director of the MOD Records Directorate: "The system is providing commanders with an exact idea of who is serving in the military at the battalion level and will also ensure that all Iraqi soldiers receive the pay that is due them."

Army Unit Effectiveness

The reality is that force-wide counts never come to grips with the actual need to measure effectiveness. In the real world, entire forces are never ready; only individual units are ready and all have different levels of readiness. There is no way, however, to use the limited data that the MNF-I and US government make detailed judgments about the genuine readiness of Iraqi regular forces on a unit-by-unit basis.

There is considerable disagreement on how to judge some units' performance, although it is clear that a handful of units stand out as highly capable. In general, some experts feel Kurdish units are the most effective because of their experience as guerrilla forces that have retained their officers and cohesion.⁴³⁶ Others feel that Iraqi capability is mixed, and that only 10-15 of Iraq's more than 90 combat battalions had serious readiness at the end of 2006.

Some experts cite the 205th Iraqi Army Battalion, or "Tiger Battalion," for both its military professionalism and competence. Breaking with Saddam-era traditions, officers delegated responsibility to their soldiers. The unit was mostly recruited from within its area of operation, helping it with intelligence collection efforts.

The Second Battalion, Second Brigade, First Iraqi Army Division, operating in Fallujah, was also praised for its effectiveness. Its progress towards operating alone was said to be especially noteworthy given the serious Iraqi morale problems during the fight for the city in 2004.⁴³⁷

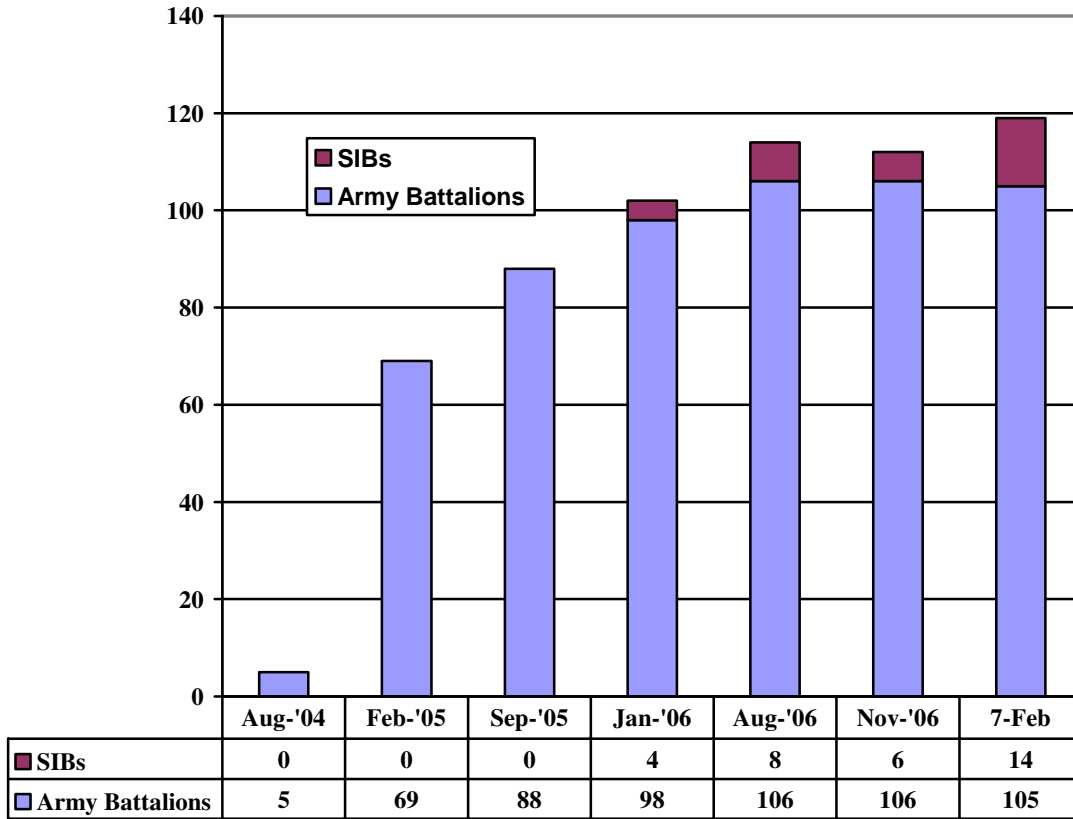
One highly effective brigade from Hilla in the south, was known as the Scorpions. When the Scorpion unit's commander, Colonel Salam al-Mamuri, was killed, a Washington Post article described his unit as highly effective and not taking political sides. The Scorpion unit was noted for taking tough action against both Al-Qa'ida in Iraq and the Mahdi Army. The unit also received high marks from US Special Forces members:

“They are literally the only Iraqi unit under arms in the south that is completely independent of the political parties and the militias. Everyone else – the police, the army – is playing ball for somebody. They won’t.”

“We look at them as peers, we don’t look at them as below us.”⁴³⁸

While any such reporting is necessarily anecdotal, Iraqi forces do become steadily more successful with time if they do have the right mix of embed trainers and partner units, if they are given the necessary time to develop unit effectiveness and cohesion, and if they have adequate manning, equipment, and facilities,

Figure 7.1
Iraqi Army Battalions in Combat: August 2004-February 2007



NOTE: Army Battalions Includes special operations battalions but does not include combat support and combat service support units.

Data as of November 13, 2006

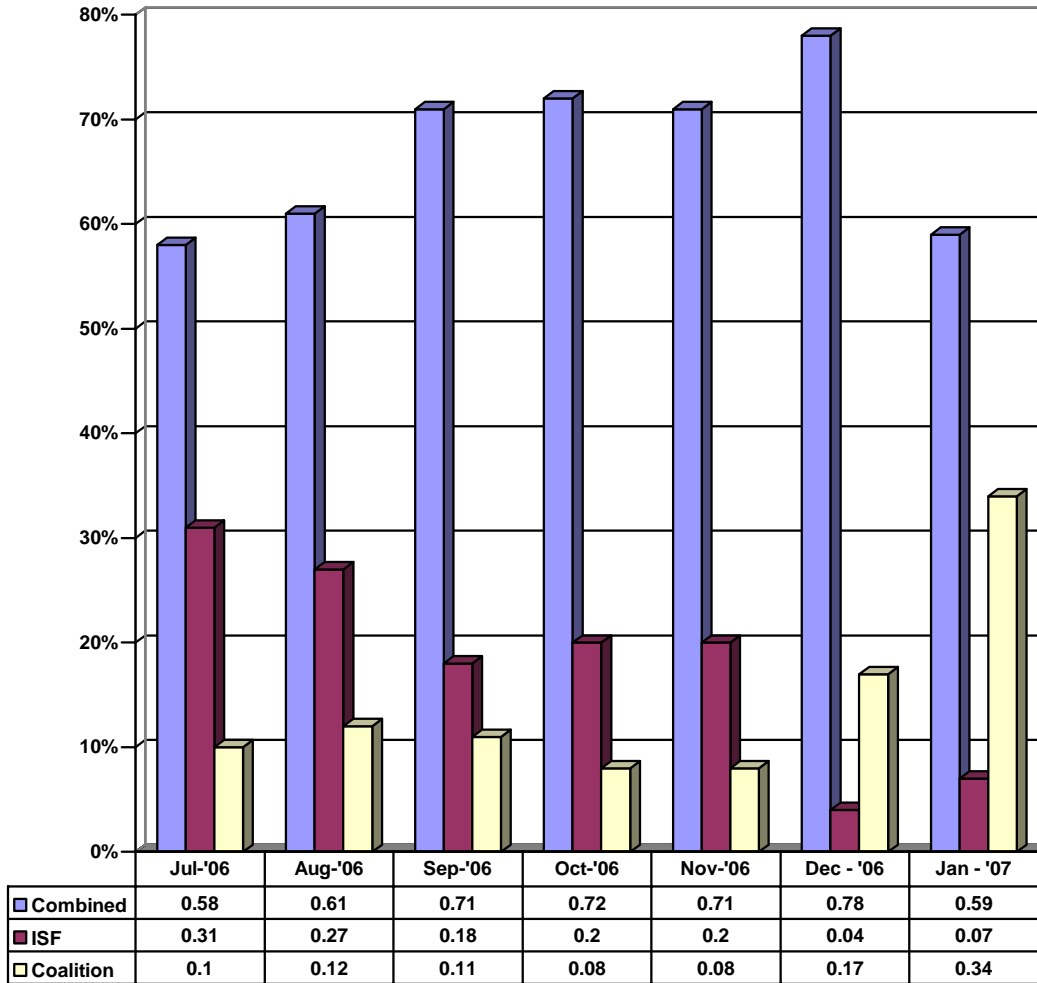
Source: Adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Report to Congress, March 2007, p.25;

Note: +/-5% margin of error

Figure 7.2

Role of Coalition and ISF Forces in Combat Operations: July 2006-January 2007

(Company level and above*):

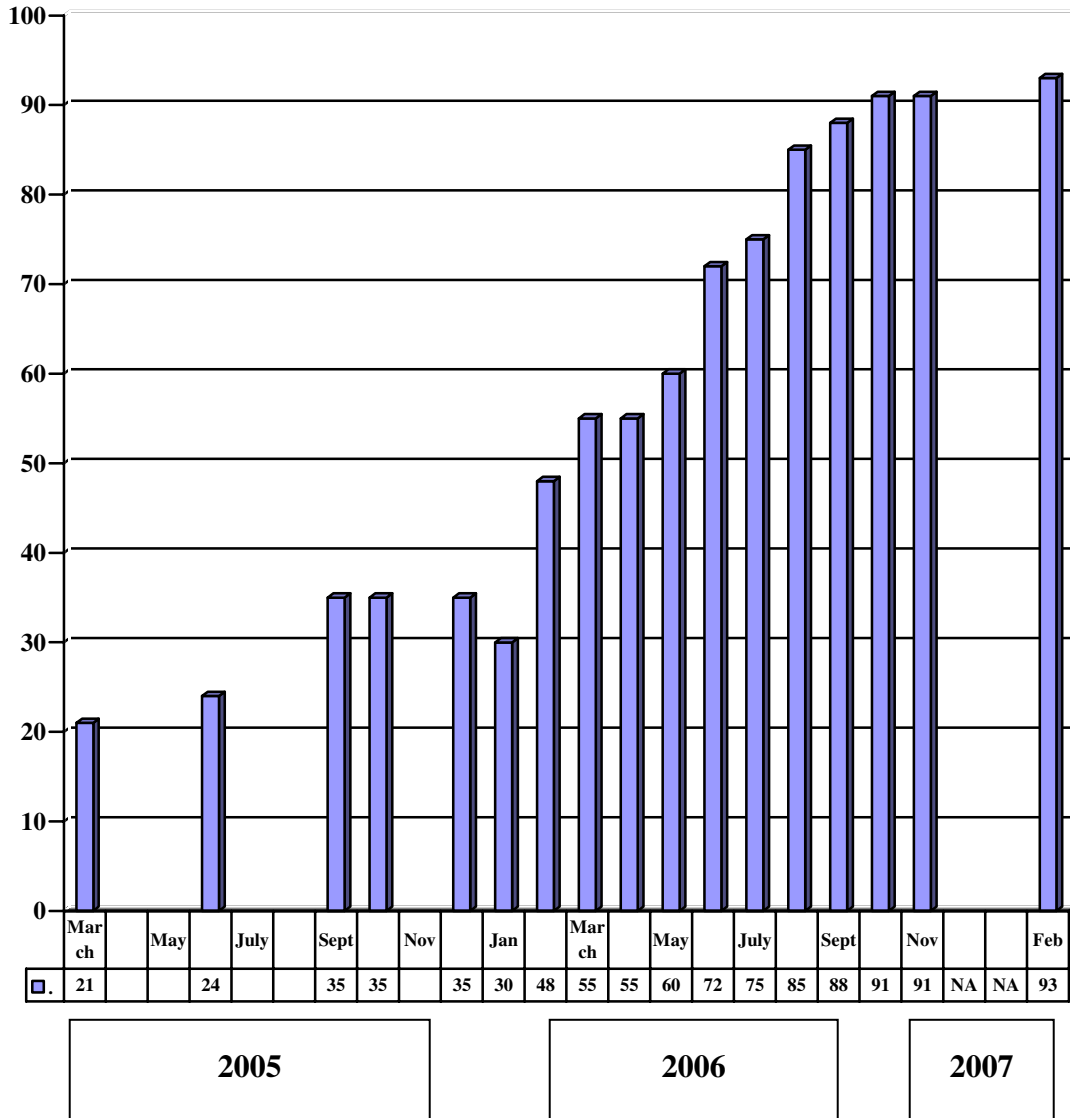


* Includes MOD and National Police units; data includes only those ISF independent operations that are reported to the Coalition Data as of March 2, 2007.

Source: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2007 Report to Congress, p.38.

Figure 7.3

Iraqi Army Battalions “leading” Counterinsurgency Operations: March 2005-February 2007*



* Note: The DoD defines a unit as “in the lead” “once it has been thoroughly assessed and has demonstrated that it is capable of planning and executing combat operations.”

** Note: Figures +/- 5%

Source: Walker, David M. “Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq,” GAO. Testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives. January 18, 2007; and US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, November 2006 Report to Congress, p.25.

Equipping the Force: Problems with Arms Transfers and Accountability

The Iraqi Army has also faced continuing force development problems because its equipment plans have never caught up with the growing level of threat it faces, or come close to matching the level of capability of US and other MNF-I forces. Once again, the metrics that have been publicly reported seem better than they are.

The US had planned to provide equipment for 325,000 ISF personnel by December 2006. 277,600 of these had been issued weapons by August 2006.⁴³⁹ The Department of Defense reported that 100% of individual authorized items had issued by the end of 2006.⁴⁴⁰ The US also reported continued to provide personal equipment such as body armor sets, and also up-armored Humvees, tracked M113 armored personnel carriers, heavy machine guns, and fuel trucks. According to according to Col. Brian Jones, commander of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, this significantly shored up the confidence of Iraqi soldiers.⁴⁴¹

Too Light to Fight

As **Figure 7.4** indicates, most ISF forces were only issued personal and squad-level weapons, and light, unprotected vehicles. MNF-I issued about 480,000 weapons, 30,000 vehicles and 1.65 million pieces of gear (uniforms, body armor, helmets, footwear), among other items, to the ISF as of October 2006.⁴⁴² This equipment was procured from a number of sources, including funds from the US, Iraq, and other coalition countries, as well as weapons captured since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom and then redistributed to Iraqi forces.

The rushed pace of the ISF training and equipping program hampered DoD efforts to properly track equipment transfers to the ISF, and led to continuing problems in cross-leveling between and within army units that led to shortages in some subordinate units. Although it is unclear what accountability regulations the DoD has applied to the program, MNSTC-I did take initial steps to account for the equipment transfers in 2004 and 2005. In May and June 2004 MNSTC-I ordered: serial numbers for all sensitive items such as weapons and radios to be recorded; relevant information to be entered onto a Department of the Army hand receipt form; signatures from receiving Iraqi security forces; and property accountability information to be submitted to MBSTC-I.⁴⁴³

The creation of an operational equipment distribution network, however, did begin in 2004, but was not completed until mid 2005. This network included establishing regional distribution centers, taking stock of existing inventory, and creating a database to track equipment. By the time the network was operational, MNF-I had already been distributing large amounts of equipment to the ISF for over a year. Under staffing at the responsible offices in MNSTC-I also contributed to the accountability problems.

According to the former MNSTC-I commander, several months passed after MNSTC-I's establishment before the commander received the needed number of staff. As a result, shipping containers were not opened and individual items distributed to Iraqi forces were not recorded.⁴⁴⁴ Finally, the operational demands of rapidly equipping the ISF as it was forced to fight the growing insurgency limited the MNSTC-I's ability to conform to accounting procedures.

Corruption Without Compare

Iraqi army forces increasingly complained about corruption and the lack of armor, protected vehicles, and artillery. In October 2006, former Iraqi finance minister Ali Allawi, alleged that a total of “up to \$800 million” meant to equip the Iraqi Army had been stolen by former officials through fraudulent arms deals, mostly during the tenure of former interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi. The former minister did not accuse specific officials. Iraqi investigators were, however, investigating former procurement officer Ziad Cattan, who in turn claimed he could account for the hundreds of millions he used to buy weapons. Analysts at Jane’s, however, said this documentation did not prove whether any of the weapons ordered by Cattan were actually delivered.⁴⁴⁵

Sectarian biases within the MOD also hampered the distribution of Iraqi Army equipment. According to Col. Bryan Owens, Commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division, operating in Salah ad Din Province, sectarian discrimination has played a role in the lack of equipment received by the mostly Sunni Iraqi Army forces in the province. There were, according to Owens, “warehouses down in Taji and other locations that have equipment,” for the ISF, but a combination of sectarian bias in the Iraqi government and a “bureaucracy . . . worse than I’ve ever seen” has kept the equipment from the ISF in Salah ad Din.⁴⁴⁶ Similar issues slowed the distribution of equipment to Sunni Iraqi police and Army units in Anbar province as well.

Irregularities in US Arms Shipments to Iraqi Forces

Equipment accountability was as critical a problem as equipment type. A request by the head of the Senate Armed Services Committee John Warner to the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction prompted a discouraging report from SIGIR. About \$133 million of the IRRF was used to purchase more than 370,000 weapons through 19 contracts with 142 delivery orders. These weapons were small arms, comprising 12 types ranging from semiautomatic pistols and assault rifles to heavy machine guns and RPG launchers.⁴⁴⁷

It was clear that the US military did not properly track hundreds of thousands of weapons intended for Iraqi security forces and did not record the serial numbers of nearly half a million weapons provided to Iraqis, making it impossible to track them. It also failed to provide spare parts, repair manuals, and maintenance personnel for the equipment.

Of the 505,093 weapons given to the Ministries of Interior and Defense, only 12,128 were properly recorded. These arms include RPG launchers, assault rifles, machine guns, shotguns, semiautomatic pistols and sniper rifles. Of those weapons, 370,000 were bought with American taxpayer money under the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, and thus fell within the general mandate of the Special Inspector General.

Although there were standard DoD regulations in place, US military officials in Baghdad said they thought these rules – the DoD small-arms serialization program – did not apply to them. Moreover, there were large discrepancies in the numbers of weapons purchased and those arrived in Iraqi warehouses. The US government directly bought 176,866 semiautomatic pistols, but only 163,386 showed up in warehouses, making for a difference of 13,480. Nearly 100 MP-5 machine guns and all of the 751 M1-assault rifles that were shipped have also vanished.

The total number of lost weapons could indeed be higher, because the Inspector General was only responsible for equipment bought directly with US taxpayer money.⁴⁴⁸ MNSTC-I responded to the SIGIR's concerns, but while the SIGIR found some of MNSTC-I's comments "responsive," he did not believe that MNSTC-I adequately responded to SIGIR's recommendation to establish accurate weapon inventories.⁴⁴⁹

Part of the problem came from the way the force development effort was funded. Congress funded the training and equipping of Iraqi forces outside of traditional security assistance programs, initially through the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, and later through the Iraq Security Forces Fund. This gave DoD greater flexibility in managing the program, but also led to accountability issues. Accountability requirements normally applicable to security assistance programs, such as the registration of small arms or the many other procedures for storing, protecting, transporting, and registering sensitive items, did not necessarily apply to the Iraqi arms transfers. It is unclear what, if any accountability measures the DoD has taken in regards to the train-and-equip program for Iraq. DoD officials, according to the GAO, "have expressed differing opinions on this matter."⁴⁵⁰

In any case, the end result was an inability to account for all of the weapons issued to Iraqi forces, and an inability to ensure that all of the distributed equipment reached the intended recipients. The DoD admitted in February 2007 that equipment accountability was "at a level below that desired by the Coalition or the Government of Iraq [Government of Iraq]".⁴⁵¹ According to the GAO, the numbers reported by the former MNSTC-I commander do not necessarily represent the weapons received by the ISF. Instead, these numbers only indicate weapons tracked at national warehouses and regional distribution centers. In particular, the GAO discovered 80,000 pistols and 90,000 rifles that were reported as issued but were not recorded.⁴⁵²

A Lack of Proper Equipment

The problems in the quality of the equipment supplied to the ISF, however, remained far more serious than the ability to account for the equipment supplied. Any effort to "uparmor" the ISF also lagged badly behind the Iraqi Army's requirements. The MOD did begin to increase its armored forces, but its efforts fall far behind need – a fact made all too clear by the constant increases in the US army and Marine Corps effort to the uparmor US forces. These problems have been made worse by mismanagement and corruption.

The lack of heavy weapons, armor, logistical support, and air support continued to hamper the ISF. At the same time, the contrast between the constant uparmoring of MNF-I forces and the failure to do so for the ISF helped lead to widespread ISF complaints. So did the fact that stepping up Iraqi operations in the field coupled with their lack of protection and firepower left them increasingly exposed.

The MOD is, however, slowly procuring more armored forces. In June 2005, for example, the MoD ordered 98 BTR-80UP armored personnel carriers (APC) from Poland. The deal was delayed a year, and the first of the vehicles began to arrive in September 2006. Most of the BTR-80UP's will be delivered in a basic APC configuration. Iraq will also receive some specially modified BTR-80UP's, including: command vehicles for battalion commander (BTR-80UP-KB), command vehicles for company commander (BTR-80UP-KR), staff vehicles (BTR-80UP-S), armored

ambulances (BTR-80UP-A), reconnaissance vehicles (BTR-80UP_R), cargo vehicles (BTR-80UP-T), and armored maintenance/recovery vehicles (BTR-80UP-BREM).⁴⁵³

Additionally, 398 ILAV Badgers were purchased by the Iraqi Army. These large armored Infantry Fighting Vehicles are deployed with engineer platoons, and had started to arrive in Iraq by March, 2007. Badgers, based on a South African design, provide good IED protection.⁴⁵⁴

Armored humvees are also critical to operations in Iraq, as demonstrated by the controversy over the US military's delayed procurement of 'up-armored' humvees. The ISF fielded about 2,400 armored humvees as of March 2007. Existing procurement plans would add another 300, and the Prime Minister's New Force Initiative would add another 400. In total, the Iraqi Army plans to field roughly 3,200 armored humvees.⁴⁵⁵

The lack of heavy Iraqi forces was apparent in ISF operations in Turki, east of Baghdad, in January 2007. On January 4th a joint Iraqi and American offensive began to root out insurgent forces that had been hiding and staging attacks in Baghdad from a network of irrigation canals. The Iraqi forces, part of the 1st brigade, 5th Army Division, had received 181 out of the 211 armor-plated Humvees promised by the US. However, many of them were deployed elsewhere when the operation began, and 45 had already been destroyed or damaged by roadside bombs. They had no heavier vehicles, or indigenous air support.

Heavy rains made roads muddy, and immediately the Iraqi pickup trucks and minivans became mired in the mud. US troops were forced to tow them out using their Bradley fighting vehicles and tanks. As the operation continued for several weeks, the US was forced to fly in all of the Iraqi's supplies, from ammunition to food. According to one of the Iraqi soldiers engaged in the fighting: "The coalition forces have airplanes, tanks, all the equipment they need. But the Iraqi army does not have that. We need US support."⁴⁵⁶

Corruption compounded the ISF's equipment problems and forced Iraq to expand the use of "total package" military procurements.⁴⁵⁷ A large \$400 million deal to procure Russian helicopters from a Polish contractor in 2004 and 2005 turned out to be corrupt. Many of the helicopters that did arrive were more than 25 years old and not air-worthy. The Iraqi government then renegotiated the deal, to bring in 28 new MI-17 Russian helicopters. The four MI-17's that had arrived by February 2007, however, were missing key onboard systems that allowed the helicopters to perform combat missions. They were restricted to training missions in friendly airspace only.

This corruption extended down to the level of individual soldiers. Reports of under-equipped Iraqi soldiers were common. One reporter noted in February 2007, that Iraqi soldiers manning checkpoints in Baghdad wore plastic shower sandals instead of army boots.⁴⁵⁸ Iraqi officers were sometimes accused of selling the uniforms their men were supposed to be issued.

The most that the Department of Defense could promise in March 2007 was that,⁴⁵⁹

Equipment accountability is improving; however, it is still at a level below that desired by the Coalition or by the Government of Iraq. MNSTC-I and the Government of Iraq are now issuing other mission-critical items to the Iraqi armed forces, such as up-armored HMMWVs, wheeled APCs, heavy machine guns, and fuel trucks. MNSTC-I is currently working with the MOD to transfer maintenance capabilities to the Iraqi Army. The MOD will fund a contract through a Foreign Military Sales sustainment case planned to start on April 1, 2007. This contract will be monitored by a joint Iraqi/Coalition forces board that will determine when the transition requirements have been met. The MOD agreed, in principle, to fund the National Maintenance

Contract from spring 2007 through March 2008 using a Foreign Military Sales case. Total cost of the maintenance support contracts to be assumed by the MOD is estimated to be US\$160 million.

These statements gloss over the continued lack of a clear plan to provide heavier forces, and the honest recognition that the US will almost certainly have to fund this effort initially and for some years to come. If the US wants out of Iraq in a way that produces lasting regional stability, then armor, artillery, mobility, IS&R, close air support, and a large range of support assets must come in. A long-range strategy, plan, and aid funds are critical. If they exist, they exist in remarkable silence.

Figure 7.4
Partial List of U.S. Army Equipment Given to the Iraqi Army as of June 2006*

*Source: "U.S. Army and Marine Corps Equipment Requirements: Background and Issues for Congress,"

Item	Quantity
Tracked Vehicles	251
Wheeled Vehicles	2,600
Small Arms	153,000
Night Vision Devices	16,00
Uniforms	601,000
Body Armor Sets	242,000
Kevlar Helmets	170,000
Engineer Equipment	56
Generators	195
Material Handling Equipment	17

CRS Report For Congress, 12/20/2006. Pg. 25.

Support Capabilities and Requirements

The Multinational Command-Iraq continue to provide logistical support to Iraq's armed forces, and 22% of the funds spent on supplies and services for the ISF between May and August 2006 were spent on the armed forces.⁴⁶⁰ As of February 2007, MNSTC-I had 60 transition teams (out of 400 total teams for the MOD and MOI) dedicated to assist in logistics and sustainment issues.⁴⁶¹ DoD reported that areas of focus in 2007: "will be on developing the areas of fuel, maintenance, budget, sustainment, ammunition, medical equipment and supply accountability, and national warehouse."⁴⁶²

Progress and Problems in 2006

The August 2006 report by the US Department of Defense summarized the situation as follows:⁴⁶³

MNC-I continues to provide logistical support to the Iraqi Armed Forces where the established system falls short. Although there has been some success with Iraqi Army units using their own processes, there is still a great deal of institutional development remaining. MNF-I is working with both MNC-I and MNSTC-I to aid the Government of Iraq in developing a defense logistics system, but in the absence of a self-reliant system, MNF-I must provide extensive support to Iraqi forces.

The Multinational Security Transition Command processed life support contracts worth US\$7.8 million in May and June 2006. As of August, all such contracts had been handed over to the Ministry of Defense, while Multinational Security Transition Command had set up a working group to oversee proper support of the ministry to Iraqi Army requirements.

Even seemingly simple supply and sustainability problems like fuel supply, however, still presented serious issues. In June 2006, all Iraqi Army units submitted requisitions for fuel. Fuel storage capacity was predicted to be fully fielded by December 2006. The units designated for fuel storage and transportation, the Garrison Support Units and Motorized Transportation Units, were not yet at full strength. Three of the nine planned Motorized Transportation Units were approaching operational capability, but were still hampered by a shortfall of competent maintenance personnel⁴⁶⁴, while the Garrison Support Units were not expected to be functional until March 2007.

A concern over Iraqi over dependence on American-supplied fuel led US officials to carry out a test of the Iraqi capacity to provide its own fuel. In September 2006, American fuel was cut off to an Iraqi base in Taji, outside of Baghdad. The Iraqi supply chain proved incapable of handling demand, and the base was soon plagued by blackouts. Iraqi forces throughout Baghdad were affected, and in one neighborhood were even unable to operate at all due to lack of fuel. The US was eventually forced to rush in emergency supplies to keep the ISF operational.⁴⁶⁵ **Figure 7.5** provides data on Coalition support to Iraqi Army units in terms of fuel supply through June 2006. Col. Stephen Twitty, commander of US forces in Ninewah province, stated that in order to keep Iraqi forces supplied with fuel, US forces had resorted to pre-positioning fuel trucks in neighborhoods where operations take place.⁴⁶⁶

The SIGIR report of October 2006 concluded that Iraqi forces were still heavily dependent on US military forces to sustain them in the areas of fuel, ammunition, troop transport, health care and maintenance. The US military was unable to provide

information on how many Iraqi logistics personnel it had trained because the records had been deleted in a computer network crash.⁴⁶⁷

“There’s a couple of red flags. Most significantly, is the Iraqi Ministry of Interior properly preparing to take over the mission and sustain it? We don’t know because we don’t have adequate visibility into their budgeting, and to a lesser extent the same red flag is up for the Department of Defense.” *Stuart W. Bowen, Jr., Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*

Moreover, the report found that money for spare parts was allocated for only 5 of the 12 different kinds of weapons sent to Iraq. When the Special Inspector General contacted the Defense and Interior Ministries, they did not know how or where to requisition spare parts.⁴⁶⁸ ISF units also apparently decided not to fill vacant arms maintenance positions.⁴⁶⁹ When this report was published, the overall US expenditure for Iraqi weapons had been \$133 million and \$666 million for Iraqi logistics capabilities.⁴⁷⁰

According to the SIGIR report, MNF-I had made some progress in building effective logistics capabilities within the Iraqi Army and to transition their control to the MoD. The report noted, however, “significant challenges remain that put at risk MNF-I’s goal to transition a sustainable and maintainable logistics operation to the Ministry of Defense by January 1, 2008.”⁴⁷¹

One additional problem was that MNSTC-I could not tell SIGIR how many personnel have been trained to support logistics functions.⁴⁷² Another uncertainty is whether the MoD, with its 2007 budget yet to be approved, will be prepared to provide the \$3.5 billion MNSTC-I then said it needed to sustain its operations in 2007.⁴⁷³ MNF-I did, however, inform SIGIR that it was considering a “train-the-trainer” approach, in which already trained Iraqi logisticians would train other Iraqi soldiers. MNF-I has not yet committed to this training policy.⁴⁷⁴

Limited Logistics and Sustainment

The Defense Department stated in its November 2006 Quarterly Report that, “Perhaps the most significant shortcoming in both MOD and MOI forces’ capabilities is in planning and executing their logistics and sustainment requirements. Factors underlying this deficiency include inadequate levels of sustainment stocks and limited capacity of the MOD to execute fully the planning/acquisition/sustainment cycle.”⁴⁷⁵

Similar reporting took place in the March 2007 report,⁴⁷⁶

MOD logistics and sustainment is still a relatively immature system that requires significant Coalition assistance, especially in warehouse/depot operations and transportation. Development and implementation of MOD strategic logistics policy is particularly immature. The Iraqi Army has been slow to support sustainment, and there is limited indigenous capability and capacity to replace battle-damaged equipment.

MNSTC-I has oversight of approximately 60 transition teams (of the 400 total teams for the MOD and the MOI) assigned to assist in logistics and sustainment issues. Throughout 2007, the focus will be on developing the areas of fuel, maintenance, budget, sustainment, ammunition, medical equipment and supply account- ability, and national warehouse. Coalition forces continue to provide Combat Service Support by backstopping life support and fuel during times of emergency.

...In April 2006, the MOD assumed management of life support and its contracts, but Coalition forces are still assisting *in extremis*. Overall, support to the Iraqi Army provided by Coalition forces has decreased dramatically.

Approximately 90% of the planned Head- quarters and Service Companies have been formed and are at some level of operational capability. MNSTC-I has distributed all key equipment to the

Headquarters and Service Companies. Although the Headquarters and Service Companies are gaining some capability, Coalition forces and MNC-I logistics units will continue partnering and mentoring them as they assume their roles and in case of emergency or failure within the new Iraqi logistics system.

...The MOD and the JHQ are developing processes to reduce the reliance on MNF-I to direct, support, and sustain MOD forces. The transition of Iraqi Army divisions and the IGFC to MOD control marks the first time since the removal of the former regime that any Iraqi Army combat forces are under complete Iraqi command and control.

The transition also means that the MOD, through the JHQ, has assumed responsibility for support and sustainment planning for these divisions as well as for forces transferring to JHQ command and control in the future. The JHQ planning and coordination processes are immature and are currently hampered by bureaucracy, lack of trust and understanding, lack of experience with strategic planning, and dependence on Coalition support and funding.

The “Year of Leaders and Logistics”

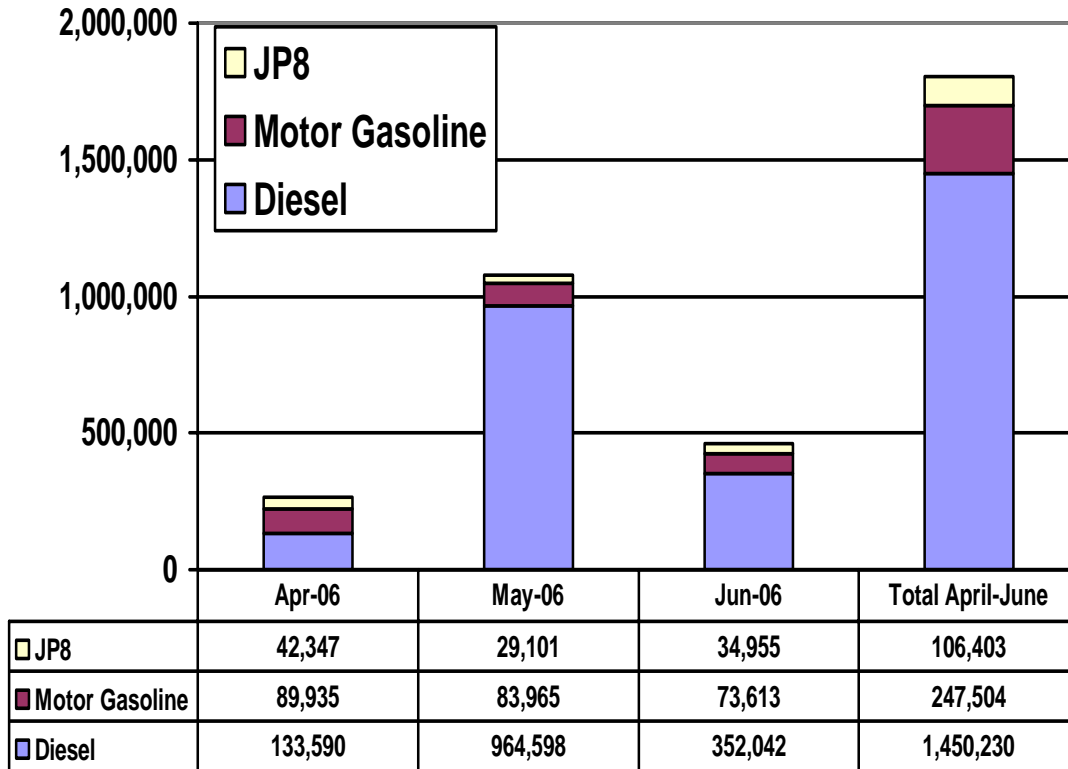
This may explain why the Department of Defense dubbed 2007 the “Year of Leaders and Logistics” in Iraq.⁴⁷⁷ One can only hope that 2007 goes better for the Iraqi logistics and support personnel than 2006 (the “year of the Police”) went for the Iraqi Police. Support and sustainability are problems that will take several years to solve. The Commanding General, MNF-I, stated on August 30, 2006, that capabilities were one of the key enablers to help develop ISF so they could eventually operate independently of US and coalition forces.⁴⁷⁸

The President’s FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Request referred to developing ISF logistics capabilities as one of its top priorities. The budget request cited several key categories of logistical support that needed improvement, such as: Sustainment, including critical infrastructure improvements, completion of all regional support units/Garrison support units and military specialty schools, and Administrative and Information Services Support to Regional Support Units/Garrison Support Units; Maintenance

Although the DoD implied in its March 2007 quarterly report that Coalition forces provide logistical support mainly “during times of emergency,” the GAO found that “Iraqi units remain dependent upon the coalition for their logistical, command and control, and intelligence capabilities. As of December 2006, the coalition was providing significant levels of support to the Iraqi military, including life support, fuel, uniforms, building supplies, ammunition, vehicle maintenance and spare parts, and medical supplies.”⁴⁷⁹

Despite progress in Iraqi Army logistical capabilities, and cheerful DoD claims that “Overall, support to the Iraqi Army provided by Coalition forces has decreased dramatically,” much work remained to be done in institutional development.⁴⁸⁰ “We need about one year to three years” before the MOD will be able to sustain itself,” said Mr. Mudafa, the director of contracting for the Iraqi Ministry of Defense.⁴⁸¹ The Multinational Force Iraq, Multinational Command, and Multinational Security Transition Command all helped the government in developing a defense logistics system, but until the completion of that system, extensive support to Iraqi forces by the Multinational Force was still necessary.

Figure 7.5
Fuel Supplied to Iraqi Army Units
 (In Gallons)



Source: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, August 2006 Report to Congress. 57.

VIII. Progress in the Iraqi Navy

Iraq's navy continued to have its main base at Umm Qasr. It was tasked with the defense of Iraq's small shoreline and its offshore oil loading facilities. Its authorized (not actual) strength in March 2007 was 1,483 sailors and four marine companies deployed for point defense of the offshore oil platforms together with Coalition forces, Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations, and base defense. These forces were organized into an operational headquarters, patrol and assault boat squadrons and a marine battalion.

MNF-I summarized the progress of the Iraqi Navy as follows in a report in March 2007:⁴⁸²

The Iraqi Navy faces significant challenges in meeting the individual and collective training needs for its ambitious acquisition program, including the leadership development of midgrade officers and technical skills of sailors. Training efforts include mentorship conducted by the Naval Transition Team and active skills training conducted by Coalition Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard forces. Infrastructure development will remain the main effort throughout 2007. Naval planning is maturing and coherent across acquisition, training, and infrastructure lines of development out to 2010.

The Navy planned to expand to 2,500 personnel, with 21 naval vessels, comprised of two offshore support vessels, four patrol ships, 15 patrol boats, and a number of smaller vessels. The four patrol ships are expected to enter service approximately October 2008. The two offshore vessels and a number of the smaller vessels are scheduled to enter service beginning in August 2008.

The Iraqi Navy's five Predator patrol boats were under the tactical control of the US Navy Command Task Force 158 (CTF 158). They assist CTF 158 in overwatch of Iraq's two offshore oil platforms. Iraq's 10 fast assault boats conducted counter-insurgency, counter-smuggling, and counter-piracy operations in the shallows of the Khawr Abd Allah waterway, which leads to the port of Umm Qasr.⁴⁸³

Both the UK Royal Navy and the US Navy reported progress in training and equipment, although efforts at independent operations were still highly erratic. Iraqis regularly served on board US and UK ships, and the Iraqi Marines and Navy boats were closely integrated into coalition operations to protect oil infrastructure.⁴⁸⁴ Iraqi sailors have also begun participating in ship boarding and inspection operations with American, British, and Australian forces.⁴⁸⁵

Figure 8.1 provides details on Iraqi naval assets, as of February 2007.

Figure 8.1**Iraqi Naval Capabilities**

Patrol boats	Fast Assault Boats	Fast Assault Boats	Offshore patrol support vessels	Patrol Ships	Patrol Boats
5	24	Purchase of 26 planned	Purchase of 2 planned and under contract	Purchase of 4 planned and under contract	Purchase of 15 planned

Source: Ripley, Tim, "Country Briefing Iraq," Jane's Defense Weekly, July 5, 2006, p.28 and Department of Defense, *FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Request*. February 2007. Pg. 46-47.

IX. Progress in the Iraqi Air Force

Iraq's air force has remained small. Its actual (not authorized) strength was around 900 on November 15, 2006, up from 750 earlier in the year, and was still only 929 in March 2007.

Increasing the Iraqi Air Forces capabilities was listed as a top priority in the Bush Administration's FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Budget Request. Development plans called for an interim manpower goal of 3,298 airmen by the end of 2007.⁴⁸⁶ The primary focus of the Iraqi Air Force (IqAF) over the next three years was said to be increasing air operational capability across the spectrum of missions supporting the counter-insurgency fight.

The FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Budget Request listed five elements as the IqAF's developmental focus⁴⁸⁷:

- Providing real-time intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), and enhancing security force projection through the use of rotary wing Battlefield Mobility of Fixed Wing Air Transport.
- The development of an armed counter-terrorism response capability for both fixed wing ISR and rotary wing Battlefield Mobility assets.
- Development of an aircrew and specialist training pipeline to provide the airmen needed for the planned expansion of the IqAF.
- Develop an air traffic and airspace control while providing a longer-term structure for future transfer and integration of civil airspace control to the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority.
- Modernization of the fixed-wing Air Transport mission area.

The MNF-I summarized progress in creating the IqAF as follows on August 29, 2006: "The Iraqi Air Force continues to evolve toward supporting the counter-insurgency force, but progress has been slowed by difficulty in recruiting qualified applicants. There have been recent airworthiness issues with the CompAir 7SL aircraft, and the Coalition is working with the Iraqi Air Force to develop solutions and alternatives to continue supporting the mission."⁴⁸⁸

The Iraqi Air Force concentrated on reconnaissance, battlefield mobility and airlift during the rest of 2006 and in early 2007. The control of Iraqi airspace remained a US responsibility, and the Ministry of Defense had not developed plans to procure its own combat aircraft. Increasing the size of the force continued to be a problem, because of the difficulty in finding qualified applicants. The Defense Department called pilot and technician training "wholly inadequate" in February 2007.⁴⁸⁹ The FY2007 budget request noted that:

The current fixed wing ISR and utility helicopter fleet is not able to provide the capability required by a modern and mobile land force. Close air support capability only exists through the use of Coalition air forces. The IqAF's current fixed wing ISR aircraft are becoming increasingly difficult to support because they are unsuitable to the harsh Iraqi environment and for the mission requirements.

The IqAF was, however, becoming increasingly operational. The Iraqi 23rd Squadron became fully operational in early February 2007. This squadron had 3 C-130 transport aircraft, giving Iraq a nascent military air-transport capability. The 2nd Squadron based at

Taji Air Base received its first 6 UH-1H Huey IIs in early 2007 and was expected to use them initially for battlefield mobility and casualty evacuation. The first 10 of 28 Mi-17 helicopters arrived in Iraq in Fall 2006. A total of 16 UH-1s were being upgraded to a UH-1H Huey II configuration, and were scheduled to be completed by April 2007.

The IqAF had three fixed-wing airbases in March 2007. The newest, New Al-Muthanna, Air Base housed the 23rd Squadron and operated 3 C-130Es⁴⁹⁰. The other fixed-wing airbases were located in Basrah and Kirkuk, and there was one helicopter base in Taji. The IqAF planned to request an additional 3 C-130s from the US, bringing the eventual squadron size to 6.⁴⁹¹ Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft were located at Kirkuk Air Base (3rd Squadron with four SAMA CH-2000s) and Basrah Air Base (70th Squadron with four SAMA CH-2000s and two Sea Bird Seeker SB7L-360s).⁴⁹²

Figure 9.1 provides details on Iraqi Air Force assets as of April 2007, according to the Defense Department.

Figure 9.1

Iraqi Air Force Capabilities

	C-130E Hercules transport aircraft	CH-2000 observation aircraft	SB7L-360 Sea Bird Seeker	Mi-17 battlefield helicopters	Bell 206 Jet Ranger helicopters	Cessna Caravan 20SB	Bell UH-1 helicopters
# of aircraft	3 (Three more requested in late 2006)	8	2-8	10 (18 more expected 2007)	5	3	16 (upgraded to US to Huey II) 18 more on order
Role	Air Transport	Patrol oil pipelines and other critical infrastructure facilities	Patrol oil pipelines and other critical infrastructure facilities	Battlefield Mobility	Basic rotary-wing training	Intelligence, Surveillance, And Reconnaissance ISR	Battlefield Mobility / Casualty Evacuation

Source US Department of Defense.

X. Developments in the Ministry of the Interior

The Ministry of the Interior's forces consisted of the Iraqi Police Service, the National Police, the Directorate of Border Enforcement, and other, smaller forces. MNSTC-I had completed its initial training and equipping goal for the Objective Civil Security Force (OCSF) of 188,300 MOI security forces by March 2007 and was in the process of expanding the MOI forces to 194,800.

In March 2007, the DoD announced that the government of Iraq was planning on expanding both the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police services. The expansion of the Iraqi police was comprised of:

- **Replenishment of National Police Brigades.** The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team (CPATT) is working to replenish all National Police units with personnel and key pacing items of equipment in support of the Baghdad Security Plan and Phase II training at Numaniyah.
- **Expansion of National Police to 10 Brigades.** The CPATT is supporting the prime minister's initiative to build a multicomponent (Iraqi Army and National Police), division-sized force to protect the Samarra Shrine reconstruction project. The Samarra BDE was recruited locally and are newly trained IP's with NP leadership.
- **Establishment of Three Emergency Response Unit Battalions in Anbar.** The CPATT, in cooperation with the MOI and provincial authorities, is assisting with the training and equipping of three battalions of auxiliary policemen, to assist the Iraqi Police Service primarily in the greater Ramadi area. This is an initiative to take advantage of increased Sunni participation in the police forces of Anbar Province.⁴⁹³ The size of the ERU and its mission is still to be determined.

Nevertheless, the various security and police forces had made substantially less progress than the Ministry of the Defense and Iraq's regular forces. There were 24,400 men trained and equipped for the National Police, around 135,000 trained and equipped for the regular police, and 32,900 men for the other forces reporting directly to the Ministry of the Interior in March 2007. Even more than was the case for Iraq's regular forces, counts based on the total number of men that were trained and equipped, rather than actually present, sharply exaggerated the number of men actually in service

MOI forces were still being actively vetted and purged in the spring of 2007. The MOI had to take an entire brigade of the National Police off line in October 2006 because of its ties to Shi'ite sectarian violence. This was an important step in cleaning up the MOI's forces, although other elements of the MOI forces still had significant ties to Shi'ite parties, militias, and death squads. Biometrics were also now being used to identify those individuals with criminal pasts and those who have previously been in the custody of coalition forces.

The Department of Defense quarterly report for August 2006 provided a number of important warnings about the MOI level of progress to date:

- Major progress has been made in reforming the internal operations of the MOI in every area but logistics and says expect major progress in that area by end 2006. It provides some details on logistic and support contracts and equipment plans. But does not address adequacy of equipment and states that, "...the MOI does not currently have an effective equipment management system

- in place...it is unknown what percentage of the equipment issued to the MOI is still serviceable.” (pp. 48-50)
- “the MOI does not currently have an effective personnel management system. As a result, it is unknown how many of the forces still trained by CPATT are still employed by the MOI.” Puts attrition at least 20% per year. (p. 50)
 - Serious problems in exist in the allocation and training of police in key provinces (p. 50)
 - Both the National Police and DBE are overmanned, and that no estimate exists of how many are trained and equipped by the MNF-I now actually serve versus those who have left. (p. 51)
 - Merging the National Police Commandos and Public Order Battalions before the January 2006 elections helped reduce sectarian problems and abuses, but no details. (p. 51).
 - The seriousness of corruption is key problem. (p. 51)
 - Units have problems with militia ties and influence, and say some are influenced by Iran, but no details, perspective, or examples. Does note that 45 more transition teams were deployed to the police in July 2006. (pp. 51-52)
 - There is “unprofessional and, at times, criminal behavior” of some National Police units but does not describe which units or the level of progress in dealing with what used to be the Iraqi security forces. (p. 46)
 - US and other NPTTs are now embedded in all levels of units down to the battalion level. This should lead to major problems in dealing with sectarian and ethnic abuses and in leadership. They have, however, been able to put a police training team in every police station and facility in Baghdad.
 - It is unclear that any meaningful recruiting and vetting process has yet taken hold. (p. 47)
 - Some unquantified progress in creating mechanized battalions and providing armored vehicles. (p. 47)
 - The section on the Department of Border Enforcement and Department of Ports of Entry describes a rushed effort of limited present effectiveness with goals that seem unrealistic. The percentage data on manning and equipment say nothing about effectiveness.
 - The current strength and capability of the Center for Dignitary Protection is unknown. (p. 48)

The August 2006 status report summarized the MOI’s internal problems as follows:⁴⁹⁴

Corruption, illegal activity, and sectarian bias have constrained progress in developing MOI forces. Inappropriate tolerance of and infiltration by Shi’a militias, some of which are influenced by Iran, is the primary concern of the Government of Iraq. A lack of effective leadership and policies to stem corruption through accountability for actions, equipment, and personnel have enabled the theft of pay and equipment, unlawful detentions, and reported cases of abduction and torture or execution of Sunnis. The minister is committed to changing corrupt leaders and instituting policies to eliminate corruption.

An additional 45 transition teams were deployed in July to increase PTT coverage across the country. As stations begin to reach TRA Level 2 in August, transition teams will expand their coverage of nearly 1,000 total stations across Iraq. This will limit infiltration by militias, improve adherence to the rule of law, and prevent complicity and participation in sectarian violence.

The November Quarterly Report was no more flattering and added: “corruption and smuggling are becoming more organized and entrenched.” This is due partly to that fact that MOI internal security training leaves little time left for “training on or conducting criminal investigations.”⁴⁹⁵ The analysis in the March 2007 report was only marginally better,⁴⁹⁶

Embedded transition teams continue to report modest improvements in the MOI's ability to perform key ministry functions, such as developing and implementing plans and policies, intelligence, personnel management, logistics, communications, and budgeting. MNSTC-I assesses MOI as being partly effective. As was described in the November 2006 report, the CPATT's MOI Transition Team works with the MOI on developing and assessing these capabilities. The MOI Transition Team is composed of slightly more than 100 advisors.

Certain functional areas of the MOI operate under an assortment of financial authorities intended for a command-and-control structure that no longer exists. In this uncertain regulatory environment, proper financial reporting is inconsistent and results in difficulty for the MOI to budget centrally and execute funds effectively and transparently. Nevertheless, budget execution under Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani is improving and the Foreign Military Sales program will mitigate some of the risk of mismanagement in this area.

The MOI Transition Team is focusing on developing the minister's ability to delineate authority, responsibility, and accountability clearly throughout the MOI. The chain of command is relatively clear and effective for National Police and Border Forces. However, command and control for the provincial police is unclear. The decentralized nature of the Iraqi Police Service often results in conflicting guidance and directives coming simultaneously from the central ministry and the provincial government.

...Corruption, illegal activity, and sectarian influence constrain progress in developing MOI forces. Although the primary concern of the Government of Iraq remains the Sunni insurgency, tolerance of and influence exerted by Shi'a militia members within the MOI are troubling. Militia influence affects every component of the MOI, particularly in Baghdad and several other key cities. Recruits take an oath of office denouncing militia influence and pledging allegiance to Iraq's constitution. Whenever actionable evidence is found, the MOI Internal Affairs Directorate and the minister act it on.

It should be noted that some MNF-I experts did feel these comments were unduly negative. For example, one expert noted that he felt the DBE was not overmanned for its mission. The Director General DBE had built 162 smaller expeditionary forts to augment the Coalition forts and planned to build an additional 291. Additional border forts and planned construction necessitates more personnel than the original OCSF authorization

The Growth of MOI Forces

The DoD announced in February 2007 that MNSTC-I had met its initial training and equipping goal for the Objective Civil Security Force of 188,300. The forces were still being expanded through 2007 to 194,800.⁴⁹⁷

The President's FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Request called for: force structure increases such as 4,000 police and forensic specialties; National Police forces to be provided with armored/SWAT vehicles and HMMWVs, tactical gear and body armor; National Police reform training to include law/ethics training, leader capability to include surveillance system equipment; and life support capability to include development of a MOI logistics structure and infrastructure sustainment.⁴⁹⁸

The following figures summarize some of the trends in the growth of MOI forces as measured in terms of the number of men who were trained and equipped:

- **Figure 10.1** shows the growth of the men trained and equipped for MOI forces by force element. The actual number of men retained and on duty on a day-to-day basis was often below 60% of these totals. One MNI-experts notes, however, that, "When training, leave and authorized absences are taken into account this figure is not below what could be expected in a war time force. A peace time military force might be expected to be below 80% when leave, training, medical and moves are included."

- **Figure 10.2** provides similar data to Figure 10.1, shows force distribution by percentage.
- **Figure 10.3** contrasts DOD assessed capabilities for the National Police Service, June 2005 and February 2007, at the combat battalion, brigade, and division level. These figures reflect the same exaggeration of actual Iraqi combat capabilities as similar data for the Army. Note that the DoD qualifies units “in the Lead” as “with Coalition enablers or fully independent.” How many units are “fully independent” is not revealed. MNF-I experts do comment, however, “We rightly developed the operational capabilities first to get the Iraqis “out in front” or “in the Lead” and now must develop the support capabilities in these units.”
- **Figure 10.4** provides a force generation timeline, with information on manning and training as well as equipment deliveries, as of August 2006. This schedule is far too demanding, even given the limited length of training and the light nature of the equipment provided to the forces involved.

The Iraqi Police Service did, however, make major progress in many areas of training. The IPS effort began with JIPTC and the IPS Academy in Baghdad. The first IPS class graduated from the Baghdad academy in February 2004. The initial class had only 2 female IPS, but that number grew progressively with each additional class to a class of 360 females in late 2004. Also, the overall class size was close to 1000 IPS throughout 2004. As of December 31, 2006, the majority of Iraqi Police Academies had transitioned to Iraqi control. Only the Baghdad Training Center and the Jordan International Training Center remained under Coalition control.⁴⁹⁹

Thousands of former IPS who returned to duty in fall of 2003 and went through a three week TIP course in policing in a democratic society. These TIP Academies were spread throughout the entire country and conducted in every large city. The Military Police were given the mission and that became their main effort from late 2003 through fall of 2006. While training sometimes still have to be rushed, it still was far more effective than no training.

Real Manning Levels Are Unknown

Once again, the manpower data in Figures 10.1 to 10.4 only count manpower throughput in the training system and authorized manning. They do not report actual manning or real world force readiness and capability. They ignored desertions, absenteeism, and many other problems. As one MNF-I expert explains, “They do not report actual manning because we have no way to track that data. The MOI personnel system is a paper process. We are reporting the only figures on which we have accurate data.”

The DoD reported in November 2007 that:

The MOI continues to struggle with personnel management. Lack of standardized personnel strength reporting from stations up their district and provincial chains causes lack of transparency on the total number of Iraqi police officers on duty on any given day. The only numbers available are the payroll numbers submitted by the provinces, which, in many cases, are higher than the actual numbers of Iraqi police officers on hand. As a result, it is unclear how many of the forces trained by the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team are still employed by the MOI, or what percentage of the 180,000 police thought to be on the MOI payroll are Civilian Police Assistance Training Team-trained and equipped.⁵⁰⁰

In addition to the uncertainties in the overall number of trained regular police officers on duty there continued to be problems with distribution of the manpower that actually did exist among provinces. Some provinces were reluctant to take officers off the streets in order to send them to training resulting in those provinces being understaffed with trained

personnel. Meanwhile these openings allowed other provinces to fill the empty slots in the academies and having more than their authorized trained force.⁵⁰¹

Absenteeism continued to be a serious problem, with leave policies and undeveloped personnel management accounting for 30-40% of absent personnel. In the IPS shift schedules make it difficult for the coalition teams to offer any assessment of the level of absenteeism.⁵⁰² Finally, to make up for chronic absenteeism and manpower shortages in the Iraqi police, many provincial and local governments have hired additional police outside of the central government's train-and-equip program.⁵⁰³ Unfortunately, these "extra" police are trained and equipped by the local governments, and are often put on the job with little or no training. Since the provinces continue to hire above the OCSF numbers it is also impossible to track specific policemen trained versus those untrained in individual stations

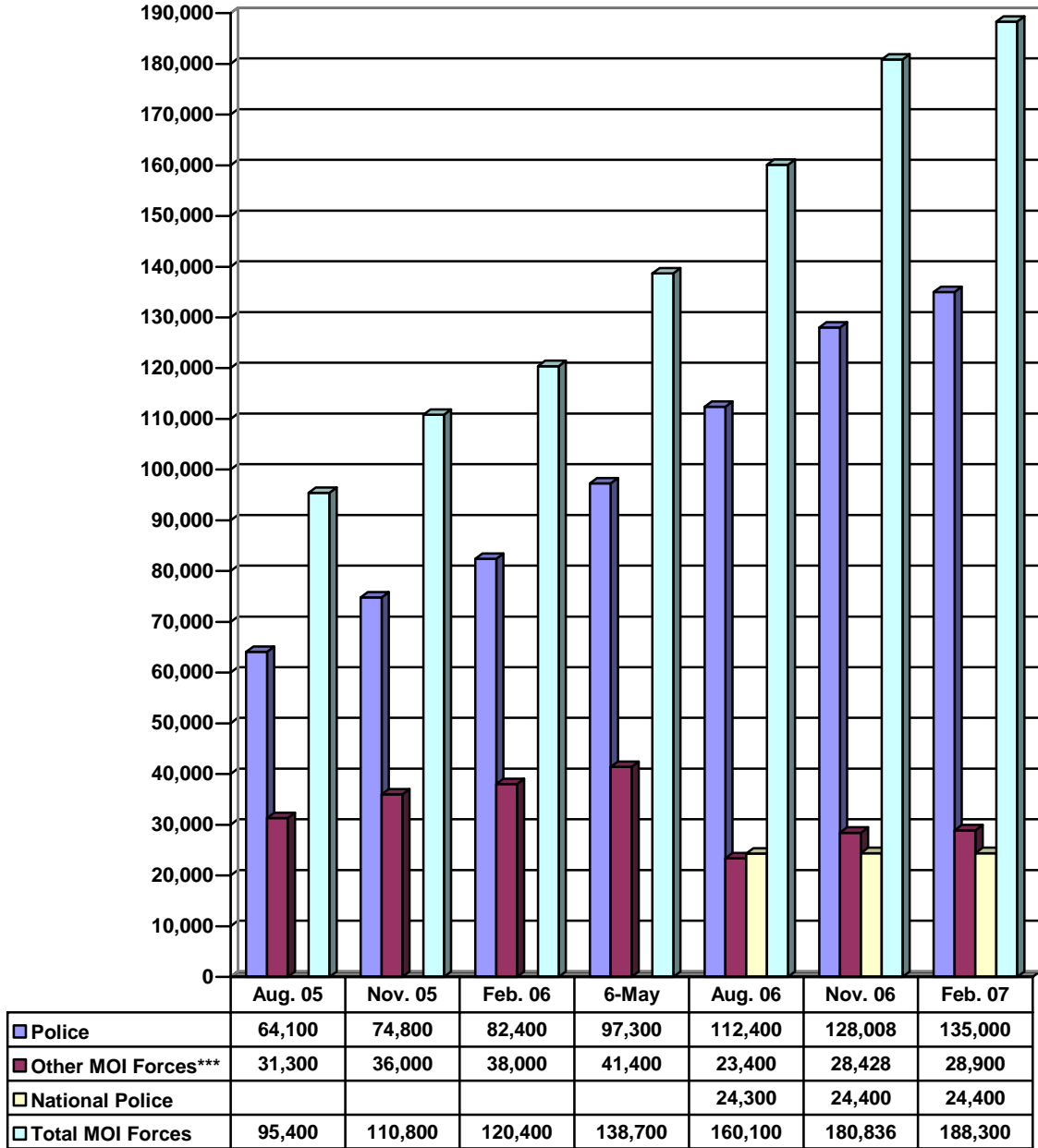
The Department of Defense Quarterly Report for March 2007 summarized the MOI's manpower and personnel problems as follows,⁵⁰⁴

The MOI does not yet have accurate personnel accountability and reporting procedures, and it is unknown how many of the more than 306,000 employees on the ministry's payroll are present for duty on a given day. MNSTC-I estimates that, on an average day, less than 70% of MOI personnel are present for duty. This is a combination of authorized absences (leave, school, sickness) and unauthorized absences. The problem of personnel accountability is being addressed through the purchase of an automated human resources and payroll system. The equipment and software for this system were installed in January 2007, and training has begun. Full deployment of the system is expected to take 18 months. Once complete, the personnel management system will be integrated fully with employee biometrics, improving the accuracy of employment rosters and facilitating employee criminal background screening.

...Although the MOI is implementing an automated personnel management system, there are currently no reliable data to indicate how many of the OCSF are still serving with the MOI. Additionally, the MOI has hired a significant number of police beyond those trained by MNSTC-I. MNSTC-I estimates attrition for the MOI as approximately 20% per year, with the Iraqi Police Service and the National Police attrition remaining higher than the Directorate of Border Enforcement and other personnel due to the variance of risks in the duties.

... The Ministers of Defense and Interior are aware of "ghost" soldiers and policemen who exist only on the rolls. By maintaining these soldiers and policeman on their roles, units are able to receive additional resources based on per capita planning factors. Additionally, corrupt leaders often collect pay and other compensation designated for these soldiers and policemen. The ministries have made significant strides in reducing corruption within the personnel and pay systems and are well along in the automation of these systems to reduce corruption further and to tackle the absenteeism resulting from soldiers leaving their units to deliver their pay in cash to their families in their home districts.

Figure 10.1
MOI Manning Levels*: August 2005 to February 2007*



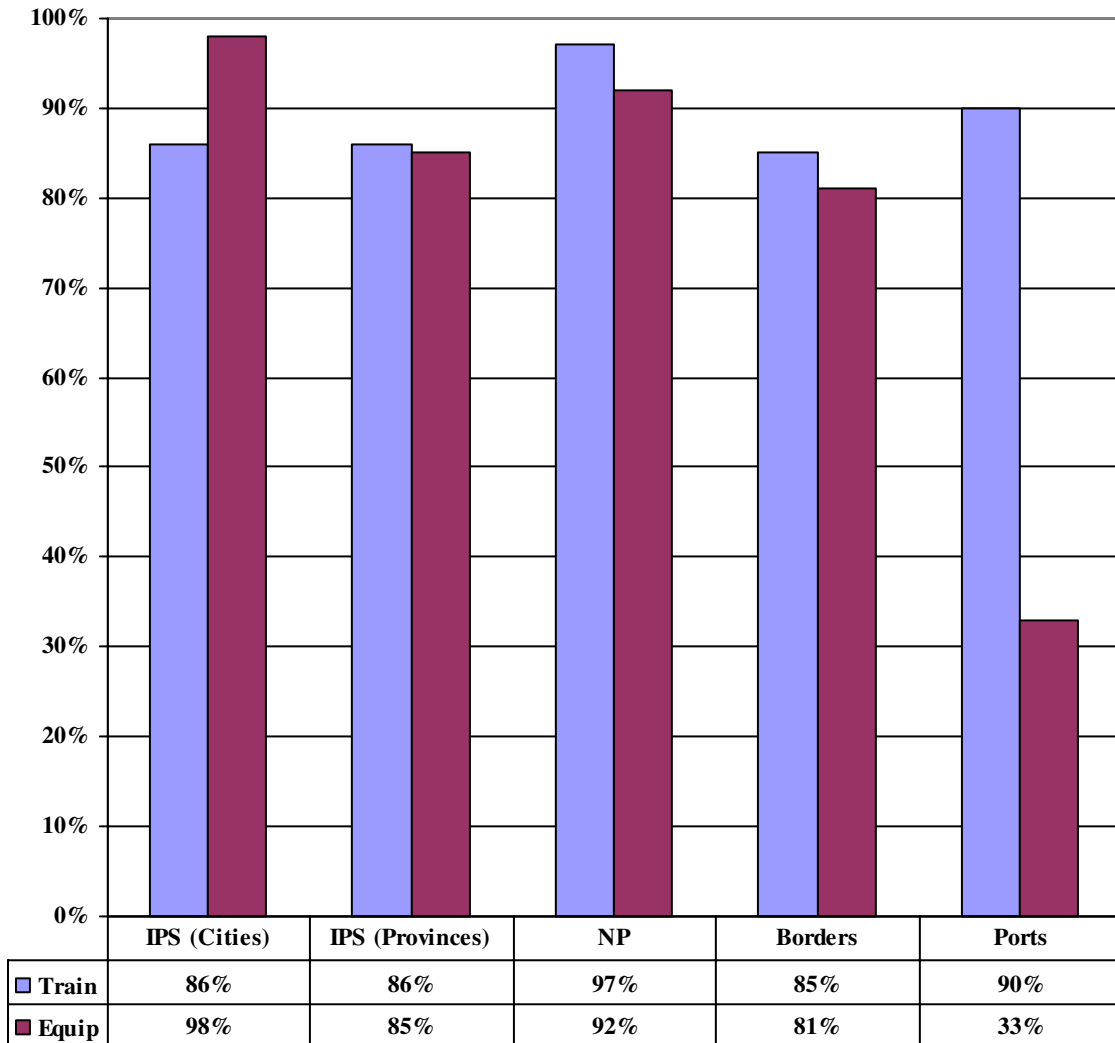
Note:* These figures only show the number of men trained and equipped and not the manpower and equipment actually in active service in the unit.

Note: ** Does not include Facilities Protection Service

*** "Other MOI Forces" includes Border Protection forces, Dignitary Protection Forces. The National Police were taken from these forces to form a separate force.

Source: Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State Weekly Status Reports, August 2005-February 2007.

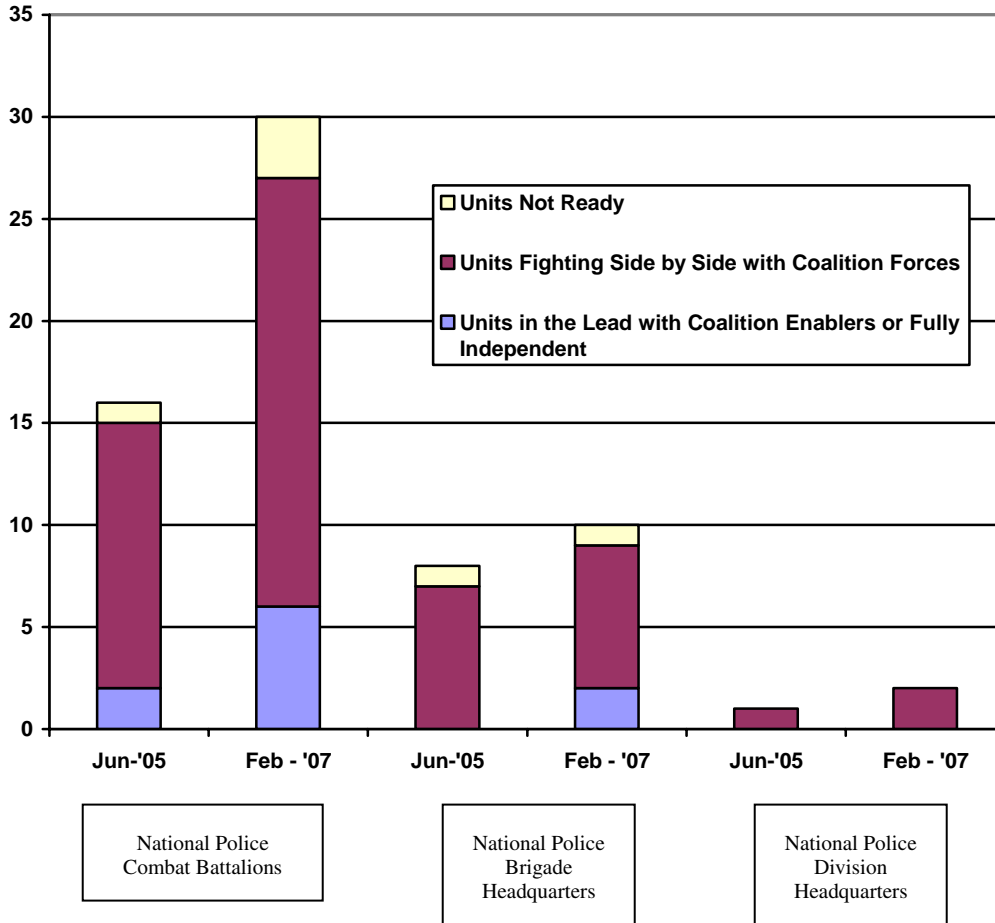
Figure 10.2
Trained and Equipped Manpower for Major Branches of MOI Forces
 (Figures as of July 2006)



Note: These figures only show the number of men trained and equipped and not the manpower and equipment actually in active service in the unit.

Data as of 15 July 2006. Source: Adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, August 2006 Report to Congress, p. 42; Note: +/-5% margin of error.

Figure 10.3
MOI National Police Forces: Assessed Capabilities



Data as of November 13, 2006

Source: Adapted from *US Department of Defense, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2007 Report to Congress*, p. 26.

Note: +/- 5% margin of error.

Figure 10.4
Force Generation Timeline

Part I: Manning and Training

	1 st National Police Division	2 nd National Police Division	Department of Border Enforcement	National Information and Investigative Agency	Criminal Investigative Division	Iraqi Police Service
To be trained in 2006	1,116	3,634	4,351	1,471	1,173	41,179
Total Objective Force at end of 2006	11,238	11,238	28,360	2,500	4,000	135,000
2006 Training goals expected to be reached by...	July 2006	August 2006	November 2006	December 2006 (this date is also listed as the training completion date of the "MCU", which supposedly stands for "Major Crimes Unit", although neither the term nor the abbreviation are mentioned elsewhere in the August 2006 Report to Congress "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" from which the data in this table is taken.		

Equipment Issues

Figure 10.5 shows that the Iraqi Police Service was supposed to have 77% of its authorized equipment as of November 2006. The police were then expected to have 100% of their authorized equipment by summer, 2007.⁵⁰⁵ The supporting data in the August Quarterly Report are summarized in **Figure 10.5**, and the report stated that:

- Overall on track to meet OCSF equipping goals by Dec 06
- Expect significant progress on weapons when shipment arrives from Russia in Aug 06
- Shipping delays regarding communications equipment resolved; equipment inbound
- Pistol purchase contract challenged causing delay in manufacture and delivery

The DoD reported that as of March 2007, the Iraqi Police Service in Baghdad and 9 other cities had received 100% of their authorized vehicles and equipment. As of early 2007, the Iraqi Police service overall had received 83% of its authorized critical equipment, and is expected to receive 100% by the summer of 2007.⁵⁰⁶ The National Police were also reported to have received all of their equipment by the end of 2006. The MNF-I reports that most units were well equipped for their duties, but that a minority of units in particularly dangerous areas were outgunned.

Furthermore, the DoD stated in its March, 2007 Quarterly Report that:⁵⁰⁷

Due to the immaturity of the MOI's equipment accountability system, there are no reliable figures on how much of this equipment remains in service, nor is it known how much equipment the MOI has purchased for additional Iraqi Police Service staff and for staff authorized by provincial governors. The most accurate reports on equipment quantities and serviceability are provided by MNC-I through the Police Transition Teams (PTTs). MNSTC-I continues to work with the Iraqi Police Service to implement standardized reporting and tracking processes and mechanisms. In conjunction with MNSTC-I, the MOI is developing a comprehensive procurement plan to ensure that MNSTC-I funds and MOI equipping funds are spent coherently.

The spiraling violence has also greatly increased demand for police equipment. According to Col. Bryan Owens of the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, "The original mandate from CPATT was to equip 5,830 policemen in Salahuddin. That was based on the population of Portland, Oregon, which is about 1.2 million. Well, as you know, the security situation in Portland, Oregon, is a lot different than it is here. And so in Salahuddin, we have close to 12,000 policemen and they are only being equipped by coalition forces to the tune of 5,830."

This lack of accurate force strength data seems to be even more critical in the case of the various police forces, because the MOI forces were generally significantly less ready and reliable than their regular army counterparts. While some MNF-I advisors disagree, discussions with both Iraqi and US personnel on the scene indicate that Iraqi police units often had more severe manning and equipment problems, officers and NCO presented more problems, corruption was a greater problem, and they were more likely to support Shi'ite operations and militias.

Figure 10.5
MOI Equipment Breakout as of August 2006

9+ CITIES	% Eqpd	Overall	Key Shortfall	18 PROVs	% Eqpd	Overall	Key Shortfall	
Baghdad	98	99%	AK-47s	Baghdad	98	66%	AK-47s	
Fallujah	100			Anbar	43		Personnel	
Ramadi	99		AK-47s	Dahuk	16		All, Priority	
North Babil	96		PKM	Irbil	53		Comms	
Mosul	100			Karbala	73		PKM, Comms	
Tal A'Far	100			Najaf	86		PKM, Comms	
Najaf	100			Sulymaniyah	13		All, Priority	
Baqubah	100			Wasit	68		Glocks, PKM, Comms	
Basrah	93		AK-47s	Babil	72		Glocks, PKM, Comms	
Kirkuk	100			Basrah	71		AK-47s, PKM,	
Samarra	100			Dhi Qar	82		Glocks, PKM, Comms	
				Diyala	57		AK-47s, PKM,	
National Police	92		92%	B.A., Glocks, PKM, Comms	Maysan		82	Glocks, PKM
				Muthanna	91		Glocks, PKM	
DDE	81	56% ^b	PKM, Vehicles ^a	Ninewah	62		Weapons, Body Armor	
			Glocks, Body Armor,	Qadisiyah	75		Glocks, PKM, Comms	
POE	32				Salah Ad		68	AK-47s, PKM,
				Tamim	79		PKM, Comms	

Data as of July 15, 2006.

a. Note that MNF-I reports important improvements since that time. MNF-I reports the MOI forces were at 75% in April 2007. Fuel trailers, Fuel trucks, 9 ton trucks, and uniforms were the current key shortfalls, and MOI forces were expected to be at 100% by August 2007

b. The equipment fill percentage was 70% in April 2007. Key shortages included patrol vehicles, flat bed trucks, 10K generators, and uniforms. The flat bed trucks and uniforms were to be 100% filled by the end of the 2007, all other key shortages were to be filled by August 2007

Source: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, August 2006 Report to Congress, p. 56 and 49.

Ongoing Sectarian Issues

There was a continuing effort to ensure the ethnic diversity of the MOI forces – but far too little substance progress was made. Older units such as the Public Order Battalions, by August 2006 integrated into the National Police, remained less diverse, since they were formed when Sunni participation in governmental efforts was particularly low. In comparison with these older units the newer ones were increasingly diverse. In contrast with the National Police, local police forces typically continue to reflect the ethnicity of the community in which they work, according to the DoD.⁵⁰⁸ However, the DoD also noted that, “there are some neighborhoods in Baghdad and other cities where the percentage of Shi’a in the Iraqi Police Service is disproportionately high.”⁵⁰⁹

The National Police also continued to be composed of a disproportionate number of Shi’ites. In 2004, many of the senior Iraqi Police leaders were Sunni, but have since been removed by the predominantly Shi’a controlled MOI.

Sectarian militia infiltration of the police forces was a serious problem. In March 2007 the DoD noted, “tolerance of and influence exerted by Shi’a militia members within the MOI are troubling. Militia influence affects every component of the MOI, particularly in Baghdad and several other key cities.”⁵¹⁰ Retired Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, after conducting a fact-finding tour of Iraq in March 2007, reported “The police force is feared as a Shia militia in uniform which is responsible for thousands of extra-judicial killings.”⁵¹¹

Infiltration of MOI forces by Shi’ite militias remained a primary concern as corrupt, unprofessional or illegal activities by such groups within the police or with police consent continued to reflect poorly on and degrade the confidence in the police forces. As with the other problems it was hoped that implanting stronger leadership and more effective policies would lead to a lessening of criminal activity and an increase of organizational loyalty. In March 2006, the MOI HQ conducted a program led by three Deputy Ministers that required employees to participate in assemblies in which loyalty to the state was emphasized over family or tribal loyalty. Each session ended with an oath of allegiance to Iraq. Additionally, further transition teams were deployed to help limit infiltration by militias and criminal activity by members of the police in July 2006

A high profile case of police torture and mistreatment in May 2006 – the “Site 4 case” led to the dismissal and prosecution of 55 Interior Ministry employees. Some remained free as of November, leading Ambassador Khalilzad to warn Iraqi leaders that unless they pursued the case more vigorously, the US might be forced to suspend aid to the police services under the so-called Leahy Law, which prohibits the financing of foreign security forces that commit “gross violations of human rights. In the spring of 2007, however, the most notorious of the Site 4 suspects were remanded over for trial at the new Rusafa "law and Order" complex.

The police force in Basrah was mentored and trained by Armor Group Services Ltd, a private security contractor. Armor Group’s approach to overcome mixed loyalties due to sectarian or tribal affiliation was to hire young men of about 18-21 years of age, expecting them to be less entangled in traditional networks. Armor Group employees reported this system to work very well for the Basrah police’s Tactical Support Unit,

which came to be a highly respected unit and one of the very few ones without any corrupt practices.⁵¹²

Basra's general police force, however, met much lower standards. The 7,000 policemen were "notoriously corrupt even by Iraqi standards, and death squads wearing police uniforms and traveling in police vehicles have abducted and killed Sunnis and journalists." British forces had lost oversight over the police in the area, but tried to regain control in October 2006 in "Operation Sinbad." 1,000 British soldiers backed up by 2,000 Iraqi troops reinforced existing police stations to raise standards.⁵¹³

British training efforts experienced a setback on October 29, 2006, when 17 Iraqi police instructors and two translators were killed on their way home from a British-run training school.⁵¹⁴ A British operation to re-take a renegade police station in Basra on December 25th provided a clear example of the corruption rampant in Iraqi Police forces. British forces, aided by 600 Iraqi army soldiers, the police station in Basra, transferred all 127 of its prisoners to another station, and demolished the building. Many of the prisoners showed signs of ill treatment and outright torture. Major Charlie Burbridge described the condition of the prisoners as "appalling."⁵¹⁵ The 'Serious Crimes Unit' that had run the station was suspected of involvement with local death squads. The British acted on a tip that the police were about to execute their prisoners.⁵¹⁶

On March 27th, 2007 a massive truck bomb exploded in Tal Afar, killing 152 people, the deadliest single bombing in the entire Iraq war. The bombing sparked reprisal attacks on Sunnis the following night. Although many of the reprisals were led by Shiite militiamen and civilians, the Iraqi police force gave at least tacit support to the reprisals. There were reports of police officers actually taking part in the revenge killings. The violence only stopped after the arrival of Iraqi Army units. Soldiers from the Iraqi 3rd Division detained 20 police officers, but released them for fear of sparking wider violence.⁵¹⁷

Fighting Corruption in the MOI and Police Forces

The MOI has expanded the staffs that are supposed to fight corruption. During the fourth quarter of 2006, it sought to improve its internal capacity to identify, deter, and prevent corruption. Approval by the Ministry of Finance allow the MOI's Inspector General (IG) to plan to increase the number of employees by 1,000 individuals during 2007. Added resources also improved the IG's ability to evaluate and report independently on the performance of MOI programs and operations throughout Iraq.

The March 2007 Quarterly Report stated that the IG developed its first Annual Inspection Plan and formally set up IG special inspection committees to conduct inspections of pre-selected MOI organizations throughout Iraq based on approved inspection checklists. The IG also formalized a professional development program for serving IG employees and expanded the core Program of Instruction for basic training of IGs. During this period, the IG increased its number of trained investigators from 81 to 125, to include employees serving in outlying provinces.

These efforts allowed the IG's office to increase its trained investigators from 81 to 125 during the last months of 2006. Funding increases also allowed the IG office to grow by 1,000 employees by Spring 2007. The IG also created an annual inspection plan "aimed at formalizing the use of IG special inspection committees to conduct inspections of pre-

selected MOI organizations throughout Iraq based on approved inspection checklists.”⁵¹⁸ Its Internal Affairs Directorate initiated a specialized training curriculum, training 73% of its 1,250 full-time employees by the end of 2006.⁵¹⁹

The MOI launched a police reform program, dubbed “Quicklook” in December 2006. This program “consisted of stations visits by the MOI team, composed of representatives of Police Affairs, Internal Affairs, Human Resource, Training, and Administrative directorates, and complemented by the local PTT, which provides both inspection preparation and on-site security. The team gauges the reliability of police forces as well as the more traditional readiness metrics involving manning, equipping, and facilities.”⁵²⁰

The program is time-consuming, and as of April 7, 2007 42 stations have been inspected. The program started in Baghdad, and will take 3-4 months to complete in the city. The program will then be expanded to the rest of Iraq. MNF-I experts feel however, that this effort sets the stage for a near complete transformation. A similar effort with the National Police had great success, and may prove to be equally successful with the regular police.

On the surface, the record of IG internal affairs investigations was impressive. A total of 3,403 corruption-related investigations and 249 human rights-related investigations were opened in 2006. Many of these investigations resulted in disciplinary action, as seen in **Figure 10.7**. More than 10,000 employees were fired or re-assigned due to the IG investigations.⁵²¹ According to the DoD, of the 3,403 corruption-related investigations:⁵²²

775 (22%) resulted in disciplinary punishment, 312 (9%) were forwarded to the Commission of Public Integrity or to a court for subsequent adjudication, 49 (1.5%) were closed because of insufficient evidence, and 106 (3%) were handled as internal MOI discipline. The other 2,161 (63%) remain open pending judicial review, ministerial review, or the completion of further investigation by Internal Affairs.⁵²³

Of the 249 human rights-related investigations:

The Internal Affairs Directorate conducted 249 human rights-related investigations. Of these, 76 (30%) resulted in disciplinary punishment and 10 (4%) were closed because of insufficient evidence. The other 163 (65%) remain open pending judicial review, ministerial review, or further investigation.⁵²⁴

In addition to corruption and human rights-related investigations, the MOI conducted inspection and compliance programs and screened its employees for ties to the Ba’ath party or criminal records. Of the MOI’s more than 280,000 employees “8,000 were reported as possible derogatory matches, 1,228 employees were dismissed, and 2,143 were identified in late December 2006 and are pending dismissal.”⁵²⁵

In order to improve the IG’s capabilities to fight corruption, the Specialized Advance Training Unit at the Baghdad Police College began training new investigators, with 125 investigators completing the training by March 2007.⁵²⁶ It is expected to take until January 2008 to complete the training of the entire Investigations Directorate.⁵²⁷ Additionally, through September 2006, 65% of Internal Affairs officers had received specialized training. The entire force of Internal Affairs officers is expected to complete this training by March 2007.⁵²⁸

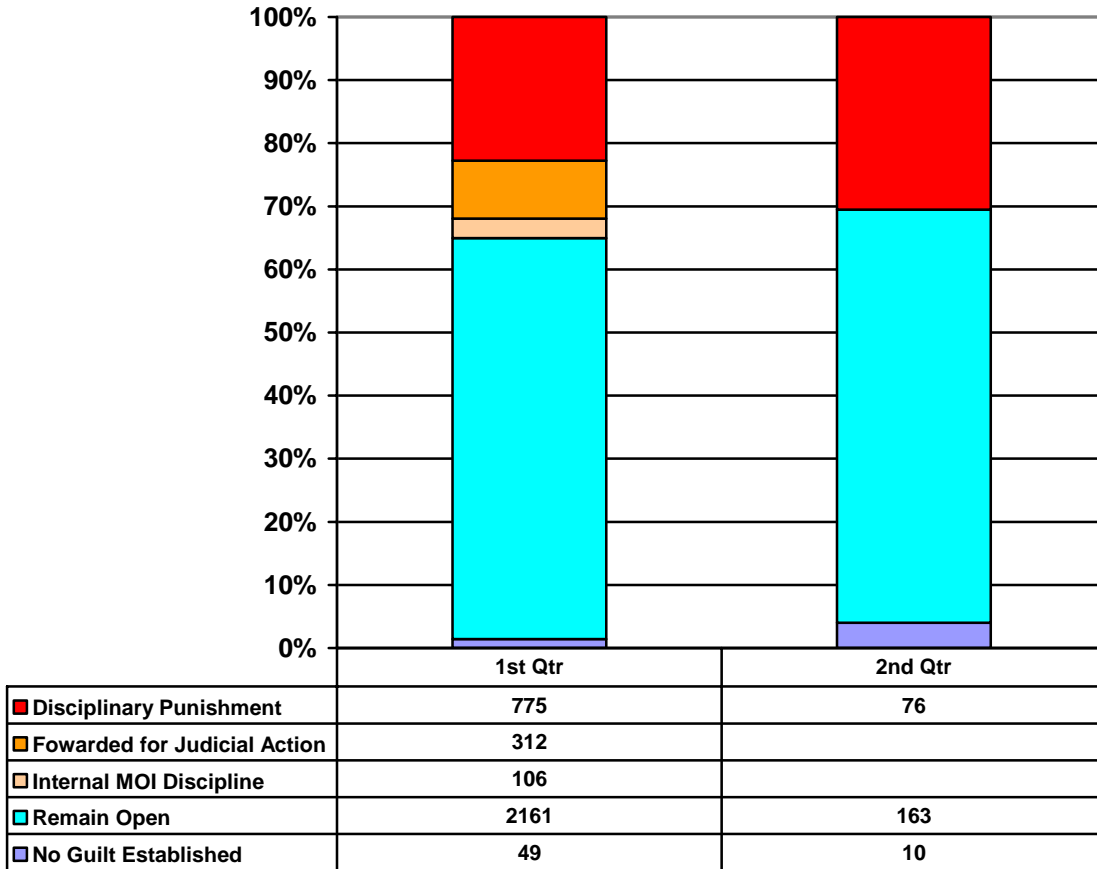
It was clear, however, that it would take years to eliminate the corruption that affected both the Ministry and National Police and which was endemic in the regular police. One key problem was that corruption interacted with an inadequate pay and benefit systems, poor and over-accelerated training and deployment efforts, poor facilities, and a lack of

adequate weapons and systems to track and control their use. Another problem was a series of operational needs that drove the Government of Iraq to put more security forces on the street even if this meant the ISF could not wait for academy graduates to fill the requirement.

According to a USIP report issued in February 2007, “There is ample anecdotal evidence of Iraqi police officers participating in training in order to obtain a weapon, uniform and ammunition to sell on the black market. U.S. advisors operate through translators and are often unaware of what transpires around them.”⁵²⁹

Far too many elements of the police development effort also had never planned for the level of capability needed to deal with a cycle of serious insurgency and civil conflict. The human dimension was lost in the rhetoric about patriotism and motivation and the focus on “leadership,” or simply ignored because planners and advisors believed they could not get the necessary aid.

Figure 10.7
2006 MOI Internal Affairs Investigation by Outcome



Source: US Department of Defense, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq." March 2007 Report to Congress, p. 31

The “Year of the Police” in 2006

Some of the MOI’s problems were caused by US and MNF-I neglect, and the failure to initially give the development of MOI forces the priority that was necessary or to shape these forces to meet the needs of Iraq. It was not until October 2005 that the police training effort was placed under the US military along with the creation of regular forces. The US military had previously been restricted from providing such training and had little practical experience with creating the kind of paramilitary forces needed to “hold” and deal with civil conflict.

The same was true of US police forces. Despite the widespread recognition in America of the importance of training effective Iraqi police forces, the training effort remained under-staffed and under-funded. The DoD admitted in its March, 2007 quarterly report that it was not: “deploying enough PTTs [Police Transition Teams] to cover all of Iraq’s police stations; at any time, only 5 of Iraq’s 18 provinces have sufficient PTTs to conduct the full range of activities. . .”⁵³⁰

The mission had not really existed since the US military had effectively had to abandoned missions because of problems and abuses in Latin America during the Cold War. The US lacked cadres of experienced trainers for the kind of forces needed by both the National Police and police. It is a tribute to the US military and civilian advisors that many succeeded in spite of these problems, and many cadres are becoming steadily more effective.

By 2006, however, the MNF-I was ready to start a “year of the police” that involved a far larger training effort and taking many other steps to reform and improve the MOI forces. The August 2006 status report by the Department of Defense summarized some of these steps as follows:⁵³¹

The MNF-I initiative to develop professional civil security forces able to assume the lead for the security of the Iraqi people has been dubbed the “Year of the Police.” The focus is on creating a force loyal to the people of Iraq and its Constitution, and committed to guaranteeing human rights and the rule of law. This was designated as one of MNC-I’s main efforts in 2006.

Mentoring of civil security forces is conducted by Police Transition Teams (PTTs), National Police Transition Teams (NPTTs), Border Transition Teams (BTTs), and Customs and Border Protection Teams (CBPTs). More than 160 PTTs are assisting the development of the IPS. Because of the large number of police stations dispersed throughout Iraq, the PTT program has initially focused on provincial headquarters, district headquarters, and Iraqi police stations in key strategic cities, but will spread to other stations throughout the country as more stations achieve a higher level of readiness. To conduct their mission, the PTTs travel to their assigned stations to train, teach, and coach the Iraqi police and to conduct joint patrols with their Iraqi counterparts.

The integration of International Police Liaison Officers (IPLOs) into the PTTs significantly increased the Coalition force’s ability to develop the IPS. The IPLOs provide the civilian police with expertise in all technical aspects of criminal investigation and police station management. The deployment of five additional Military Police companies in July 2006 added extra PTTs, enabling the expansion of the program to assess and assist in the development of the IPS.

Twenty-seven BTTs mentor and enable development of border forces. Additionally, Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Patrol Teams (CBPTs) provide critical mentorship at ports of entry, while 38 National Police Transition Teams (NPTTs) continue to support the development of the National Police units. These transition teams are intended to improve the readiness and capability of their MOI partner units. The Coalition Police Assistance Training

Team (CPATT) is on track to meet the goal of recruiting and training the authorized number of MOI forces by the end of December 2006. The force generation of the Department of Border Enforcement (DBE) and the IPS will occur in November 2006 and December 2006, respectively. Specialized police units, such as the Criminal Investigative Division (CID) and the National Information and Investigative Agency (NIIA), will be trained by the end of 2006.

US and MNF-I efforts to develop the Iraqi police forces often fell short of their goal, or remained at least partially ineffective through the rest of 2006. In testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 31st, 2007, when asked whether 2007 will actually be the “Year of the Police” in light of the failures of 2006, Lee Hamilton, the co-chairman of the Iraq Study Group, replied that there is: “Little evidence to suggest that that will be the case.” Senator Durbin added: “Any notion that we are going to surge to victory dies in the Iraqi police stations.”

Even so, the MNF-I feels it made important progress during the “year of the police.” MNF-I experts summarized the situation in April 2007 as follows:

CPATT achieved its Objective Civil Security Force (OCSF) goals in 2006. All twelve Iraqi MOI training academies were turned over to Iraqi leadership and supported by the MOI in Dec.

The OCSF equipping objective has been achieved with very few exceptions. DBE and some forces in low risk areas will receive the remainder of their personal protective equipment and uniforms by June. Contested areas and National Police have been replenished with increased allocations of key equipment and weapons to sustain the fight.

Ministerial_capacity steadily improves. CPATT advisors have spent more than 130K hours embedded with their Ministry counterparts to date. Their efforts have contributed immeasurably to improving Ministerial Capacity and have directly supported the Minister’s MOI reform efforts especially in the fight against corruption. The MOI is functional and rated partially effective.

Implementation of a professional development system for MOI forces is also on track. The first half of an officer program is in place and the remainder along with an NCO professional development system will be instituted later in 2007. (COL Bartran)

Having achieved OCSF objectives, CPATT’s training focus shifts to: 1) Sustainment of the OCSF: Ensuring that the ministry recruits, vets, and trains the appropriate forces to address a 20% attrition rate. 2) Overseeing National Police (NP) Transformation: NP transformation training began in October 06 and is expected to run through July 07. We will also work to bring to fruition: the NATO supported “Carabinieri” leader training for the NP, forward regional deployment of NP brigades, and the establishment of a NP Training Center of Excellence. 3) Support for MOI Training Academies: We are conducting an analysis to determine how best to support the training academies and the specific role of our International Police Trainers.

Sustainment of MOI forces will remain a priority through 2007. This includes the establishment of a functional logistic and supply system as well as a maintenance program to sustain the operational readiness of MOI’s fleet. CPATT will assist in the oversight of these programs and the establishment of a process to track readiness. Key areas of concern include: working with the MOI to set up effective warehouse operations, spare parts management, and replacement of lost or aging equipment.

CPATT will continue to embed over 100 personnel in the MOI to improve ministerial capacity. The #1 priority for the MOI Transition Team is to help the MOI establish their maintenance and logistics programs. We will also focus on: dissemination of the minister’s Strategic Directive, implementation of the MOI Organizational Structure Law, the continued establishment of the MOI information technology system (e-Ministry), dissemination of the Human Resources recruiting and hiring directive, development and establishment of a MOI healthcare action plan, fielding and establishment of the National Information and Investigative Agency (NIIA), enhancing C2

capabilities in the National Command Center, completion and implementation of the 2007 Training Directive, revising subordinate ministry 5 year plans, executing an Inspector General inspections program, strengthening MOI Public Affairs, refining financial procedures to include budgeting, planning and execution processes, MOI assumption of life support contracting, and establishment of infrastructure management capabilities.

Finalizing the establishment of a professional development system for the MOI will also be a primary concern for CPATT. This will include: the expansion of the Baghdad Police College from 1000 to 3000 cadets by Oct 07, and completion of the officer and NCO professional development system.

National Police

The National Police was now composed of Iraq's old security forces, which were elite Shi'ite units formed by an earlier Minister. It still presents serious problems because MoI efforts to recruit more Sunnis have so far had little success and the ties of some elements in the National Police to Shi'ite parties, militias, and death squads.

As part of effort to reform the National Police, it was reorganized into a headquarters, two divisions, the 1st and 2nd, a mechanized brigade and an Emergency Response Unit (ERU). The 1st and 2nd National Police Divisions were reported to have reached 99% of their authorized equipping and manning levels by July 2006, and completed force generation by the end of 2006.

Force Strength and Generation

Approximately 24,300 National Police Personnel had been trained and equipped by August 2006. This was an increase of 1,600 since May of that year, although such figures did not reflect absences and desertions. The total was 24,400 in March 2007, but Prime Minister Maliki announced a plan to expand the National Police by three battalions. This would bring the authorized strength of the National Police to 26,900

Deployment and Operations

In March 2007, all but one of the National Police brigades which were not enrolled in the National Police Transformation and Retraining program were conducting counter-insurgency operations to support the Baghdad Security Plan. Two National Police battalions were assigned security lead for their areas of responsibility within Baghdad. One battalion has been designated as part of the prime minister's operational and an additional brigade has been requested by the prime minister to provide security to the Samarra Shrine reconstruction project. Thirty-nine NPTTs support the development of National Police units by mentoring, training, and facilitating communication with Coalition forces. NPTTs assess the readiness and operational capability of the National Police, similar to the tasks performed by Military Transition Teams with Iraqi Army units.

Training

Training for the new recruits consisted of six weeks of training in the police academy in northern Baghdad. The equipment of the National Police consisted of small arms, medium machine guns, RPGs, and light trucks, which were used for patrols. The mechanized battalions were equipped with Armored Security Vehicles and REVAs, a South African wheeled APC. Like the regular police, however, some of the equipment they were supposed to have was not delivered or was somehow lost.

Equipment

The National Police had received 92% of their authorized equipment by August 2006. They reached 96% by the end of November, falling short of the goal of reaching 100% by that time. They were reported to be fully equipped by the end of December.⁵³² These figures, however, were at least as misleading as those for manpower. Much of the equipment was too light or inadequate for the missions the force now had to perform and much was missing or unaccounted for.

The March 2007 Quarterly Report noted that,⁵³³

The National Police was issued all of its key authorized equipment by the end of December 2006. MNSTC-I tracks the end-items issued to the National Police and relies on National Police Transition Teams (NPTTs) to report periodically on the status of that equipment. The MOI is responsible for equipping National Police hired in excess of the agreed authorization, although CPATT provides additional uniforms and key equipment to National Police units as they rotate through the Phase II program at Numaniyah.

During this reporting period, Iraqi and Coalition forces leadership emphasized National Police property and personnel accountability via the Quicklook program. The MOI Administration and Vehicles Directorates are making measurable improvements in property accountability policies and processes. The Administration Directorate developed and staffed an electronic data repository to track and account for items issued. This database will continue to be backed up by hard copies of supply transactions until more robust and stable electronic media, such as the e-ministry program, are available. The Vehicles Directorate is initiating an electronic database to track vehicles. Both directorates are writing policies and documenting accountability processes to enable future compliance audits of their activities.

Sectarian, Ethnic, and Crime Problems

The National Police are sometimes said to be as effective as the army or even more so. Some units, such as the 'Scorpions' brigade in Hilla, are often held up as model units for their professionalism, effectiveness, and lack of sectarian bias. Nevertheless, the National Police continued to have problems with unprofessional and criminal behavior in some units. This was true in spite of ongoing efforts to review each unit and make changes in personnel or send units to be retrained as the need arose. The Department of Defense status report for August 2006 touched on those problems, although it scarcely fully addressed them:⁵³⁴

Organized into a National Police Headquarters, two National Police Divisions, the 1st National Police Mechanized Brigade, and the Emergency Response Unit (ERU), the National Police are charged with maintaining law and order while an effective community police force is developed.

The National Police Headquarters provides command and control, staffing, equipping, training, and sustainment for these National Police Forces. It also commands the two training and professional development academies at Camp Solidarity and Camp Dublin.

...Unprofessional and, at times, criminal behavior has been attributed to certain units in the National Police. This behavior and the decrease in public confidence in these forces has been the impetus for a National Police reform program. Each unit and its leaders will be assessed by a joint (Coalition and Iraqi) committee. Substandard leaders at all levels will be removed and units will undergo retraining.

...The U.S. Government is committed to helping the Government of Iraq create an MOI that reflects the diversity of the Iraqi people. The goal is to create ethnically integrated units at the national level, while still allowing local police to reflect the ethnic composition of the communities in which they serve.

The former Police Commandos, now part of the National Police, are becoming increasingly diverse. The former Public Order Battalions, also now part of the National Police, tend to be disproportionately Shi'a, due to a lack of Sunni participation when these units were being formed in preparation for the January 2005 elections.

Merging the National Police Commandos and the Public Order Battalions into one National Police force has helped produce a more representative National Police. Recruiting initiatives targeting Sunnis have improved the diversity. Unlike the National Police, local police forces tend to be of the same ethnic mix as the communities in which they live and work.

... the National Police payroll is significantly larger than its authorized end strength.

... There are currently more than 29,000 National Police on the MOI payroll, but it is unknown how many of these have been trained and equipped. Absenteeism among National Police units generally follows the same pattern as in the military. Leave policies and immature personnel management policies account for 30%–40% of personnel not present for duty. Absenteeism in the IPS is difficult to quantify because shift schedules preclude PTTs from ascertaining which police officers are absent and which are simply off duty.

The DBE payroll is also larger than its authorized end-strength, with 25,832 DBE personnel on the MOI payroll. It is currently unknown how many untrained DBE personnel are on the rolls and how many of the trained and equipped border personnel have left the MOI. As with the other personnel issues, an effective personnel management system will help resolve these reporting and accountability deficiencies.

The Iraqi National Police was not immune from the problem of militia infiltration. Some of the most combat capable and best-equipped forces in the National Police were heavily implicated in the 2005 prisoner torture scandal.⁵³⁵ Other army and police units especially known for their brutality displayed a high level of independence from the government. They included several Police Command Units, as well as the Tiger and Thunder Brigades, founded in 2004 without the consent of US commanders.

Units known to brutalize Sunnis included the Volcano Brigades, the Punishment Committee, and the Secret Investigative Unit. The Wolf Brigade and Maghawir Special Commando Brigades displayed strong continuity from the Saddam era, Wolf being mostly recruited from the former Iraqi Special Forces and Maghawir mostly made up of Saddam-era veterans.⁵³⁶

In early October 2006, the entire 8th Brigade of the 2nd National Police Division was removed from duty and its commanders were arrested. The Brigade was implicated in a raid on a food factory in Baghdad in which 26 Sunni workers were kidnapped, and 7 executed.⁵³⁷ According to a February, 2007 USIP report, many of the un-vetted original units that were combined to form the National Police in early 2006 were primarily loyal to Shi'ite Militia organizations.⁵³⁸

In December, Lt. General Martin Dempsey, the Multinational Security Transition commander in Iraq, responsible for assisting the Iraqi government in development, organization, training, equipping and sustaining Iraqi security forces, briefed reporters about ongoing training efforts. He stated that: "The National Police is the biggest worry, about 20 to 25 percent of them probably needed to be weeded out." To help accomplish this "weeding out" process, National Police brigades were being taken out of service, one brigade at a time, for a four-week police training program that included the re-vetting of leaders and background checks and polygraph checks. This was the first police training that most of these units had ever received.

As of November 2006 there were 177 Police Transition Teams (PTTs) (14 Provincial, 54 District, and 109 Station) assisting the development of the Iraqi Police Service. Each team had approximately 11–15 members; 3 or 4 members of each team are International Police Liaison Officers (IPLOs) hired as contractors by the U.S. State Department and the rest are typically military personnel, many of whom are Military Police. PTTs travel to stations to coach the Iraqi police and to conduct joint patrols with them.⁵³⁹

Four of Iraq's nine National Police brigades have, however, gone through retraining as of April 7, 2007, while another brigade remained in retraining. This is a process will continue until each brigade is taken off line for retraining. General Martin Dempsey, the Multinational Security Transition commander in Iraq said there's been "significant change in those units that go through that process and a fairly wholesale change of leaders in those units." There is re-vetting of leaders underway with background checks and polygraph tests. This retraining was ordered in the wake of reports that one particular National Police Brigade had actively participated in sectarian violence.

Iraqi Police Service

“There remains a significant shortfall in the abilities of the Iraqi police forces in the area of leadership, personnel, training and equipment in my area.”

-Brigade Commander Col. Paul Funk, April 9, 2007⁵⁴⁰

The situation was far worse in the regular police and the Facilities Protection Service. Most regular police units were too adequately equipped for police duty, but units in dangerous neighborhoods were too lightly equipped and had a high rate of desertion or retreated from their stations. MNF-I feels such cases are not representative of "most regular police units" today, but there have been many media reports of units that suffered massive desertions, and local recruiting has meant that many units serve sectarian and ethnic – not national – leaders. Such problems are of critical important because the Iraqi Police Service is should provide day-to-day security, and perform much of the “hold” function in the “win, hold, build” strategy of counterinsurgency. As the previous Figures have shown, the Iraqi Police Service also constitutes the majority of MOI forces. In 2007, Iraqi Police Service is composed of patrol, traffic, station, and highway police, as well as specialists, such as forensic specialists, assigned throughout Iraq’s 18 provinces. Its mission is to enforce the law, safeguard the public, and provide internal security at the local level.⁵⁴¹

By the end of 2006, approximately 135,000 Iraqi Police Service (IPS) personnel had been trained and equipped, an increase of 21,200 over the prior three months. The fact remained, however, that actual manning could be as low 60,000-70,000, and is certain to have been well below 135,000. No one knew the numbers that remained in service, or how many of these men were even moderately effective. It was also clear that there were major shortages in manpower in some areas and small excesses in given units. The real world personnel situation was radically different from the largely meaningless totals of “trained and equipped” reported in MNF-I press releases.

Police Problems in 2006

The DoD quarterly report for August 2006 was not explicit in describing all the problems in these forces. It did, however, provide enough detail to raise major questions about efforts to rapidly improve the force:

The lack of PTTs means the US only has “limited observations of the IPS (Iraqi Police service)” in 13 of 18 provinces. This means that US and MNF-I have no real system for rating effectiveness and capability of the IPS in most of Iraq. (p. 45)

The section on IPS recruiting and vetting indicates some progress has been made, but admits that “There is currently no screening process to ascertain militia allegiance” and “currently, no method exists to track the success rate of these or other police officers.” (p. 45)

The progress reported on equipping the IPS ignores the fact that the equipment supplied does not include protected vehicles and leaves the police underarmed compared to threat forces. (p. 45)

The section on IPS leadership describes the training program, not actual leadership. (pp. 45-46) There is no meaningful reporting on progress in removing failures in senior leadership.

The August report also described other problems in police development:⁵⁴²

.The MOI does not currently have an effective personnel management system. As a result, it is unknown how many of the forces trained by CPATT are still employed by the MOI, or what percentage of the 146,000 police thought to be on the MOI payroll are CPATT trained and equipped.

CPATT estimates attrition to be at least 20% per year going forward. The MOI reports having paid death benefits for more than 6,000 police officers since the fall of the Ba’athist regime in May 2003. In addition to the overall number of police in Iraq, there are some issues with distribution of the police among the various provinces.

For example, by the end of the year, Diyala Province will have recruited its authorized force, but will not have trained the entire authorized number. In the case of Diyala, the provincial leadership has resisted sending 100% of the force to training due to security concerns and the reluctance to take its police off the streets. Anbar, Basrah, and Ninewah may also miss their training targets for the same reason. Rather than let training seats go unfilled, other provinces were permitted to send some of their untrained personnel to training. As a result, those provinces will have more than the authorized force trained in their provinces.

...More than 230,000 MOI employees have been screened by the Iraqi Police Screening Service, which checks fingerprints against Ba’ath Party records and Saddam-era criminal records. Of these, 5,300 were reported as possible derogatory matches, and 74 have been dismissed. There is currently no screening process to ascertain militia allegiance.

The November, 2006 DoD quarterly report was somewhat more frank about the problems in the police forces:

The MOI continues to struggle with personnel management. Lack of standardized personnel strength reporting from stations up their district and provincial chains causes lack of transparency on the total number of Iraqi police officers on duty on any given day. The only numbers available are the payroll numbers submitted by the provinces, which, in many cases, are higher than the actual numbers of Iraqi police officers on hand.

It is unclear how many of the forces trained by the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team are still employed by the MOI, or what percentage of the 180,000 police thought to be on the MOI payroll are Civilian Police Assistance Training Team-trained and equipped.

The Coalition estimates that attrition will remain approximately 20% per year as long as fighting in Iraq persists.

The US was finally able to embed a US advisory team in most key police station and facilities in Baghdad by the end of 2006. This, however, was largely a reaction to the failures in Operation Together Forward. In broad terms, the “year of the police” still left most of the police without adequate US teams to serve with Iraqi forces, and looked far more like the “two to three years of the police,” beginning in 2007. As the Department of Defense quarterly report for August made clear, there was still no meaningful database on where the men trained and equipped for the regular police actually are, or on the effectiveness of individual units.

The March 2007 report noted that the US was still badly short of advisors in March 2007,⁵⁴³

There are 203 field-deployed PTTs (10 Provincial, 44 District, and 149 Station) assisting the development of the Iraqi Police Service. Each team has approximately 11–15 members; 3 or 4 members of each team are International Police Liaison Officers (IPLOs) hired as contractors by the Department of State, and the rest are typically military personnel, most of whom are Military Police. IPLOs provide civilian law enforcement expertise in technical aspects of criminal investigation and police station management. To conduct their missions, PTTs travel to stations to coach the Iraqi police and to conduct joint patrols with them. These joint PTT/Iraqi Police Service patrols promote active community policing and work to improve the reputation of the police among the Iraqi people.

Each month, MNC-I uses PTTs to assess the operational readiness of a portion of the police forces using the Transition Readiness Assessment process. This process evaluates the ability of the police to perform core functions required for effective law enforcement and community policing. Key assessment criteria include manning, leadership, training level, equipment, facilities status, force protection measures, and station ability to conduct independent operations. *Cost and risk preclude deploying enough PTTs to cover all of Iraq's police stations; at any time, only 5 of Iraq's 18 provinces have sufficient PTTs to conduct the full range of activities described above. Continued PTT presence and participation at Iraqi Police Service stations are needed to improve police readiness and to sustain progress in reforming community policing.*

Ongoing Police Manpower Problems

Some important aspects of the police development effort did improve. By mid October 2006, 88,000 police recruits had passed through the 10-week basic course. Those recruits with prior experience attended the three-week Transitional Integration Program (TIP), in lieu of the longer program. Originally only officers trained during the Saddam regime were eligible for the TIP program, but in July it was extended to include those that lacked formal training, but had at least one year of experience on the force. In addition to the TIP program the Officer Transitional Integration Program was designed to train officers for leadership and supervisory roles in the IPS.

The US reported that the “trained and equipped” strength of the Iraqi police had reached a total force of 192,000 by March 19, 2007. This included 24,400 National Police, 32,900 other MoI forces, and 135,000 regular police. In practical terms, however, the US provided no readiness and capability reporting, and no data on actual manning. At total of 49,100 officers had graduated from the TIP and OTIP programs. By the end of 2006, more than 151,000 Iraqi police had completed basic training courses. In addition, 26,000 National Police had completed initial training, and 30,000 in the Department of Border Enforcement.⁵⁴⁴

In an effort to ensure that MOI personnel were loyal, honest, and qualified, more than 230,000 MOI employees were screened by the Iraqi Police Screening Service. The process checked fingerprints against records of Ba’ath Party membership and Saddam-era

criminal records. In addition to the fingerprint checks over 54,000 police candidates were tested for literacy. Of these candidates 73% passed and were enrolled in basic training. Unfortunately, the new screening process did little to affect the number of desertions, still let in many unqualified men, and there was no test for checking on possible militia allegiance.

As MNF-I experts pointed out in April 2007,

There are numerous ongoing initiatives to reduce militia influences (see previous comment at Central Ministry program). However, militia memberships (or other personal allegiances) are difficult to detect during a vetting process

While the full details are unclear, Colonel Ahmad Taha Hashim, the head of internal affairs at the Iraqi MOI admitted in an interview published in Al Zaman news paper on Sep 27th that the MOI had investigated and dismissed more than 1300 police officers some with high ranks. He said some of them were leaking information to outside entities and had criminal record. Furthermore, some of them were demanding bribes from applicants of up to \$600 in return for a job in the police force, as well as rehiring ex-convicts into the service and issuing fake IDs. According to Col. Hashim the personal investigating this case constantly receiving death threats, in fact 6 of his personal body guards and 16 other officers had been killed in the past few month.

Some of the applicants told the newspaper that brokers with connections to government officials at the recruitment centers bargained with recruits to provide them with the endorsement necessary to be admitted into the force for bribes. Col. Kareem confirmed the story to ABC and the number was actually 1,500 police personal dismissed and investigated on charges of corruption and human rights violations. When he was asked about reports that an additional 7000 were being investigated, he replied this was exaggerated but did not deny the additional numbers were substantial.

The March 2007 Quarterly Report summarized the manpower situation as follows:⁵⁴⁵

CPATT has met the nationwide OCSF goal of training 135,000 Iraqi Police Service personnel. However, distribution of that 135,000 has not been according to original program goals, leaving some provinces with more than their programmed allocation and some with less. Basic training continues in those provinces still working to meet their individual requirements. CPATT is working with the MOI to build institutional capacity and to identify annual requirements for force sustainment, reconciling anticipated annual requirements with institutional capacity.

To meet local needs and dynamic requirements, the MOI authorized provincial governors to hire additional Iraqi Police Service officers, but the MOI and the governors are responsible for the additional officers' equipment and training. Every province, except Anbar, has more personnel than agreed. However, many of these additional police are put on the job with minimal or no training. As the Coalition transfers the institutional training base to MOI control, training of these "extra" local police will continue.

As of December 31, 2006, the majority of Iraqi Police academies had transitioned to Iraqi control. The two exceptions are the BPC and the Jordan International Police Training Center. For all academies, the administration and instruction functions transferred with relative ease. Operational control of the BPC was turned over to the MOI in 2006. Life support for the BPC will transition to the MOI this quarter. Because sufficient training capacity exists inside Iraq, the Jordan International Police Training Center is scheduled to cease basic-level training by March 2007, although the Department of State is looking at options to keep it open, to train limited numbers of Iraqi police officers in leadership and specialized courses, after DoD funding for the facility ends.

Real world training, however, was either limited or just beginning to affect the officer corps. The March 2007 Quarterly report noted that,⁵⁴⁶

The Iraqi Police Service has three 2-week leadership courses to improve the quality of its leaders. The First Line Supervisor Course is designed for company-grade officers; the Intermediate-Level Course is designed for field-grade officers; and the Senior-Level Course is designed for general officers. Courses cover topics ranging from management to ethics to field training. To date, 691 officers have completed the First Line Supervisor Course; 690 officers have completed the Intermediate-Level Course; and 606 officers have completed the Senior-Level Course.

The MOI's Intermediate Staff Officers Course, started in September 2006, teaches senior lieutenants and junior captains staff operational functions. To date, 14 officers have completed this course. The Advanced Staff Officers Course, which began in November 2006, teaches senior captains and majors field-grade staff functions. The Senior Staff Officers Course and the Executive Officers Course—designed for colonels and generals—are scheduled to begin in early 2007.

One bright spot in police recruitment did emerge in Anbar province in Winter 2006/2007. The leaders of several tribes decided to ban together against Al Qaeda in Iraq, which had previously been quite powerful in the province. The move was brought on by Al Qaeda's frequent beheadings, kidnappings, and bombings of Sunni civilians. An immediate result of the tribal leader's shift has been increased cooperation with American and ISF forces. Additionally, police recruitment in the province, which had been extremely low, jumped. During the winter of 2005/2006, there were roughly 1,300 police in the province. As of April, 2007 there were 13, 200, with more in training.⁵⁴⁷ A police recruiting drive in Ramadi in March, 2007 netted 2,500 recruits.⁵⁴⁸

Ongoing Police Equipment Problems

The IPS continued to be poorly equipped. They were supposed to be equipped with AK-47s, PKC light machine guns, Glock pistols, body armor, high-frequency radios, small and medium pick-up trucks, and mid-sized SUVs. Much of the equipment they were supposed to have, however, was not delivered or was somehow lost. In Baghdad, and the nine other key cities, IPS personnel were supposedly equipped at 99% of their authorized equipment by the end of June 2006. They were expected to be fully equipped by mid-August. Overall, however, in the 18 provinces the IPS was only 83% equipped by early 2007, and were not expected to be fully equipped until the summer of 2007.⁵⁴⁹

The March 2007 Quarterly report indicated that,⁵⁵⁰

Due to the immaturity of the MOI's equipment accountability system, there are no reliable figures on how much of this equipment remains in service, nor is it known how much equipment the MOI has purchased for additional Iraqi Police Service staff and for staff authorized by provincial governors. The most accurate reports on equipment quantities and serviceability are provided by MNC-I through the Police Transition Teams (PTTs). MNSTC-I continues to work with the Iraqi Police Service to implement standardized reporting and tracking processes and mechanisms. In conjunction with MNSTC-I, the MOI is developing a comprehensive procurement plan to ensure that MNSTC-I funds and MOI equipping funds are spent coherently.

Ironically, MNF-I experts felt that this statement was true of equipment that the MNF-I has issued directly to the units. However, they felt that the MOI appeared to have a good equipment accountability system for items issued through them.

Uncertain Iraqi Police Service Effectiveness

Combat effectiveness remained poor and Local police did not always respond aggressively when militias carried out sectarian or ethnic attacks. Col. James Pasquarette, commander of the Army's 1st Brigade Combat Team in Baghdad, felt the need send out

letters to every police officer and official in his area, warning they would be fired if they did not combat militias, and threatening their detention if they cooperated with them.⁵⁵¹

The assessment of local police forces before they had to hold their own ground was not always reliable. In one case in the small town of Saba al-Bor, north of Baghdad, the local force had been considered a model unit until two weeks after the US pulled out of the town. It was overrun by Sunni insurgents and armed Shi'ites retaliated in return. The police force disintegrated, the police chief fled after being shot at, and the new chief said he could account for only 24 of his 150 policemen.⁵⁵²

Department of Border Enforcement and Department of Ports of Entry

The Directorate of Border Enforcement (DBE) and the Directorate of Ports of Entry (POE) are charged collectively with controlling and protecting Iraq's borders. The DBE is in the lead on Iraq's borders; backed up by Iraqi Army units in accordance with an MOI/MOD Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in January 2007. According to US Army Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey, MNSTC-I commanding general, responsibility for border protection followed a tiered approach, wherein border police on the perimeter would be backed up by the Iraqi Army, who would be backed up by Coalition forces.

The DBE was organized into 5 regions, 12 brigades, and 38 battalions, and included forces that man 420 border posts and forts, of which the Coalition had funded 258. There were 17 land border Ports of Entry, 4 sea Ports of Entry, and 4 air Ports of Entry.⁵⁵³ The Department of Border Enforcement (DBE) had 28,400 trained and equipped personnel by February 2007. These personnel were organized into 5 regions, 12 brigades, 38 battalions and the staff for 420 border structures.⁵⁵⁴ By April 2007, the DBE had increased to 42 battalions and 420 border structures. The DBE forces were trained in three academies each with the capacity to train approximately 800 recruits at a time.

As of early August 2006, the Coalition had funded the construction of 258 border forts throughout nine Iraqi provinces. There are no plans to go beyond 258 Coalition supported border forts. The Director General of the DBE has, however, built 162 smaller expeditionary forts and plans to build an additional 291 for a total of 711 border forts and expeditionary forts. The forts were seen as critical to ensuring the Iraqis' ability to assume responsibility for 3,161 kilometers of Iraq's borders.

The traffic the border guards had to handle is illustrated by Iraqi officials' accounts of traffic at Rabiya, a border control point at the Iraqi-Syrian border. 2,000 people with Iraqi passports, up to 500 foreigners, plus 300 commercial trucks, 80 cars, and as many as 30 buses crossed into Iraq at this border point per day.⁵⁵⁵ Despite meeting the objective manning goal of 28,400 personnel, many border forts remained undermanned. Overstaffing at regional and brigade-level headquarters diverted personnel from these border forts, partly because of non MTOE identified requirement for PSD to protect the headquarters and leaders. The March 2007 Quarterly Report noted that,

Border Forces payroll exceeds its authorized initial training objective. Overstrength regional and brigade-level headquarters continue to divert personnel away from border forts and POEs. The DBE has begun cross-leveling of excess personnel, and current staffing levels at POEs are sufficient. Promotion opportunities across DBE and POE units are improving, and there have been

fewer pay problems. There are still discrepancies between MOI payroll numbers and actual assigned strength. The Iraqi leadership is addressing these issues through official investigations.⁵⁵⁶

Coalition teams continued to support the DBE by mentoring and training border units in fall 2006. Supplying the DBE and the Ports of Entry (POE) were given priority in receiving equipment and this in addition to the cross-leveling of personnel managed to raise most units to TRA Level 2 by August. Furthermore, of the 14 land POEs in Iraq, 13 were functional by November 2006.

The DBE and POE were supposed to be equipped with AK-47s, medium machine guns, body armor, medium pick-up trucks, mid-size SUVs, generators, and radios. The DoD reported 79% of authorized critical equipment for the DBE had been issued by early 2007, although the MNF-I only reported 75% in April 2007.⁵⁵⁷ The POEs were expected to be fully equipped by the end of December 2006,⁵⁵⁸ As of March 2007, only 61% of authorized equipment had reached the land POEs, although they were expected to be fully equipped by August 2007.⁵⁵⁹ These equipment estimates were not supported by equipment audits to show how much equipment was combat capable and remained on-hand.

The March 2007 Quarterly Report stated,

All Coalition-planned border forts are completed. Refurbishing headquarters buildings, and the assignment of trained border police, are complete. Seventy-nine percent of the authorized critical equipment for DBE and 61% for land POEs have been issued. Remaining issuance of equipment, logistics facilities, and other infrastructure will continue throughout 2007. The MOI has reduced the numbers of legal POEs in an effort to concentrate on the readiness for those border crossings that remain open, and, since the last report, DBE and POE units have improved in Transition Readiness Assessment progression.

The DBE is supported by 28 Coalition Border Transition Teams. Each team is composed of 11 members. There are also 4 three-man Department of Homeland Security teams monitoring the DBE at critical POEs.⁵⁶⁰

Facilities Protection Service

In addition to the regular MOI forces, an estimated 144,000-145,000 personnel were authorized to serve in the Facility Protection Service (FPS), working directly for 27 other ministries. The FPS forces were used as security guards for governmental buildings and compared to other MOI forces were minimally trained and equipped. These forces received no formal training, but were issued police style uniforms, badges, and weapons.

Some 80% of these personnel were contract employees hired by each of the Ministries. They lacked a standardized training and equipping. The Actual manning in terms of men both present and willing to perform any useful duty may also have been closer to 70,000, although no one had meaningful figures. The FPS was conducting an audit of the men in the 27 ministries in April, however, and this audit was designed to account for all FPS personnel and place them into a central data base. If successfully completed, it could provide the foundation that the FPS will could upon to establish a more solid program

There were also serious problems with the integrity and loyalty of FPS officers and personnel. DoD stated in its November quarterly report that: "There was substantial evidence that some Facilities Protection Service personnel were unreliable and, in some cases, responsible for violent crimes and other illegal activity."⁵⁶¹

The DoD Quarterly Report for August 2006 noted serious problems in the Facilities Protection Service and that these include the fact their uniforms look enough like police uniforms to help compound the problems in identifying real police from sectarian attackers and criminals. (p. 48). These uniforms have since been changed, but the differences between various force elements are difficult for ordinary Iraqis to track, particularly since no branch of the ISF has yet proved reliable or free of sectarian and ethnic bias. In short, the majority of Iraqi police forces remained as much a part of the problem as the solution.

According to the Iraq Study Group: “these units have questionable loyalties and capabilities.” In the ministries of Health, Agriculture, and Transportation, controlled by Moqtada al-Sadr, the Facilities Protection Service is a source of funding and jobs for the Mahdi Army. One senior U.S. official described the Facilities Protection Service as “incompetent, dysfunctional, or subversive.” Several Iraqis simply referred to them as militias.”⁵⁶²

Senator Jack Reed, after a trip to Iraq, reported that there are “bad elements” in FPS units that “are carrying out murders and kidnappings . . . [and] attacking the infrastructure that they are supposedly protecting.” He also added that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki had described them as “worse than the militias.”⁵⁶³ According to a February, 2007 USIP report:

The ministerial guard forces became the private armies and a source of patronage jobs and funding... The FPS provides money and jobs for the Mahdi Army. The same is true for ministries controlled by Kurdish politicians and other political parties that have militias.

As the Department of Defense status report for August 2006 noted, however, the FPS uniforms looked similar to those of the IPS leading Iraqi civilians to confuse the two forces. Mistakenly identifying FPS forces as IPS forces undermined the reputation and thereby the capability of the better trained IPS forces.⁵⁶⁴ This situation was supposedly corrected by issuing new uniforms, but the real world impact was uncertain. As a result, an entirely new uniform for the FPS is due to be on the street by May 2007. Furthermore, corruption, theft, and favoritism were common in the FPS. Many elements operated on tribal, ethnic, and sectarian lines and there was significant insurgent infiltration.

The March 2007 Quarterly Report described the FPS as follows:⁵⁶⁵

The Facilities Protection Service (FPS) is a decentralized group of security guards who protect Government of Iraq buildings and act as personal security details to protect government ministry officials. Each ministry controls its own force of FPS personnel. Although they share the same name, FPS personnel are not a coherent force. More than 150,000 personnel work for 27 ministries and 8 independent directorates, with half of the FPS personnel working in Baghdad. The MOI's FPS continues to have better regulation, training, and discipline than do FPS staff of other ministries, and a higher proportion of them—possibly half—have completed the FPS basic training course.

There continues to be evidence that FPS personnel are unreliable and, in some cases, responsible for violent crimes and other illegal activity. On December 27, 2006, the prime minister signed a consolidation directive that provided instructions placing all FPS personnel under the Minister of Interior and ordered the transfer of money for salaries to the MOI budget. The directive maintained the separation of the Ministry of Oil, the Ministry of Electricity, and the Higher Juridical Council forces. The MOI has a plan to assess the current state of these forces and implement the consolidation, including standardizing training, equipment, uniforms, and procedures.

Other MOI Programs

The Center of Dignitary Protection (CDP) was reported to be fully manned, trained and equipped as of August 2006. The CDP included 600 personnel trained for Protective Security Details (PSDs) to provide security for Iraq's governmental leaders. These are trained units working within the MoI, that work with the FPS, and not an outside organization. An Iraqi training team took over responsibility for training future PSD personnel in June 2006.

Logistics and Sustainability

By August, logistics continued to be a significant concern, being the only essential system still assessed as ineffective by the transitional readiness assessment (TRA). Vehicle maintenance continued to be of particular concern. During the summer a Director General for Logistics and staff were put into place. A 6-month vehicle maintenance contract for the National Police and Baghdad IPS was agreed upon. For the MOI forces a US\$950,000 vehicle spare parts contract was implemented and a US\$350,000 one for the National Police.

From April to June an average of US \$20,266,121 was required for logistical life support coming to a total of \$60,798,363. By December an MOI National Storage and Maintenance Facility started in June 2006 was expected to be completed. Additionally one of the seven LDI storage warehouses was transferred to Iraqi control as a test case in August 2006.⁵⁶⁶

SIGIR reported in October 2006 that MNC-I spent 84% of the funds used to support the ISF on Iraqi local and national police forces.⁵⁶⁷ The October 2006 SIGIR report feared there would be several significant challenges to the MoI logistics capabilities that MNF-I hoped to develop until the end of November 2006.

SIGIR believed there was a significant risk that even if the initial goal to develop a sustainable logistics capability plan was achieved by the end of November 2006, the ministry would not be capable of sustaining logistics for the local and national police forces in the near term.⁵⁶⁸

Implementing the MNF-I plan and achieving logistics capabilities "because the Ministry does not control the Iraqi Police Service."

Training enough logistics personnel. "Because MNF-I plans are not yet final, there can be no assurance that MNSTC-I is planning to train enough police forces logistics personnel by the end of 2006."

Ensuring the availability of sufficient funds to sustain the logistics capabilities of the Iraqi police forces. "MNSTC-I estimates it will cost the Ministry of Interior about \$2.4 billion to sustain its operations in 2007. Because the Ministry of Interior's budget has also not been submitted to or approved by the Iraqi Parliament, it is not possible to assess whether the Ministry of Interior is prepared to provide sufficient funds to support logistics capabilities in 2007."

SIGIR recommended that MNF-I in cooperation with the MoD and the MoI identify the respective logistics personnel requirements and "formulate a plan for training these personnel."⁵⁶⁹

The March 2007 DoD quarterly report noted continued problems in MOI logistics capabilities, including:

Fuel. Shortfalls of adequate fuel continue to hinder mission performance – a problem that affects MoD forces as well and all government of Iraq operations.

Equipment Accountability. Due to decentralized control and funding of elements that comprise the MOI, there is no standardized unit equipment accountability procedure. The responsibility for proper equipment accountability is delegated to the subordinate organizations, with most elements maintaining equipment accountability through the use of hand receipts and manual ledgers.

Financial Accountability. Certain functional areas of the MOI operate under an assortment of financial authorities intended for a command- and-control structure that no longer exists. In this uncertain regulatory environment, proper financial reporting is inconsistent and results in difficulty for the MOI to budget centrally and execute funds effectively and transparently.⁵⁷⁰

Critical Failures Parallel Development of the Criminal Justice System

The lack of an effective criminal justice and prison system were another set of major problems limiting progress in shaping the ISF. Both are which are essential for both true progress in creating an effective police force and establishing local security and trust in the government. The Department of Defense status report for August summarized the strengths and weaknesses of the criminal justice system in ways that had not changed as of early 2007:⁵⁷¹

The Coalition continues to provide administrative support as well as technical and legal assistance in drafting legislation.

...The Coalition has helped the Government of Iraq improve the judicial system in several areas, including building or renovating courthouses, expanding the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI), and improving security. The CCCI, for example, now has 12 panels operating throughout Iraq. It processes, on average, 118 insurgency-related cases each month. Due to the limited capacity of the 11 panels outside Baghdad, the Baghdad CCCI is the primary facility for hearing insurgency cases.

Poor security for judges and judicial facilities, an insufficient number of judges, and an inadequate court infrastructure undermine advancements in the rule of law in Iraq. Judges are subject to intimidation and in many areas are afraid to prosecute insurgents. The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Marshals Service, responded by providing secure housing, personal security details, courthouse protection, and personal protection firearms to some members of the Iraqi judiciary. In Baghdad, the Coalition has provided facilities for 22 judges to reside in the International Zone. Working in conjunction with MNF-I, the U.S. Marshals Service has begun training an Iraqi Marshals Service. The U.S. Department of Justice, along with the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Defense, is proceeding with plans for the renovation and construction of Iraqi courthouses and other related court facilities, including witness protection buildings. As of July 21, 2006, approximately 20 projects to improve judicial capacity have been completed, and 13 more are under way. Five additional projects are planned.

...The MOJ is responsible for imprisoning convicted criminals and insurgents in Iraq. MOJ prisons . . . are already at maximum capacity. As a result, many detainees spend time in MOI or MOD facilities, which generally fall short of internationally accepted standards. To address this issue, the U.S. and Iraqi governments are funding construction of seven new MOJ prison facilities, one each in Basrah, Khan Bani Sa'ad, Nasiriyah, Dahuk, and Baladiyah, and two in Rusafa. Work has stopped at Khan Bani Sa'ad and Nasiriyah due to problems with the primary contractor. Bridge contracts have been awarded to local Iraqi contractors to provide site security and to perform some continuing construction work. The Gulf Region Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers anticipates that contracts will be issued to a new contractor in September and that both facilities will be completed in April 2007.

Construction at the two Rusafa facilities has been delayed due to a title dispute between the Ministers of Justice and Interior. The title dispute is currently in litigation in the Iraqi courts. Dahuk, a 1,200-bed facility in the Kurdish region, is scheduled for completion in February 2007. Construction at Baladiyah was completed and the prison facility there has been activated and is currently in use by the Iraqi Corrections Services. Upon completion in mid-2007, all of these facilities will add a combined 4,800 beds.

Even with these additions, however, projections show another 20,000 beds will ultimately be needed. Thus, the Government of Iraq must address insufficient bed space, enactment of custody transfer laws, abuses in MOI and MOD detention facilities, and the need for more guards and trained supervisors. The Government of Iraq also faces the problem of prisoner-detainees awaiting adjudication/ resolution of the charges against them. The MOI and MOD are believed to be detaining between approximately 2,000 and 10,000 people in pre-trial status, many in crowded, substandard facilities.

The Department of Defense Quarterly Report for March 2007 noted that pre-trial detention facilities were “overcrowded, with substandard facilities and poor detainee accountability practices.”⁵⁷² Post-conviction facilities were better maintained and generally met international standards but were still overcrowded. However, according to the DoD: “Concerns remain that the Iraqi Corrections Service is increasingly infiltrated by criminal organizations and militias.”⁵⁷³

The U.S. Department of Justice estimated that Iraq needed 1,500 judges, yet only 870 are now working. To address this need, the Iraqi government recently appointed 79 judges to the bench, and another 80 are pending approval. 178 judges and prosecutors are expected to graduate from the Judicial Training Institute in summer 2007.⁵⁷⁴ In November 2006 Defense Department reported:

To meet the demands of the courts, the number of judicial investigators is slated to reach 700 in 2007 and 1,000 in 2008. In addition, the Ministry of Justice has a Judicial Training Institute, which offers a 2-year training course for judges and prosecutors. The first class of 178 judges and prosecutors is scheduled to graduate in the summer of 2007. A second class of 60 has just started training.

It concluded that while “corruption in the judiciary was less pronounced than in other branches of the justice system,”⁵⁷⁵ courts often failed to act or were corrupt even when they were present, and much of the real justice system operated on a local tribal, religious, or militia level.

Intimidation of judges is an ongoing problem. The DoD stated that: “Judges frequently face threats and attacks, and thus absenteeism and resignations undermine the workforce. Those who remain often fear handing down guilty verdicts against defendants with ties to insurgent groups or militias. In the provincial courts, judges often decline to investigate or try cases related to the insurgency and terrorism.” To combat this problem, the US has obligated roughly \$38 million since 2004 for judicial security. Secure criminal justice complexes are under construction, complete with courthouses, detention facilities, forensic labs and judicial housing. The first of these complexes is to be located in the Rusafa district of Baghdad, outside the Green Zone.⁵⁷⁶

Reflecting the deep problems Iraq had in establishing law, the Justice Minister, Hashem al-Shebly, resigned on March 31st. She cited dissatisfaction with how the government is being run.⁵⁷⁷

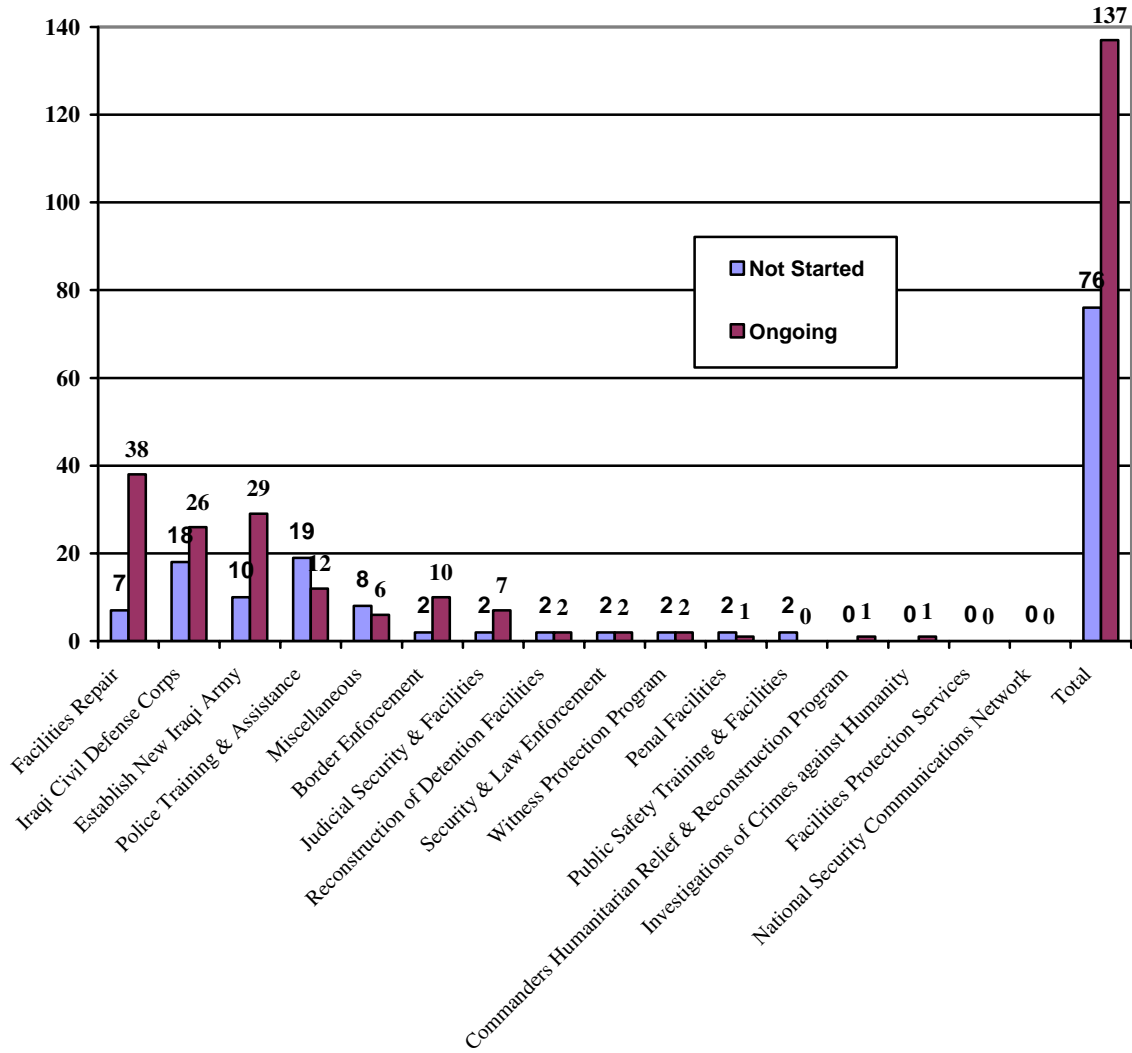
The slow development of the criminal justice system has harmed the legitimacy of the Iraqi government as a whole. Problems were particularly critical in the case of the police

that often had to try to operate in a legal vacuum. In short, nearly four years after the US-led invasion, Iraq does not have an effective criminal justice system or rule of law in much of the country. A critical partner to both ISF development, and serious efforts to “hold” and “build,” had still not appeared on the scene.

Status of Security Projects

The October 2006 SIGIR report provided more detailed data on the state of security- and justice-related construction projects, detailing the number of “Ongoing” projects and planned efforts “not started.” **Figure 10.8** shows this data. Note that the SIGIR did not report such comprehensive data on the *completion* of construction projects – only the Facilities Protection Services and National Security Communications Network were completed as of October 2006.

Figure 10.8
Status of Security and Justice Projects



Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress," October 30, 2006, p.69

XI. Operational Developments: Summer and Fall 2006

Everything stays very dynamic in this type of environment, and it's clear that the conditions under which we started are probably not the same today. And so it does require some modifications of the plan. *Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, October 19, 2006*

Important as the force development problems outlined in this report are, they are an argument for patience, honesty and transparency, and adequate time and resources, *not for giving up on the ISF*. It is important to note that Iraqi forces often fought hard and with great courage in spite of the larger problems in the force development effort. They had a number of tactical successes in spite of these problems and pressures, and the growing sectarian and ethnic tension and rising number of clashes.

At the same time, the drift toward ethnic and sectarian conflict, and civil war forced significant changes in the operations of both Iraqi and MNF-I forces towards the end of 2006, and increased the pressures and demands on Iraq's new and still maturing units.

These trends presented new operational problems that were steadily compounded by the draft towards full-scale civil war, and the lack of underlying progress towards political conciliation made it more difficult to develop unified forces and create popular support for either counterinsurgency operations or efforts to control the militias and other sectarian and ethnic forces.

The 2006 Battle for Baghdad

The new Iraqi government did cooperate with the MNF-I in making did make new efforts to arrest the drift towards civil war, and use the Iraqi forces to perform this mission. The key operation to achieve this goal during the summer and fall of 2006 was an effort to bring security to Baghdad.

Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki announced this operation on June 14, 2006. It was called Operation Together Forward, or *Amaliya Ma'an ila Al-Amam* in Arabic. The original plan relied very heavily on Iraqi forces and consisted of steps like increased checkpoints and patrols, curfews and enforcement of weapons bans in targeted areas of the city. US troops were to hold cleared areas for 60 to 90 days, during which infrastructure and economic reconstruction would start.⁵⁷⁸ It also included a three-day reassessment of all Iraqi brigades.⁵⁷⁹

A Failed Initial Plan and Iraqi Effort

The size and complexity of the security situation meant that *Amaliya Ma'an ila Al-Amam* would take months to complete, and other major problems soon emerged.⁵⁸⁰ The Iraqi government was in control of both US and Iraqi military operations in Baghdad, and US troops had to seek Iraqi government approval to act in the capital, giving the government the possibility to take into account its delicate political position.⁵⁸¹ The Prime Minister complained in October 2006 that he had not been informed about an American-backed raid to capture the suspected leader of a Shi'ite death squad. Gen. Caldwell's response was that the raid had been led by Iraqi forces and concerned a suspect whom the Iraqi authorities had given prior approval to capture. "Notification was made to the

government of Iraq, but it's apparent that it didn't make it to the prime minister," Caldwell said.⁵⁸²

Iraq's national unity government and MNF-I did devise a Baghdad Security Plan, comprised of three principal components:⁵⁸³

- *Stabilizing Baghdad zone by zone.* Four Iraqi Army battalions, two Coalition brigades and five military police companies will be redeployed to Baghdad, resulting in more than 12,000 additional forces on the city's streets. The National Police will simultaneously undergo intensive retraining, with each brigade to be subjected to a three-day assessment period, with its leadership evaluated and, if necessary, replaced. Each brigade will subsequently receive additional training focused on countering violent sectarianism before redeployment. Over the last 10 days this approach began to be implemented in five areas of Baghdad--Doura, Ghazaliyah, Rashid, Ahmeriyya and Mansour. In coming weeks other districts will be added.

Iraqi government and Coalition forces are adopting new tactics to stem sectarian killings. Increased checkpoints and patrols are being used to deny freedom of movement and safe haven to sectarian killers. The leaders of the death squads are being targeted. Security forces have started to work with cross-sectarian neighborhood committees. These and other new tactics will drive toward the goal of achieving security neighborhood by neighborhood. As each district of Baghdad is secured, operations will expand into contiguous zones over coming weeks and months.

- *Disrupting support zones.* Even as Iraqi and Coalition forces concentrate on securing specific neighborhoods, they will continue to conduct targeted operations in other zones that are staging areas for the violence. This includes targeted raids and other operations on areas outside of Baghdad's center, where planning cells, car-bomb factories and terrorist safe houses are located. This will degrade the ability of the terrorists and death squads to mount offensive operations into the areas we are working to stabilize.
- *Undertaking civic action and economic development.* One of the most tragic elements of the increasing violence in Baghdad is that it has robbed the Iraqi people of the sense of normalcy they desperately seek after living under crushing tyranny for more than three decades. In the immediate aftermath of Iraq's liberation, the entrepreneurial spirit of the Iraqi people was demonstrated as Baghdad's shops overflowed with consumer goods prohibited under the previous regime. However, the increasing violence in the streets of Baghdad has forced many Iraqis to close their shops for fear of their safety.

This plan, however, read far better than the actual practice. Iraqi forces were not up to the job, and the civic action and economic development efforts faltered and often failed. Some units performed well. However, significant numbers of Iraqi forces failed to deploy, and others were badly manned, lacked leadership from their officers and NCO, and played only a pro forma or static role. At least some allowed insurgents and militias to operate in their areas, refused to engage them, or provided support to sectarian or ethnic factions.

The operational plan was also flawed because success to a large degree depended on political conciliation and building trust in the new government, and on the ability to control or disband militias and other sectarian and ethnic forces, and not simply attack "terrorists" or insurgents. Disrupting support zones had some success in the case of neo-Salafi Sunni groups, but little in the case of Shi'ite militias or more mainstream Sunni security forces. Furthermore, the operational plan for Operation Together Forward telegraphed American intentions. This allowed insurgents to clear out of neighborhoods long before American or Iraqi forces conducted their sweeps, returning once major forces had left. Often, ordinary Iraqi's weapons were confiscated, leaving them more vulnerable when the insurgents returned.⁵⁸⁴

Part of the problem was the ineffectiveness of some Iraqi units deployed to Baghdad for Operation Together Forward. According to US military officials, several Iraqi battalions deserted rather than follow orders to go to Baghdad. Sending them to the capital was tantamount to demobilizing them, despite the extra pay that US officials offered to persuade reluctant troops to come to their aid in Baghdad.^{585, 586} At the end of October 2006, only two of the six additional Iraqi battalions that US commanders requested had been sent to the capital.⁵⁸⁷

The first month of the operation did not result in the projected decreases in the number of attacks. There were an average of 23.7 attacks per day over Baghdad's 10 districts, virtually identical to the 23.8 daily average for the month prior to the operation.⁵⁸⁸ When Prime Minister al-Maliki visited the United States in July 2006, he and President Bush announced adjustments to the Baghdad Security Plan including the key addition of increasing security force levels in the city, and further adjustments in tactics and procedures. The two primary foci of the new security operations were to reduce sectarian violence by de-legitimizing illegally armed groups and to establish the Iraqi Security Forces as the dominant security presence.

These failures forced the US to take over much of the effort. This "Phase II" of the operation began on August 7, 2006. The MNF-I Commanding General said on August 30 that he was pleased with the operation's progress, but also stated that it would take a long time to bring security to Baghdad's neighborhoods. US intelligence assessments of this operation's impact were classified as of September 2006,⁵⁸⁹ but according to the State Department, the daily rate of killings in Baghdad was reduced by 46% from July to August as a result of Operation Together Forward. It also stated that 33,000 buildings had been searched, over 700 weapons confiscated and 70 individuals detained by the end of August.⁵⁹⁰

During the end of the summer of 2006, the Baghdad neighborhood of Doura, in the Rashid District, became one of the main focuses of US engagement as part of Operation Together Forward. One of the capital's most violent neighborhoods, Doura was the subject of "intelligence-driven precision operations" meant to clear the area of violent elements and establish joint Coalition-Iraqi police patrols to protect area residents. The US Army's 4th Brigade Combat Team was working closely with the Rashid District Council and local religious leaders to initiate a series of public works on the district of 1.8 million to empower the citizenry and help revitalize the community.

By August 18, Colonel Michael Beech of the 4th Brigade Combat Team announced that the murder rate in Doura had dropped from an average of 20 per week to only one murder in the preceding 10 days. After three weeks spent searching 3,700 homes, Col. Beech further announced that Doura was now securely under the protection of Iraq's 6th National Police Brigade. Beech placed specific police companies in each of Doura's subdivisions to establish a community effort, in an attempt to facilitate the process of Doura inhabitants coming to recognize the police as trusted protectors.⁵⁹¹

As of late August, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense reported that the crime rate in Doura had been reduced by 80%.⁵⁹² Tribal leaders and imams in the Rashid districts also met to sign an agreement forswearing violence, and renouncing protection for tribal members who engage in sectarian violence.⁵⁹³ This last measure was seen by many as a positive step, at least at a formal level, in moving away from sectarian agendas to a unified solution within the district.

On August 25, US Army Col. Robert Scurlock, stated that the two weeks prior had experienced a 41% decline in violent attacks across Baghdad. On August 13, Scurlock's combat team had moved into Baghdad's restive Amiriyah neighborhood, in an operation similar to that in Doura. That same day, in a meeting in Washington with Donald Rumsfeld, Iraqi Deputy President Adil Al-Mahdi told journalists that 70% of Iraq had been effectively secured. Still, as of late August, the number of violent deaths in Baghdad hovered at about 2,000 per month.⁵⁹⁴

By mid-September, Iraqi and Coalition forces had searched 52,000 buildings in the Doura, Amiriyah, Ghazalia, Shula, and Adhamiya neighborhoods. According to US Army Maj. Gen. William Caldwell, spokesman for MNF-I, at a September 14 press briefing, these searches resulted in the seizure of 32 weapons caches and more than 1,200 illegal weapons. Ninety-one individuals with suspected links to insurgents, terrorism, or sectarian violence were also detained during the course of the searches.

Caldwell said that Iraqi and Coalition troops had conducted 10 combat operations in the week leading up to the press briefing, centered on southwest Baghdad, in order to keep violence from returning to these neighborhoods. He also announced that Coalition and Iraqi forces were now expanding these security operations into three more neighborhoods: Risalah, Khadra, and Shaab.⁵⁹⁵

As of early October it was clear that Iraqi forces still presented major problems at every level, still had high absentee rates and serious leadership problems, and that the Maliki government still had failed to make major moves towards conciliation and demonstrate it could support security operations by deployed an effective government presence into secured areas. At the same time, Iraqi forces were getting better, some areas were more secure, and the operation was not a failure.

In late October 2006, the US military said it had committed 15,600 troops to the operation, compared with 9,600 Iraqi Army troops and 30,000 Iraqi policemen serving in support roles. In practice, American troops led 95,000 house searches, Iraqi regular forces often failed to perform their missions, and many police units were ineffective or passive.⁵⁹⁶

In short, the ISF effort in Baghdad largely failed and the limited successes that did occur took place because the US provided a substantial increase in both its troop presence and its efforts to reform and stiffen the ISF units operating in the Baghdad area. As time went on, the Iraqi government and MNF-I claimed a number of limited tactical successes in given districts of the city, although they did not demonstrate the ability to deal with sectarian forces or control a city of over five million.

Chairman of the JCS Gen. Peter Pace acknowledged in October 2006 that senior US commanders were puzzled by the failure of the plan to train and equip Iraqi forces to curb violence. Pace said other factors driving violence needed to be examined. He also admitted that US troops were unable to stop sectarian violence: "You cannot have enough men under arms 24-7 to stop the hatred killings."⁵⁹⁷ Phillip Carter, an embedded adviser with the 101st Airborne Division in Baquba, also questioned the viability of the strategy focused on building up Iraqi forces to replace Coalition troops:

"In theory, security should have improved with the development of capable Iraqi Army and police units. That did not happen. This is the central paradox of the Iraq war in fall 2006: we are making progress in developing the Iraqi Army and police, yet the violence gripping the country continues

to worsen. This paradox raises fundamental questions about the wisdom and efficacy of our strategy, which is to 'stand up' Iraqi security forces so we can 'stand down' American forces. Put simply, this plan is a blueprint for withdrawal, not for victory. Improving the Iraqi Army and police is necessary to prevail in Iraq; it is not sufficient. (...) This means many more embedded advisers like myself (are necessary), working in tandem with teams from the State Department and other agencies, supported by combat forces only when force is necessary."⁵⁹⁸

US commanders in October said that the Baghdad campaign had so far only covered the "clear" and "hold" phases, with little infrastructure reconstruction.⁵⁹⁹

By late 2006, it was painfully clear that US and Iraqi forces had not succeeded in curbing the overall level of violence in Baghdad, defeating the insurgents in any lasting way, or breaking up the militias. The overall number of armed attacks on US soldiers and Iraqis in the capital had *increased* by 43 percent since midsummer.

Maj. Gen. William Caldwell noted an 11% decrease in violence in the neighborhoods where sweeps had been focused. Individual accounts of Iraqis in these neighborhoods corroborated this improvement.⁶⁰⁰ But this positive development was more than offset by more attacks in other parts of the city. Caldwell said the military expected the level of violence to keep rising during the remainder of Ramadan.⁶⁰¹

The first three weeks of the holiday saw an average 36 violent incidents per day in Baghdad, compared to 28 per day since mid-June, when Operation *Forward Together* first began.⁶⁰² The Health Ministry reported 2,700 Iraqi civilians killed in the city in September 2006, 400 more than in August and nearly as many as in July.⁶⁰³

Caldwell also said that the operation had not succeeded in keeping neighborhoods peaceful once they were cleared of insurgents or militias. "We're finding insurgent elements, the extremists, are pushing back hard. They're trying to get back into those areas" where Iraqi and US forces had targeted them before. "We're constantly going back in and doing clearing operations."⁶⁰⁴

A lack of motivation, logistical support, and proper organization contributed to the Iraqi ineffectiveness of Iraqi forces. According to Lt. General Martin Dempsey, the Multinational Security Transition commander in Iraq:

As to why only 2 Iraqi brigades were willing to participate in operation Together Forward, A review found the soldiers felt 1) they weren't trained for the job required in Baghdad, 2) no one had talked to local leaders and 3) 'it wasn't made clear to them how long they were coming to Baghdad for.' The point is, there has to be somebody at the far end to help you move out, even in our system, and there has to be somebody at this end to catch you when you get here and orient you. And both of those systems failed. But that wasn't an indictment on the Iraqi training; it was an indictment, frankly, on the training program."⁶⁰⁵

Some of the Iraqi units that did take part in Operation Together Forward caused more harm than good. A DoD report found that a major reason for the failure of Operation Together Forward II was the support Shi'ite death squads received from the Iraqi Police Service as well as the National Police. These police forces often "facilitated freedom of movement and provided advanced warning of upcoming operations" to the Shi'ite groups.⁶⁰⁶ Thus the neighborhoods that had been "cleared" were quickly retaken by insurgents.

The Government Introduces Baghdad Neighborhood Committees

The al-Maliki government responded in ways that partially bypassed the entire ISF development effort. It introduced a new security plan on October 2, 2006, after being criticized for its mishandling of the security situation, especially the escalation of sectarian killings. This plan included forming committees of Baghdad neighborhood leaders to try to ease sectarian tension.

Local political leaders, tribal sheiks, clerics and members of the security forces would monitor every Baghdad neighborhood. They would not have control over security forces, but instead function as arbitrators for local disputes, identify dangers and collect intelligence for the security forces, and act as a bridge between them and the civilian population.⁶⁰⁷ Another task was to set up checkpoints “with Iraqi authorities.”⁶⁰⁸ They reported to a ‘central commission for peace and security,’ which would in turn work with security forces. The plan was apparently meant to improve trust in and cooperation with the police, although details of the plan at first remained vague.⁶⁰⁹

The plan did gain broad support in parliament among the major Sunni and Shi’ite political blocs, despite the fact that it appeared to conflict with Shi’ite politicians’ plan to set up armed neighborhood watches.⁶¹⁰

The United States also endorsed the plan. Gen. Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad issued a joint statement, describing the plan as “a significant step in the right direction.”⁶¹¹ The idea of neighborhood watches was at odds with the imperative to abolish militias, but was seen as expedient by some military officials.⁶¹² In practice, however, nothing really improved. This lack of progress was a key reason for the new Bush strategy announced in January 2007.

Securing Anbar Province

The uncertainties in the battle of Baghdad were compounded by developments in other parts of Iraq, many of which revealed similar weaknesses in some aspects of Iraqi forces. These problems became especially clear in Anbar Province in western Iraq – the area most dominated by the Sunni insurgency.

In August 2006, Col. Peter Devlin, a senior Marine Intelligence officer at the Marine headquarters in Anbar Province, prepared a report on the province’s security situation and requirements to improve it. The Washington Post leaked parts of his assessment, and several military officials familiar with the document disclosed additional material. While a number of senior officers did make it clear that they felt his assessment might understate the potential for future success, none disagreed with its basic conclusions.

Devlin’s assessment stated that without the deployment of an additional US division, “there is nothing Multinational Force-West can do to influence the motivation of the Sunni to wage an insurgency.” Several parts of the assessment are consistent with the views of some Marine officers who were interviewed in the field in July 2006. Lt. Col. Ronald Gridley, XO with Regimental Combat Team 7, pointed to his regiment’s recommendation that additional troops be allocated to its section of Anbar. Even a battalion or two, Gridley said, would have impact.⁶¹³

Devlin warned that the Sunnis in Anbar province had generally lost faith in the national government and feel marginalized to a degree that “their greatest fears have been

realized.” The report describes Al Qa'ida in Mesopotamia, which is predominantly made of native Iraqis, as an “integral part of the social fabric” of Anbar.⁶¹⁴

He also warned that even successful attacks on low-level insurgents had little practical value, since losses were limited and the men involved could be easily replaced, and because insurgents could simply hide or disperse. He noted that as long as the insurgent had the support of the people, or could broadly intimidate them, that insurgency could not be defeated.

At the same time, he stated that the addition of troops could increase the number of border posts and the number of raids along smuggling routes. Another approach could be to focus on the towns and cities along the river west of Baghdad, as well as the roads from Fallujah towards Syria. Extra troops could also assist in nation-building tasks. On the other hand, more troops could also increase the perception among Iraqis of the United States as a heavy-handed occupier.⁶¹⁵

The practical problem in responding to Devlin’s caveats was that the US was already increasing its deployments to deal with Baghdad and Iraqi forces remained weak. About 30,000 US forces were stationed in Anbar, a region that borders on Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and is about the size of Louisiana.

Iraqi forces also lacked the strength and capability to solve the problem. Two Iraqi divisions were already in Anbar, with an authorized strength of 19,000 men. The Iraqi units, however, were at least 5,000-7,000 troops short of their authorized strength and hundreds more are AWOL. Together with the practice of giving monthly leaves, these problems produced a day-to-day strength of the two divisions of 50% and 35% respectively.

Iraqi force performance remained erratic throughout Anbar and in all other threatened areas outside the Kurdish zone. As was the case in Baghdad Province, some forces fought and some could only provide limited support. Battalions and units identified as being in the lead ranged from combat capable to virtually inactive. Iraqi forces generally could not plan or execute without substantial US support, and often did no better than US units in attracting local support and HUMINT. While Iraqis as a whole might support the ISF, the Iraqis in the field often saw them as tied to other sects and ethnic groups.

This did not mean that some Iraqi forces did not succeed. Some Iraqi units did show the ability to go out into the field and the ability to work with local and tribal leaders. Moreover, local volunteers continued to join the ISF. Iraqi force development still have great potential, but it was clear that it could take several more years to make effective, and that much depended on Sunni belief at the local and national level that the Iraqi government would serve Sunni as well as Shi’ite and Kurdish interests.

Marine Maj. Gen. Rick Zilmer, commander of the troops in the region, said his forces were sufficient to fulfill the primary mission of training Iraqi forces, but not enough to also defeat the insurgency in Anbar. Marine Brig. Gen. Robert Neller, deputy commanding general of Multinational Force West, also said in November that the training effort was making progress, but commented on an Iraqi police officer’s request for more US forces: “Let’s be honest with each other. There are not enough Marines, Iraqi army or police to cover all this ground. And I can’t tell you there will be more Marines coming.”⁶¹⁶

In mid-November 2006, Neller said that many police officers in Anbar province had not been paid for three months, because the central government did not provide security forces there with the necessary funding. "That's why people in Anbar think the government in Baghdad doesn't want them to succeed," Neller said. "Sometimes I wonder if the government in Baghdad wants them to succeed." The government's response to such allegations was that the reason for the lack of funding was police corruption in Anbar province that the government was unwilling to subsidize.⁶¹⁷

Co-opting Tribal Leaders in Anbar

In September 2006, the leaders of 25 out of 31 tribes in Anbar province agreed to unite in the fight against the insurgency. It remained unclear, however, how quickly and forcefully they would confront Al-Qa'ida and other insurgent elements. One of the tribal leaders, Sheik Abdul Sattar Buzaigh al-Rishawi, estimated that the 25 tribes counted 30,000 young men armed with assault rifles willing to fight against insurgents, whose number the Sheik put at about 1,300. He also demanded weapons, equipment and tactical help for Anbar's tribes from an Iraqi army brigade. According to US military sources, the tribes in the area had fought Sunni insurgents in the past, but had never coordinated their actions in the fight. The initial government response from Baghdad was grateful, but avoided specific commitments.⁶¹⁸ The agreement was denounced shortly afterwards as "pure nonsense" by other tribal leaders from Anbar.⁶¹⁹ The week after the announcement, however, seemed to confirm the tribal leader's sincerity in fighting the insurgency; armed tribesmen seized four men at a mosque in Ramadi they believed to be Al Qa'ida fighters. Their bodies were later found in a dumpster.⁶²⁰ Meanwhile, Marine Corps commandant Michael W. Hagee described security in Anbar as improving, but said the province was nonetheless still hazardous.

"The security situation has changed very greatly since we went in there. Now, it's still very dangerous."⁶²¹

By the end of the 2006, the agreement with tribal leaders did seem to have begun to bear fruit. The number of recruits joining the Iraqi police force rose dramatically in Anbar Province in December and January. In Ramadi, during the first 2 weeks of 2007 more than 1,000 applicants sought police jobs. In December 1,000 applicants joined the police force.⁶²² This contrasts with previous month's recruitment numbers, which were "a few dozen."⁶²³ US commanders attributed the sudden surge in recruits to deals brokered with several local tribal militias, in which tribal leaders agreed to send their fighters to join the local police. According to US commanders, a rift has opened up between local tribes and groups like Al Qa'ida. "They've seen enough of the murder and intimidation," stated Maj. General Richard Zilmer.⁶²⁴

The strategy of co-opting tribal leaders appeared to pay off in March 2007. Iraqi Army and police forces together with local tribal forces, killed dozens of suspected Sunni insurgents in an unusually fierce battle. 80 others were captured. According to Abdul-Karim Khalaf, a spokesman for the MOI, "The tribes in this area refused to join al-Qa'ida."⁶²⁵

Securing Ramadi

One additional problem with Operation Forward Together was that Coalition and Iraqi efforts concentrated on securing Baghdad over the summer, and the pacification effort in other parts of the country had to get by with lower troop numbers. This put more strain on

ISF forces as well as those of the MNF-I, and most of the forces supposedly “in the lead” already faced serious problems in manning levels and real-world mission capability.

One example was Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province. Although the Iraqi government had authorized police force strength of 3,000, there were only about 300 trained and equipped policemen in August 2006. About 2,000 Iraqi troops and several thousand US soldiers were also stationed in the city of 300,000. In comparison, about 12,000 US and Iraqi troops were employed to rid Fallujah of insurgents, a city about half the size of Ramadi.

US Army Col. Sean MacFarland, commander of the brigade responsible for the Ramadi area, openly admitted to the low priority given to the city as a result of the troop requirements for the Baghdad offensive, saying that Baghdad, not his area of operation, was currently the main effort: “I’m trying to take the heat off Baghdad.” Part of the security problem in Ramadi may actually have been the retaking of Fallujah, when insurgents were pushed out of the city and partly relocated to nearby Ramadi.

The political process in the province was also hampered by the high level of violence, which had killed four of 31 members of the Anbar Provincial Council in the past months. Insurgents had tried to kill Anbar’s governor, Maamoun Sami Rashid al-Awani, 30 times. Employees going from one part of the government compound to another had to sprint in order to avoid sniper fire.

Politics on a national level also slowed down progress. Anbar was the only province not to receive its share of the 2006 budget for development and reconstruction projects. All other provinces have received about 10 - 40% of their share of the money. While al-Awani alleged that the Shi’ite-dominated central government wanted to weaken his government, politicians in Baghdad said they wanted better guarantees that the provincial administration was stable enough to safeguard the money. A Ramadi bank had recently been robbed of more than \$6 million in central government funds.

The US military did, however, feel that MNF-I and ISF efforts had been more successful in some other parts of Anbar province, both in terms of security and reconstruction, for example in Fallujah and several towns in the Euphrates valley.⁶²⁶

Partial British Retreat From Basra

The British government in late October moved most of its civilian staff out of its compound in Basra due to rocket and mortar attacks by militias, saying this was a temporary measure.⁶²⁷

ISF Operational Successes and Human Intelligence

One area where MNF-I experts did feel that ISF forces became more successful was HUMINT. For example, Operation Sidewinder, executed on August 1, 2006, was seen as a success in terms of Iraqi Security Force operational capabilities, as well as growing ISF HUMINT capabilities.

The mission was carried out by Iraqi soldiers assigned to the 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division, and was a cordon and search operation to interrupt “anti-Iraqi forces” activity in Sadiquiyah. According to US Marine Sergeant Brian A. Richmond, a rifleman who provided support to the Iraqi forces, the Iraqi soldiers were able to gather more intelligence from the local citizens than he believed Coalition troops could have.⁶²⁸ In a

counterinsurgency operation where HUMINT serves as a key ingredient to success, Iraqis' growing ability to obtain information and tips indicates possible growing trust from the public, which Coalition trainers have sought to establish through increased emphasis on professionalism.

Other ISF successes in obtaining actionable Human Intelligence in the late summer and early fall of 2006 included:⁶²⁹

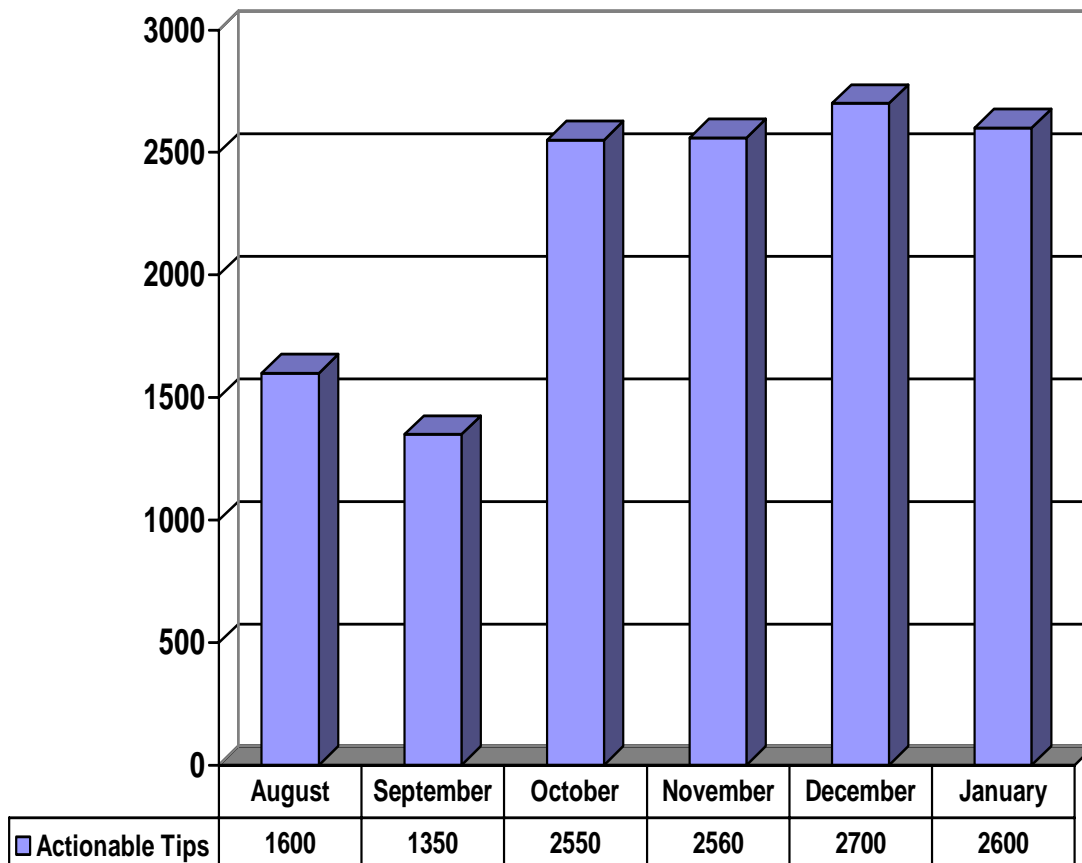
- Jul 31: A tip from an Iraqi citizen led a patrol of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition soldiers to a munitions cache in east Baghdad. The soldiers discovered 18 60mm rounds with fuses installed. It reportedly took the soldiers less than 15 minutes from the time the tip was called to locate the cache.
- August 9: Operating on a tip from local citizens in Muqdadiyah, Iraqi soldiers from the 3rd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition forces found four terror suspects after searching a building in the northern part of the city. The search also revealed a vehicle-borne IED factory, three vehicles that matched the description of cars used in an attack on an Iraqi police checkpoint earlier in the week, and one rocket-propelled grenade launcher.
- August 20: A woman in Karkh who claimed to have been kidnapped previously entered the office of the Iraqi Army's 6th Division and led soldiers from the 5th Battalion to a house where she said another kidnapped victim was located. The soldiers rescued the woman, unharmed, and arrested the two kidnapers. That same day, in Baghdad, a tip from a citizen led soldiers from the 5th Special Troops Company, 9th Iraqi Army Division to a permissive entry of the Al Fadly Mosque, where they discovered a cache of weapons and detained two five suspected terrorists.
- August 21: An Iraqi citizen in Baghdad led soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division to a house in the Adhamiyah neighborhood where kidnap victims and weapons were kept. One victim was rescued, along with the discovery of a cache of rocket-propelled grenades, propellant charges, grenades, and rifles.

On September 3, 2006, Iraqi authorities announced that a top Al-Qa'ida leader who had been in custody since June 19 had yielded valuable intelligence, including information leading to the capture of 20 terrorist leaders. In the weeks leading up to this announcement, Iraqi army and national police units conducted over 80 missions specifically targeting Al-Qa'ida in Iraq. During these operations, it was reported that 49 terrorists were killed, while Iraqi forces detained 225 more who had been connected with bombings, kidnappings and murders, as well as facilitating movement of foreign fighters, weapons, explosive materials, and funding into the country.⁶³⁰

Figure 11.1 shows the rise in actionable tips to Coalition and Iraqi forces, as reported by MNF-I as of August 2006. The data show fluctuation on a weekly basis, but an overall upward trend since March 2006.

Figure 11.1

National Hotline Actionable* Tips



Note: Not all actionable tips result in the apprehension of enemy forces or the seizure of illegal weapons.

Source: MNF-I, as adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2007 Report to Congress, p. 20; Note: +/-5% margin of error.

Other Operational Developments

The scale of the problems Iraqi forces had to deal with becomes clearer from a chronology of the major daily interactions between ISF forces, insurgents, and militias during July-September 2006 and what some now call “anti-Iraqi” actors. Iraqi army and police units partnered with Coalition forces in 140 operations, killing 17 insurgents and detaining 300 suspects In August 2006.⁶³¹

- July 1, 2006:** In the aftermath of a powerful bomb attack that killed over sixty people in a marketplace, US and Iraqi forces arriving to provide assistance were pelted with rocks by civilians, the *New York Times* reported. Female Sunni MP Taysir al-Mashhadani was abducted in Baghdad, apparently by a Shi’ite militia. Sunnis accused the Shi’ite-dominated Iraqi security forces of complicity, since Iraqi patrols were apparently nearby but did not attempt to intervene.
- July 2, 2006:** Iraqi military forces with more than 50 vehicles and backed by US helicopters moved to surround the Ur neighborhood northeast of Baghdad in an attempt to locate and free abducted Iraqi MP Taysir al-Mashhadani. The MP and her bodyguards remained missing. Iraqi National Security Advisor Mowaffaq al-Rubaie released a “most wanted” list of 41 known insurgents, based on data compiled by the security forces over the previous nine months. A suicide

- car bomb in Kirkuk killed a police officer and wounded two others. Two policemen were killed in a car bombing in central Baghdad. Police clashed with militias in several neighborhoods around Baghdad, apparently following a police entry into a Sunni mosque early in the morning, resulting the killing and wounding of an undetermined number of security forces and militiamen.
- **July 3, 2006:** The “bullet-riddled” bodies of five Iraqi policemen were found near a sanitation plant in Mandali near the Iranian border. Two soldiers and two policemen were wounded in an attack by a suicide car bombing in Baghdad. Four police officers and three civilians were killed by a car bomb in Mosul. The bodies of five Iraqi soldiers were recovered in Baquba, and a police officer’s body was recovered in Kirkuk one day after he had been captured amidst a gunfight with insurgents. A joint patrol of Iraqi police and army troops raided a farm compound west of Kirkuk and freed a police officer and a soldier who had been kidnapped on July 1. Coalition forces announced that Iraqi soldiers had raided a farmhouse west of Baghdad, capturing 14 al-Qa’ida foreign fighters.
 - **July 4, 2006:** Allegedly out of fear that Iraqi forces won’t be able to provide security in the Muthanna province following its handover from British and Australian troops later in July 2006, the province’s Governor Mohammad Ali Hassan and Police Chief Mohammad Najim Abu Kihila were made to resign by the provincial council. The resignations occurred after 300 recently fired policemen stormed the provincial council and attacked council members to protest the loss of their jobs. The provincial council doubted the ability of Iraqi forces to secure Muthanna province independently. Three policemen were killed and three other wounded by a roadside bomb in eastern Baghdad. Gunmen dressed in security force uniforms kidnapped Raad Hareth, the Iraqi deputy electricity minister, and his 11 bodyguards on the outskirts of Baghdad, but all were released that evening with no explanation.
 - **July 5, 2006:** US and Iraqi troops carried out a raid on the Saddam Hospital in Ramadi, which Coalition military spokesman Maj. Gen. William Caldwell said was being used as a haven for insurgents. Caldwell also noted that, due to a rise in the number of vehicle-borne bomb attacks, Iraqi security forces were being trained in “new techniques” to deal with them and were raiding suspected car bomb “factories.” Iraqi forces were also continuing operations in the search for abducted Sunni MP Taysir al-Mashhadani with “little success.” In Kirkuk, a roadside bomb killed a security force member protecting oil facilities. A police officer was killed in Mosul when a suicide car bomb detonated near the police station.
 - **July 6, 2006:** In an afternoon news conference, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said that the Facilities Protection Service, a branch of the security forces created to protect government buildings and installations, was “filled with criminals and murderers.” “It didn’t really protect the ministries,” he acknowledged. “On the contrary, it turned into a partner in the killing.” Insurgents wounded two police officers in an attack on the Ramadi hospital that Iraqi and US forces had raided and secured the previous day. A Mahdi militia commander, Adnan al-Unaybi, was arrested by Iraqi and US forces around Hillah, 60 miles south of Baghdad.
 - **July 7, 2006:** Iraqi forces supported by US aircraft conducted an early morning raid on the Sadr City area of eastern Baghdad that US and Iraqi spokesmen said killed or wounded about 30 fighters and capturing an unidentified “extremist leader,” apparently a commander of the Shi’ite Mahdi militia. No Iraqi force or US casualties were reported. The raid was part of the ongoing search for kidnapped Sunni MP Taysir al-Mashhadani, abducted July 1. An Iraqi army officer said that American officials had given Iraqi forces a list of people to be arrested in the Sadr City raid.
 - **July 8, 2006:** A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi police patrol wounded one officer in Baghdad.
 - **July 9, 2006:** Major Qahtan Adnan Abdul-Razzaq, an Iraqi army intelligence officer, was shot while driving in Karbala. A police officer was killed in a drive-by shooting in Karbala. One policeman was killed in eastern Baghdad when gunmen fired on a patrol. Iraqi forces cordoned off the Sadraim Mosque, a center of radical Shi’ite Mahdi militia supporters, in Zafraniya southeast of Baghdad and the national police searched the mosque, detaining 20 people and confiscating six AK-47s. The Mosque described as a stronghold of the radical Shi’ite Mahdi militia. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on confidential Iraqi government documents that detail more than 400

investigations of Iraqi police corruption and brutality, including participation in insurgent and sectarian militia-led violence. Individuals of all police ranks within the Interior Ministry have been implicated in corruption and other violations. Prominent Sunni leaders criticized the Iraqi forces “for their inability to control violence” and links to Shi’ite militias after gunmen went on a killing spree in the western Jihad district of Baghdad inhabited mainly by Sunnis. A military cordon was established in the city shortly afterward.

- **July 10, 2006:** Five policemen were injured by a roadside bomb in central Baghdad. A roadside bomb in Hilla killed a police officer and wounded four civilian bystanders. Soldiers and police enforced a daytime curfew and kept the al-Jihad neighborhood of Baghdad cordoned off in the aftermath of an anti-Sunni killing spree by gunmen the preceding day, while violence against civilians by gunmen continued. Locals expressed concerns about the loyalty and capabilities of the military and police: “The security forces are not capable of maintaining security.”
- **July 11, 2006:** Britain’s defense secretary said British, Australian, and Japanese troops would hand over control of the southern Muthanna province to Iraqi security forces on Thursday July 12. The Maysan and Dhi Qar provinces were also being slated for coalition force withdrawals. In an address at CSIS in Washington, DC, US Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad reported that Iraqi security forces have increased over the past year from 168,000 to 265,000. He also claimed that by the end of summer 2006 about 75 percent of counterinsurgency operations would be led by Iraqi units and acknowledged that the security clampdown in Baghdad that started about one month previously had not met expectations that it would reduce violence.
- **July 12, 2006:** US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, speaking to US troops in Iraq, said that 267,000 Iraqi security forces were “trained, equipped, and gaining combat experience,” but that US forces would have to remain as the Iraqis’ “enablers” “for some period of time.” Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki told the parliament that he was optimistic that there are enough security forces to defeat the insurgents. US Gen. George Casey, the senior American commander in Iraq, said that additional US troops might be needed in Baghdad to help quell the recent upsurge in sectarian violence.
- **July 13, 2006:** British and Australian troops officially handed over security responsibilities for the southern province of Muthanna to the Iraqi government and its security forces. Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki said it was “an important step toward the goal of full Iraqi responsibility for all 18 provinces by the end of next year.” British Maj. Gen. John Cooper, commander of British forces in southern Iraq, said his forces had trained and equipped 2,000 policemen and 1,000 soldiers to be based in the province. One police officer was killed and two others wounded in clashes in Baghdad between security forces and Shi’ite militiamen. A “postal policeman” was killed in a drive-by shooting in Baghdad. Gunmen stopped a car with four policemen from Karbala at a fake checkpoint in Baghdad and killed them. In Mosul, gunmen killed an off-duty police officer at a car-repair shop.
- **July 14, 2006:** Gunmen attacked a checkpoint south of Kirkuk, killing 12 Iraqi soldiers.
- **July 15, 2006:** A suicide bomber attacked a convoy of Interior Ministry commandos, wounding two while killing two civilians.
- **July 16, 2006:** A roadside bomb west of Kirkuk detonated as a convoy of Iraqi Army troops passed. Two soldiers and the Second Battalion commander Riyad al-Danouk were injured.
- **July 17, 2006:** Three Iraqi troops were killed at a checkpoint in Mahmoudiya, a town south of Baghdad, as gunmen stormed the town market and proceeded to kill some 50 mostly Shi’ite civilians. Afterwards, Iraqi soldiers raided a nearby house, arresting two suspects and confiscating grenades and other weapons. Iraqi Shi’ite politicians walked out of a parliament session to protest the Iraqi security forces’ inability to stop the violence.
- **July 18, 2006:** Iraqi National Security Adviser Mouwafak al-Rubaie reported that a Jordanian militant, Diyar Ismail Mahmoud alias Abu al-Afghani, believed responsible for the killing of two captured US soldiers in June, had been killed in a clash with Iraqi security forces. Al-Rubaie also claimed that Iraqi forces had captured four leaders of the Omar Brigade, an al-Qa’ida in Iraq

- affiliated group. Police arriving at the scene of a major car bombing in the town of Kufa, south of Baghdad, were pelted with rocks and had to fire shots into the air to disperse the angry mob. In Kirkuk, six policemen were killed and one was injured by a roadside bomb. Gunmen wearing Iraqi army uniforms robbed a bank in western Baghdad. A police officer in Baqubah was killed on his way to work. Associated Press reported that 617 Iraqis, including 90 police and soldiers, had been killed since the beginning of the month and 1,850, including 267 security forces, had been killed since the new government took power on May 20. In statements published by an Iraqi newspaper, Iraqi National Security Adviser Mouwafak al-Rubaie said that "we do not have any concrete evidence of Iran's direct involvement" in supporting insurgents and militias, while "there is no doubt the Syrian role in Iraq is a negative one" because it allowed foreign fighters to enter Iraq.
- **July 19, 2006:** An Interior Ministry General, legal adviser Fakhir Abdul-Hussein, was shot dead outside his home in the Mansur district of Baghdad. Many lawmakers said that a civil war in Iraq had already begun in the wake of sectarian attacks that killed 120 people over the previous two days. The Iraqi Interior Ministry, seeking to curb kidnappings by men in uniform, ordered its units to report their operations and told Iraqis to demand identification from law enforcement officials before complying with their orders. Four Iraqi police commandos were killed by a roadside bomb in southern Baghdad. One police officer was killed in a gun battle with insurgents outside the Yarmouk Hospital.
 - **July 20, 2006:** In a bid to reduce violence and promote reconciliation, the Defense Ministry issued a call to enlisted soldiers and officers below the rank of major from the Saddam Hussein-era military to go to recruiting centers and return to service. Five Iraqi troops were wounded by a roadside bomb near Karbala. British forces in Basra arrested an Iraqi police captain for alleged terrorist activity. A roadside bomb in eastern Baghdad killed one policeman and injured five, along with several civilians. A police officer in Fallujah was kidnapped and killed, while a police officer in Tikrit was killed while manning a checkpoint. Iraqi PM Nuri al-Maliki fired security officials in Mahmudiya in the aftermath of the July 17 massacre of Shi'ites by gunmen in the marketplace. US and Iraqi forces surrounded the towns of Hawija and Riyadh, just west of Kirkuk, in an operation to drive out al-Qa'ida suspected of numerous recent killings. Iraqi National Security Adviser al-Rubaie appeared on al-Sharqiyah TV and said, "The Iraqi armed forces and the multinational forces jointly carry out 35 operations daily against terrorism, rebellion and the enemies of Iraq. Ninety per cent of these operations are carried out jointly by the Iraqi and multinational forces. Part of them is carried out by the Iraqi command backed by the multinational forces. Only 10 per cent of them are carried out without the knowledge of the Iraqi security forces."
 - **July 21, 2006:** According to the *New York Times*, the US military tallied 92 Iraqi police officers and soldiers killed and 444 wounded in the first four weeks of the Baghdad security operation launched on June 14. Daily attacks in Baghdad increased during that period from 23.8 to 25.2; the average number of daily attacks was approximately 24 in June and 34 in July. According to the US military, the Baghdad operation utilized 42,500 Iraqi security personnel and 7,200 US troops. Iraqi Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Abdul Aziz Mohammed Jassim said "one of the biggest problems the security problem faced was armed groups posing as police and army units." A weekly Friday ban on daytime traffic in Baghdad was extended to run from 11AM to 7PM, with the nightly 9PM to 6PM curfew remaining in effect. Iraqi security forces, supported by a US helicopter, counterattacked against Shi'ite gunmen in Mahmoudiya in a clash that left three policemen, four soldiers, and between five and eleven gunmen dead. The US military called the action an "effective suppression of an apparent death squad" that "shows exactly how security forces are working together to stop the violence." Sunnis rallied in front of a Baghdad shrine to demand that the Iraqi government replace the predominantly Shi'ite army battalion stationed in their neighborhood. General John Abizaid, head of US Central Command, said that the Baghdad security plan had not achieved the hoped-for results and that additional US troops would redeploy to Baghdad to help quell sectarian violence. Top US commander in Iraq General George Casey was meeting with Iraqi Defense Minister Abdel Kader Jassem al-Obeidi on a new plan to improve Baghdad security.
 - **July 22, 2006:** The Iraqi government committee on national reconciliation met for the first time in Baghdad's Green Zone. Much of the time was spent debating whether Iraqis who had killed

- coalition troops would be pardoned. Three Iraqi soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in Fallujah. In Baqubah, a bomb killed three police officers and wounded five. In Mussayib, a gun battle between coalition forces and Shi'ite militiamen left one Iraqi soldier and 15 militants dead. Another soldier was killed in Mussayib when a bomb exploded at his house. Police killed three gunmen in Mosul. A roadside bomb in Kut killed one soldier and injured four others. A police officer was shot to death in Amara.
- **July 23, 2006:** Dozens of civilians were killed in bombings in Baghdad and Kirkuk, as well as shootings in various regions, as sectarian violence continued.
 - **July 24, 2006:** In an interview with BBC, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, traveling for meetings in Britain and the US, denied predictions that foreign coalition troops would be in Iraq for decades, insisted that Iraq was not entering a civil war, and promised continued progress in the independent capabilities of the Iraqi security forces to secure the country. Police fought a running gun battle with gunmen in the streets of Baghdad, resulting in four officers killed and 36 wounded. Three roadside bombs in Baghdad wounded two soldiers and three policemen. A suicide bomb attack on an Iraqi Army convoy in Mosul killed five Iraqi troops and wounded four.
 - **July 25, 2006:** A roadside bomb in Baghdad killed one policeman and injured three. Another roadside bomb in Mosul wounded three police officers on patrol. Gunmen killed a police officer in a drive-by shooting in Baghdad, and another policeman was killed as he headed for work in the town of Ishaqi. Expected topics of meetings included improving the Baghdad security plan and progress on force development. Three police officers died and 14 were wounded in clashes with gunmen in three different Baghdad districts. US President Bush and Iraqi PM al-Maliki met in Washington, DC and gave a press conference confirming that about 4,000 additional Iraqi and 4,000 additional US troops would be deployed to Baghdad in an effort to quell sectarian violence.
 - **July 26, 2006:** Gunmen kidnapped police brigadier Abdullah Hamood, director of residency office of Baghdad. A roadside bomb wounded a policeman in Mosul. In Baquba, a police officer was killed and one was wounded in a gun attack on their patrol. A raid by Iraqi security forces near Balad, north of Baghdad, resulted in the death of one insurgent and the capture of three others. Gunmen wearing police uniforms kidnapped 17 people from a central Baghdad apartment building hours after Bush and Maliki's announcement of renewed Baghdad security efforts.
 - **July 27, 2006:** Two policemen were killed and two were wounded by a roadside bomb in Tikrit. In Debes, northeast of Kirkuk, a policeman and a soldier were killed when their patrols fired on each other. A police officer was shot to death in Mosul. One soldier died and an army lieutenant was injured in an attack by gunmen in Kirkuk. A high-ranking police general's body was found blindfolded, handcuffed, and bullet-riddled in eastern Baghdad, one day after he was kidnapped.
 - **July 28, 2006:** Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, head of the Shi'ite SCIRI political party, said full control for security should be handed over to Iraqis and criticized the plan to add more US troops to the Baghdad security operation, calling for "handing over the security dossier to the Iraqi apparatus and stopping the interference in its work.
 - **July 29, 2006:** The *New York Times* reported that Shi'ite militias had been "staking out" morgues in Baghdad to kill or kidnap Sunnis when they go to search for missing relatives. The Shi'ite militants were allegedly receiving tips from government facilities protection personnel with links to militias when Sunnis were arriving.
 - **July 30, 2006:** Iraqi deputy prime minister Barham Salih and national security adviser Mowaffaq al-Rubaie said in a news conference that Iraq was a "frontline" in the global war on terrorism and therefore should receive more economic and military assistance for fighting international terrorists on its own soil. Interior Minister Jawad Bolani vowed to eliminate corruption and extremist political influence in the police forces with new investigative initiatives. Two police officers in Baghdad were wounded by a roadside bomb, while another bomb killed a police officer in Baqubah. Four policemen were killed by insurgents on the road between Kirkuk and Tikrit. In the town of Hawija, four policemen and a lawyer were beheaded at a roadblock. According to the *Los Angeles Times* report, over 3,000 police have been killed and 3,000 more wounded since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime.

- **July 31, 2006:** The Iraqi Interior Minister faced calls for dismissal due to the poor security situation in Baghdad. Gunmen in military uniforms kidnapped an estimated 25 people from a mobile phone shop and a chamber of commerce in the upscale Baghdad district of Karradah. Four Iraqi soldiers were killed and six were wounded in a car bomb attack in Mosul. Col. Fakhri Jamil Salman, a senior intelligence officer, was killed in a drive-by shooting in Baghdad. Police found the bodies of two officers who had been kidnapped the previous night, while a third remained missing. An Iraqi officer was killed in an explosion in Iskandariya.
- **August 1, 2006:** 23 Iraqi soldiers were killed and 20 more were wounded by a roadside bomb while traveling in a bus between Tikrit and Baiji. The Iraqi government immediately imposed a curfew on the region as authorities searched for the perpetrators. A car bomb exploded in front of the al-Rafidein bank in the Karradah district of Baghdad, where security force personnel collect their paychecks at the beginning of each month. Iraqi police reported eight civilians, three soldiers, and three commandos killed in the attack. One police officer was killed in a bomb attack in Muqdadiya, while a roadside bomb in Kirkuk killed two policemen and wounded one more.
- **August 2, 2006:** Two off-duty police officers were among those killed by a roadside bomb in Hawija. A policeman on patrol was killed by a bomb in Mosul. Ahmed Abdel Hussein, chief of the traffic police in Baquba, was shot and killed with his bodyguard. Two soldiers were wounded when a bomb exploded near their patrol in Diwaniya. The Iraqi army announced that it had arrested 26 “suspected insurgents” in the past 24 hours. Fifteen insurgents and three police officers were killed in a clash in the town of Madaen. Another four police were wounded in the wounded. Two traffic police were killed by gunmen in the town of Khalis in Diyala province. Iraqi and US forces swept Anbar University in Ramadi for insurgent presence. Iraqi President Jalal Talibani announced that he expected Iraqi forces to take control of security in all 18 provinces of the country by the end of 2006.
- **August 3, 2006:** In testimony before the US Senate Armed Services Committee, CENTCOM commander John Abizaid said sectarian violence in Iraq was “probably as bad as I have seen it,” with civil war a distinct possibility, and that the “operational and tactical situation in Baghdad is such that it requires additional security forces, both US and Iraqi.”
- **August 4, 2006:** Three policemen were among ten killed by a suicide car bomber who drove into a crowd at a soccer match in the town of Hadhar, south of Mosul. Another nine police were wounded in the attack. A senior police officer and his two bodyguards were killed by a car bomb in Mosul. A police officer and four militants were killed in clashes between security forces and insurgents in the city.
- **August 5, 2006:** A police officer was killed in the Sunni Adhamiya district in northern Baghdad. The Iraqi Defense Ministry announced that 64 suspected insurgents had been detained in operations across the country since the previous day.
- **August 6, 2006:** Iraqi troops clashed with Shi’ite militiamen near Sadr City in Baghdad and two soldiers were wounded. Two policemen were killed and five were wounded when gunmen ambushed their patrol in southern Baghdad.
- **August 7, 2006:** Six Iraqi soldiers were killed and 15 were wounded in a dawn attack on their checkpoint at Balad Ruz, southeast of Baquba. A police officer was killed along with a civilian in a bomb attack at a market in Khan Bani Saad near Baquba. US and Iraqi troops raided a “suspected death squad” in Sadr City, eastern Baghdad, resulting in two deaths and 18 injuries. Two policemen were killed in a drive-by shooting in Mosul. A suicide bomber drove a truck packed with explosives into a police commando headquarters in Samarra, killing 10 troops. Four Iraqi police officers were killed in an ambush in Sadr City. About 4,000 US troops, including the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, were deployed in Baghdad to bolster security.
- **August 8, 2006:** Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki condemned the joint US-Iraqi raid in Sadr City the previous day, saying such violent operations could undermine his efforts to promote national reconciliation. The bodies of seven Iraqi troops were found near the Iranian border. The Iraqi Army’s 4th Division was given lead responsibility for security in the northern Iraqi provinces

- of Nineveh, Salahuddin, and Tamim. Forward Operating Base Dagger near Tikrit was transferred to the Iraqi military. Five of the army's 10 divisions had taken the lead security role in their areas of operations, and 48 of 110 US bases had been transferred to Iraqi control.
- **August 9, 2006:** The Baghdad morgue reported that it had received 1,815 bodies in the month of July. Coalition spokesman Maj. Gen. William Caldwell reported that over the previous week, US and Iraqi troops had "conducted operations against 10 death squads throughout Baghdad" and uncovered 222 roadside bombs. An Iraqi army colonel, Qasim Abdul Qadir, was shot and killed on his way to work in Basra. Police arrested two people in the act of planting a roadside bomb in Kirkuk.
 - **August 10, 2006:** A policeman was shot to death in Fallujah. Two policemen were killed by a roadside bomb in Hawija, southwest of Kirkuk. Four police officers were killed and seven were wounded in a roadside bomb and mortar attack in Baquba. Three police commandos were killed and three were wounded in clashes with gunmen in southern Baghdad. Police and gunmen fought in western Baghdad. US and Iraqi troops sealed off the southern Baghdad neighborhood of Dora to quell a spate of killings there. House-to-house searches resulted in 36 arrests and the uncovering of several weapons caches.
 - **August 11, 2006:** A police officer was shot dead in Mosul.
 - **August 12, 2006:** Two gunmen were injured and detained by police after participating in an attack on a police station in Mahmudiya. In Baquba, seven policemen were wounded by a roadside bomb and a police captain was killed by gunmen.
 - **August 13, 2006:** Three police officers were wounded by a roadside bomb in Baquba. A colonel of the Oil Facilities Protection security organization was gunned down at a gas station in Tikrit. The governor of Mosul narrowly escaped assassination, while one of his bodyguards was wounded in the attack by gunmen. Four policemen were wounded during a clash with insurgents in Hilla. 30 suspected insurgents, including 16 allegedly planning to kill relatives of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, were arrested in a series of Iraqi military and police operations during which six policemen were killed.
 - **August 14, 2006:** A bus carrying police recruits was hit by a roadside bomb on the main road between Baghdad and Baquba, killing one and injuring 10. Nine Iraqi troops were wounded by a suicide car bomb attack.
 - **August 15, 2006:** One policeman was killed and two others wounded by a roadside bomb in Baquba. Three police officers were wounded by a roadside bomb in Huwayder, north of Baquba. A police lieutenant, Fadhil Uthman, was shot dead in Baquba. The Iraqi Defense Ministry announced that security forces had detained 48 suspected insurgents in the previous 24 hours. In Muqdadiya, 50 miles northeast of Baghdad, three bakers who supplied bread to the Iraqi army were killed by gunmen. A former Iraqi army officer was shot dead on a highway near Dujail. Two roadside bombs in Samarra wounded three Iraqi police commandos and destroyed one of their vehicles. In Karbala, Iraqi troops clashed with Shi'ite militiamen loyal to hard-line cleric Mahmoud al-Hasani after searching a mosque for weapons. After the clash, Karbala authorities imposed a vehicle curfew in the city. Three Iraqi soldiers were killed and four wounded by a roadside bomb in Jbala, near Mussayib. British forces were conducting training missions for Iraqi personnel in the Maysan province in preparation for the process of handing over security responsibilities in the province in September.
 - **August 16, 2006:** Police fought with insurgents in Mosul, killing six and wounding seven. A roadside bomb killed one police officer and wounded three in Baquba. Iraqi forces backed by British troops fought attacks on government buildings by armed gangs in Basra, resulting in one dead and five wounded policemen. Iraqi security forces maintained a blockade around Karbala following clashes with Shi'ite militants the previous day. Two policemen were wounded by a roadside bomb in Kut. Gunmen assaulted an Iraqi Army checkpoint near Hilla, causing the soldiers to flee, and the gunmen stole their weapons.

- **August 17, 2006:** A suicide car bomb targeting Kurdish security forces killed five guards on a road in Sinjar, northwest of Mosul.
- **August 18, 2006:** Two policemen were killed and two more among the wounded when gunmen attacked police watchtowers in Baquba. Authorities set a curfew on the city following the attack. The police officers were wounded in a bomb attack in the Mansour district of Baghdad. An Iraqi soldier guarding oil fields was shot to death in Balad, north of Baghdad. The Iraqi government announced a two-day vehicle ban in parts of Baghdad ahead of a major Shi'ite religious festival that had previously been targeted by insurgents.
- **August 20, 2006:** Fadhil al-Magsusi, a colonel in the Facilities Protection Service, was killed by gunmen in Basra. Two off-duty members of the Interior Ministry Intelligence Service were killed by gunmen in Basra. Iraqi troops arrested two suspected death squad leaders in southern Baghdad.
- **August 21, 2006:** The Iraqi army announced that it had arrested 103 suspected insurgents across the country in operations in the previous 48 hours. Two policemen were injured by a roadside bomb in Iskandariya, south of Baghdad. The US military reported the "most successful recruiting drive yet" for police in Anbar province, taking in 500 new officers for a 30 percent increase in the region's police force.
- **August 22, 2006:** One of the Anbar province governor's bodyguards was killed in a drive-by shooting in Ramadi. Gunmen killed a police major and wounded his driver in an attack on his car in Baquba.
- **August 23, 2006:** Two policemen were killed in a series of shootings in Baquba. Eight policemen were wounded by a suicide bomber wearing a police uniform in Mosul. Three traffic police were among six people wounded by a roadside bomb in Fallujah. A police officer was killed by gunmen in Al-Hay, a small town south of Kut. The Iraqi army reported killing one insurgent and arresting 29 in operations across the country in the previous 24 hours.
- **August 24, 2006:** Two policemen were among nine people wounded by a suicide care bomb attack on a police station in eastern Baghdad. Four police officers were wounded in a car bomb attack on their patrol in northern Baghdad. Two policemen were killed and three were wounded by a roadside bomb in Baquba. Police Colonel Hussein Abdul Wahid, head of police patrols in eastern Baghdad, was the target of a car bomb attack on his motorcade, which injured five of his bodyguards but missed him. Four policemen were wounded, along with a civilian, by a car bomb in Baquba that they had been lured to by a false tip. Two police officers were wounded by a roadside bomb in Mosul. Police in Mosul said they arrested Abdul Rahman al-Aathari, the head of al-Qa'ida-linked groups in Mosul. Three policemen were killed by gunmen at a Balad checkpoint. Two policemen were wounded by a roadside bomb in Baghdad. Three policemen were among six people wounded by a roadside bomb in Baquba. Two top US generals, CENTCOM commander John Abizaid and commander of US forces in Iraq George Casey, said that the revamped Baghdad security operation was causing a reduction in violence and that they were "very optimistic that the situation will stabilize."
- **August 25, 2006:** A car bomb in the Zeyouna district of Baghdad wounded five policemen. Three Iraqi soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in Buhriz, north of Baghdad. A car bomb in Baquba killed three policemen. South of Baquba, a police officer was killed and four more wounded by a roadside bomb. A policeman was killed and another was wounded in a gun attack on their patrol.
- **August 26, 2006:** Sunni Iraqi MP Tayseer Najah al-Mashhadani, abducted by Shi'ite gunmen on July 1, was released unharmed to the Iraqi Prime Minister's office. Looters ransacked a military base in Amara that British forces had vacated for Iraqi troops.
- **August 27, 2006:** Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki declared in an interview that "Iraq will never be in a civil war" and that the "violence is in decrease and our security ability is increasing," on a day when a series of attacks claimed some 50 lives across the country.
- **August 28, 2006:** Approximately 20 Iraqi troops were dead after fighting with Shi'ite militiamen in Diwaniya, south of Baghdad. A suicide car bomb attack on the Interior Ministry in Baghdad

killed 16 people including 13 police and wounded 62, 47 of them policemen. A police officer was killed and two were wounded by a roadside bomb in southern Baghdad. Gunmen killed three policemen and a former Iraqi army officer in separate attacks in Mosul. Two gunmen with a bomb in their car were arrested by police in Mosul. The Iraqi army announced that it had arrested 26 suspected insurgents in the preceding 24 hours countrywide. US military spokesmen revealed that about 100 mostly Shi'ite troops from the southern Maysan province refused to deploy to Baghdad, apparently due to unwillingness to confront fellow Shi'ites.

- **August 29, 2006:** One policeman was killed by a roadside bomb in Kirkuk.
- **August 30, 2006:** A bomb attached to a bicycle exploded in a crowd of men outside an army recruitment center in Hilla, killing 12. Nadia Mohammed, a Justice Ministry director general, and her driver and two bodyguards were killed by gunmen in the western Baghdad Nafaq al-Shurta area. Five policemen were among 21 people wounded by a car bomb at a petrol station in Baghdad. A crowd of men turned away from an army recruitment center in Samawa fought with police in a clash that killed one civilian and wounded nine people, including five policemen. Police battled insurgents in Mosul, wounding four civilians. The commander of US forces in Iraq, Gen. George Casey, said he envisioned Iraqi forces being capable of standing with minimal Coalition support in 12 to 18 months.
- **August 31, 2006:** Retired Lt.-Gen. Wajeeh Thirar Hneyfish, commander of an Iraqi air force base under Saddam Hussein's regime, was killed in Ramadi by unidentified gunmen. Four police commandos died in a bomb attack on their patrol in Baghdad. According to Iraqi television reports, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said that Iraqi forces would take full control of the Dhi Qar province in September and suggested that by the end of the year Iraqis would be "running all but Baghdad and the violent Sunni region of Anbar." One member of the oil ministry's security service was killed and another was wounded by gunmen in a northeastern part of Baghdad.
- **September 1, 2006:** A Saddam regime senior intelligence officer was found shot to death near Dujail, outside of Baghdad. A roadside bomb in central Kirkuk seriously injured three policemen. Three police officers in Baghdad's southern Dora district were killed by a roadside bomb. In Numaniya, south of Baghdad, gunmen stormed a police officer's house and killed him. Figures compiled by the Health, Defense, and Interior Ministries tallied 769 Iraqi civilians killed in August, a drop of 28 percent (the July total was 1,065)
- **September 7, 2006:** After a ceremony today, the Iraqi government will officially take control of its major air, sea and land-based military commands by standing up the Iraqi Joint Headquarters. The relationship between Iraqi and Coalition forces will be spelled out in a formal agreement that provides the Iraqi military authority to employ its forces as needed, while the Coalition continues to assist in training, equipping and supplying.
- **September 11, 2006:** At least 13 Iraqi army recruits have been killed and one wounded in a suicide bomb attack on their minibus in Baghdad, officials said. The attack happened near the Muthenna recruitment centre which has been targeted by insurgents in the past. Describing Iraq as one of the most violent conflict areas in the world, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has warned that there is a "grave danger" of breakdown of the Iraqi State and "potentiality" of civil war
- **September 12, 2006:** In Kerbala, gunmen shot dead a former security officer, Colonel Abbas al-Nuaimi, while he was in police custody for Saddam-era crimes. In Baghdad, one policeman was killed and nine people, including three policemen, were wounded by a roadside bomb. Another Baghdad policeman was gunned down while he was leaving for work. In Mosul, gunmen killed a police captain. The Iraqi army killed two insurgents and detained 84 others in operations conducted across Iraq during the last 24 hours, according to the Defense Ministry
- **September 13, 2006:** Two car bombs targeting police killed 22 people, wounding another 76. The first killed 14 outside Baghdad's traffic police headquarters, a second targeted police guarding an electricity station in the east of the city. Two mortar shells landed on al-Rashad police station in southeastern Baghdad, killing a policeman and wounding two others. Another two policemen were killed when two mortar rounds landed near their station in Baghdad's eastern neighborhood of Mashtal. Three others were injured

- **September 14, 2006:** The deputy prime minister said the government would propose a law next month to disband militias. Interior Ministry forces killed the number-two leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Jaafar al-Liby, in Baghdad along with four militants and captured two others alive, in an operation carried out in the past few days. The Iraqi army killed three insurgents and arrested 14 during the last 24 hours in different cities. Nine people were killed and 26 wounded when a car bomb went off near a police patrol in central Baghdad. Gunmen killed a traffic police Colonel in Baghdad. Ten people were wounded and one killed in clashes between protesters and guards in Diwaniya. The protesters were demonstrating against U.S. forces' storming of an office of followers of Moqtada al-Sadr.
- **September 16, 2006:** In Baghdad, two Iraqi soldiers were killed and three wounded by a bomb. A suicide car bomb killed one civilian and wounded 22 outside a well-fortified police station in southern Baghdad. Iraqi police killed four members of the Albu Baz tribe along with a gunman who attacked them on Friday after they clashed in the city of Samarra. The Albu Baz tribe blamed al Qaeda militants for the attack. Police killed two insurgents after they repelled an attack by them on a checkpoint south of Kirkuk. Two policemen were wounded in the attack. Three policemen were wounded when their vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in Mosul. Police found 47 bodies around the capital Baghdad. The Interior Ministry described plans to fortify exit and entry points into Baghdad to better control access to the capital
- **September 17, 2006:** 24 bodies, tortured and shot dead, were found in different areas of Baghdad. Two policemen guarding electrical infrastructure were killed and three wounded by a roadside bomb in Baquba. Gunmen killed two policemen in Taji. Two Iraqi soldiers and a civilian were wounded by a roadside bomb in central Baghdad. Two policemen were wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in northern Baghdad.
- **September 18, 2006:** Fourteen bodies, tortured and shot dead, were found in different districts of Baghdad. Three border guards were killed and six wounded by a roadside bomb near Kut. Three civilians were wounded by a roadside bomb in Mosul. A man and a child were wounded by several mortar rounds fired at a police station in Mosul. Four policemen were killed when insurgents ambushed them in Mosul. In Tal Afar, a bomber killed himself and 21 others, all but two of them civilians; 19 people were injured. In Ramadi, a car bomb killed 13 police recruits and injured 10. Basra police said they found the body of a counterterrorism unit police officer who had been kidnapped several days ago. Iraqi army killed two insurgents and arrested 36 suspected insurgents during the last 24 hours in different parts of Iraq. The Iraqi army with Anbar province tribal leaders killed 27 insurgents during the last week.
- **September 19, 2006:** A policeman was killed and six people, including four civilians, were wounded by gunmen in Baquba. A bomb attack in Ramadi at the Al-Hurriyah police station killed 13 people. 17 more bodies showing signs of torture and execution were found around Baghdad. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said that Iraq is in danger of sliding into civil war and its government and the international community must do more to pull it back from the brink. Parliament again delayed debate of a bill on federalism after a fresh wave of violence killed 50 people.
- **September 20, 2006:** 35 bodies were found in the last 24 hours in Baghdad. A suicide truck bomb at the entrance of an Iraqi police base killed four police officers, wounding 11 more in southern Baghdad. Three civilians were also wounded. A roadside bomb wounded one Iraqi soldier in Mahaweel. Hameed al-Hilaly, a member of Kerbala's governorate, escaped a third assassination attempt in Kerbala. Two of his bodyguards were wounded. The Iraqi army detained 45 suspected insurgents in the last 24 hours. The Iraqi government has named General Amir Amed Hassun as special envoy on counterterrorism to coordinate with his US and Turkish counterparts
- **September 21, 2006:** The Iraqi army arrested 67 suspected insurgents in the past 24 hours throughout Iraq. Police killed a suicide bomber in Tal Afar. Insurgents killed six policemen and wounded two others in western Baghdad. Gunmen killed three policemen in Baquba. A bomb killed three policemen guarding a local power grid and wounded four in southern Baghdad. Gunmen wounded a policeman and two civilians in western Baghdad. A roadside bomb killed two

Iraqi soldiers and wounded four in Diwaniya. Iraq formally regained control of Dhi Qar province. A total of 38 bodies were recovered by police in Baghdad in the past day

- **September 22, 2006:** Gunmen shot and killed one civilian and wounded two policemen in Kirkuk. One civilian was killed and five people, including two policemen, were wounded by a bomb in Latifiya. Two policemen were killed while defusing a bomb in Iskandariya. Police found 10 bodies, including those of two women, in different parts of Baghdad. Most bore signs of torture and had been shot. Police found two bodies, one beheaded, in a western part of the city of Mosul. Police found a woman's body dumped on the side of the road in the small town of Taza.
- **September 23, 2006:** The Iraqi army captured a regional leader of the al-Qa'ida-linked Ansar al-Sunna group, along with two aides, in a village near the town of Muqdadia. Gunmen killed police Colonel Ismail Jihayan, deputy head of the Salahadeen province police headquarters, in Tikrit. Men at a checkpoint beheaded nine people, including some policemen
- **September 24, 2006:** Today is the start of Ramadan. Iraqi army troops have captured the head of the 1920 Revolution Brigades and seven of his associates in Diyala province. Parliament agreed to set up a committee of 27 members to draft amendments to the constitution, which will also allow a law to create autonomous regions after 18 months. The members of the committee will be named on Tuesday. It will have 12 members from the ruling Shi'ite religious bloc, five ethnic Kurds, four from the main Sunni Arab bloc and smaller numbers of others. The corpse of an Iraqi soldier who had been shot dead was found on Sunday on the main road between Baiji and Haditha. A total of six bombs targeted at police killed 11 people and wounded 35.
- **September 25, 2006:** The Iraqi army arrested 73 suspected insurgents during the last 24 hours in different parts of Iraq. The Iraqi army arrested Zuhair Kasar Saleh, a leader of the Ansar al-Sunna militant group, and a number of his associates in Abu Ghraib district in western Baghdad. British forces have killed Omar Farouq, a top lieutenant of Osama Bin Laden in Southeast Asia, in Basra. Police found 19 bodies in different cities today, including the decapitated head of police lieutenant Sameer Hazim, who was kidnapped on Sunday. 5 bombs incidents involving security forces killed 3 civilians and wounded 19 policemen and 9 civilians. Clashes between gunmen and police killed a civilian and wounded three policemen in Mosul. Gunmen kidnapped Abdul Kareem al-Talgani, the mayor of al-Zuhour district in northern Baghdad, and wounded three of his bodyguards. President Talibani said he would like to have U.S. military bases in his country for an extended period.

XII. Operational Developments During Winter 2006-2007

"Securing the stability of the country has been more difficult than anticipated. Our ability to correctly assess the political, economic and security situation in Iraq has been lacking."

-Admiral William Fallon, Commander of CENTCOM, January 30, 2007.⁶³²

In spite of Iraqi and MNF-I tactical successes during the summer and fall of 2006, the previous chapters have shown that the level of violence continued to climb, and that the MNF-I and Iraqi government strategy for dealing with the insurgency and civil conflict was not working. The ISF and Coalition forces continued to "win" but could not "build" or "hold," and the complex mix of elements shaping the civil war led to rising internal fighting and "cleansing."

In spite of some victories, and progress in some elements of the ISF, it was clear that the situation was growing steadily worse. American and world public opinion reflected a steady drop in support for the war. The November 2006 election gave the Democrats a majority in both houses of Congress, and pressure for the US to withdraw its troops and end the war grew serious for the first time. These developments, coupled to the failures of the Iraqi government discussed earlier, virtually forced the Bush Administration to find a new "strategy" for conducting the war, and a new approach to Iraqi force development.

Key Trends: October-December 2006

Late 2006 witnessed a continuation of the increases in sectarian conflict, and a general slide towards open civil war. Operation Together Forward was clearly a failure, due largely to the inadequacies of the ISF forces involved. The lack of security in Baghdad in turn helped to fuel the insurgency and the ethno-sectarian conflict. The Sunni insurgency continued unabated, however most of the violence affecting Iraqi's was of an ethno-sectarian nature. The steady trickle of Coalition casualties went on, while Iraqi civilian and ISF casualties reached unprecedented levels. Iraq was seen by many as "on the brink."

The pace of ISF development was uneven. There was no quick fix to the severe problems in ISF loyalty and operational readiness revealed during Operation Together Forward. The loyalty and readiness of MOI forces, and in particular the National Police, remained a major concern.

In America, increased attention was placed on the training of the ISF, as it became clear how important capable Iraqi military and police forces were. The Iraq Study Group report put great emphasis on the training of the ISF. As the Bush Administration discussed changes in its Iraq strategy in late 2006, many expected them to include increases in funding or manpower for the training of the ISF.

There were some clear successes in ISF development. By the end of 2006, MNSTC-I reported that it had equipped the Iraqi Army at 100% of its operational requirement. Furthermore, by the end of 2006 force generation goals had largely been met, and official manpower levels of the Iraqi Army were near 100%.⁶³³ In several tough battles, the ISF performed admirably. Although there were vast differences between units, many showed

significant improvements, and the overall trend in the Iraqi Army was of gradual capabilities improvement.

However, myriad problems remained. Although official manpower levels were close to 100% for the Iraqi Army, the actual number of troops showing up to fight each day were significantly lower. Equipment for the Iraqi Army may have been procured by MNSTC-I, but much of it was not reaching the soldiers on the front lines. Furthermore, the Iraqi Army continued to lack heavy forces. Iraqi logistical and sustainment capabilities remained immature.

Iraqi Operational Successes in Early 2007

Examples of operational successes during early 2007 included the following examples:⁶³⁴

- January 2: 1st Iraqi Army Division forces, with Coalition advisors, captured the suspected leader of an insurgent cell in Ramadi. The cell leader was allegedly responsible for trafficking weapons and improvised explosive devices used in attacks against Iraqi civilians and security forces. No civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.
- January 1: Soldiers from the 2nd and 4th Iraqi Army Divisions, with Coalition advisors, detained two suspects during a search for a suspected cell leader in Ash Sharqat, in the northern Salah Ad Din Province. The suspected cell leader was responsible for providing weapons and supplies to insurgents and al-Qaida in Iraq members, which helps them to carry out violent criminal activity against Iraqi civilians and security forces in the area.
- January 4-13: —Iraqi soldiers, with Coalition advisors, discovered several large weapons caches and destroyed insurgent forces throughout the Turki Village area this week. Having cleared over 200 kilometers of terrain, the Iraqi Army, with the support of the Coalition, unearthed approximately 20 weapons caches, killed more than 85 terrorists and detained 25 suspected terrorists. During one mission, Iraqi Army and Coalition forces engaged eight separate small insurgent elements with small-arms fire, mortars, artillery, Bradley fighting vehicles and close air support, resulting in the deaths of more than two dozen insurgents. The operation, which began Jan. 4. with a combined air and ground assault, continues to target insurgent elements that are believed to have tortured and executed more than 40 members of rival tribes in the area in November
- January 8-13: More than 1,000 Iraqi soldiers with assistance from Coalition advisors killed approximately 50 insurgent fighters and captured two dozen more during a week-long operation to clear Haifa Street from insurgent control in Baghdad. Iraqi soldiers swept through Haifa Street to gain control of the Sheik Marouf neighborhood located less than a mile from the International Zone in Baghdad. The soldiers were supported by Coalition ground and air units.
- January 9: Iraqi police and soldiers detained 47 insurgents during Operation Ar Bead in Fallujah. Charges against 31 of the detainees were filed, and charges filed against 16 others are pending. The combined operation was spearheaded by the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army, while Coalition units provided support at the request of the police.
- January 10: A joint operation combining Iraqi national policemen and Coalition forces seized three weapons caches and detained 10 men. The men are suspected of committing sectarian murders and positioning roadside bombs in the Jaza'r neighborhood. The 2nd Battalion, 6th Iraqi National Police Brigade and Coalition forces began the operation by establishing an outer security perimeter, followed by a house-to-house search of the area. The operation was the result of tips from local citizens of possible insurgents and weapons caches in the neighborhood.
- January 15: 8th Iraqi Army Division forces captured the suspected leader of an improvised explosive device cell during operations with Coalition advisors in Hajjan, west of Al Kut.

- January 16: Soldiers from the 1st and 7th Iraqi Army Divisions captured two insurgent cell leaders during operations with Coalition advisors in Karabilah and Karmah. The two are alleged to have smuggled weapons and foreign fighters into Iraq to help facilitate their attacks against Iraqi civilians and security forces.
- January 24: Coalition and Iraqi Army soldiers detained 10 suspects and seized four caches in the Al-Doura district as part of Operation Wolverine Feast. The operation began as witnesses reported seeing several men load a mortar tube and ammunition into the trunk of a car. Iraqi soldier and Coalition advisors were alerted and cordoned off the target area. At the first objective they captured one wanted man with a 82mm mortar system, two AK-47 assault rifles, a 9mm pistol and two hand grenades. A sweep of a second targeted area uncovered six men with 10 120mm mortar rounds. The third cache found contained a 60mm mortar system and various rocket-propelled grenade launchers and RPG rounds. Three men were detained at this location. The last cache contained several RPG rockets and accelerators. The ten suspects detained in the operation are being held for further questioning.
- January 24: A tip from a local citizen to an Iraqi Army unit enabled them to stop an illegal checkpoint in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Ghazaliyah. An unidentified Iraqi phoned Iraqi soldiers stating that a number of men had set up an illegal checkpoint in a southern Ghazaliyah neighborhood. A patrol was dispatched to the area and upon arrival was engaged by AK-47 and pistol fire. The patrol returned fire but was unable to prevent the escape of the terrorists.
- January 26: Soldiers from the 2nd Iraqi Army Division captured the suspected leader of a terrorist bombing cell during operations with Coalition advisors in Mosul. The suspect is alleged to be responsible for coordinating and participating in multiple mortar, small arms and improvised explosive device attacks against Iraqi and Coalition forces.
- January 28: Iraqi police from Najaf discovered a sophisticated plan by a newly identified terrorist group to kill Shi'ite pilgrims and Shi'ite leadership during Ashura planning. Police surrounded a large compound in Kufu, a few miles north of Najaf, early in the morning demanding the group surrender. When the group refused and began attacking the police, the local police commander contacted the Iraqi National Police's Scorpion Brigade and Coalition Forces for assistance. Coalition Forces dropped leaflets encouraging the group to surrender. When that failed, the National Police commander contacted the Iraqi Commander in Chief (the Prime Minister) who ordered that either the group surrender or be disarmed by force. Units of the Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces moved into the compound and immediately were subjected to heavy small arms and machine gun fire. Iraqi Security Forces were able to seize the compound after Coalition close air support was called in. Iraqi officials stated that the battle resulted in 120 confirmed terrorists killed and more than 360 terrorists wounded and captured. The operation, which lasted more than 24 hours, resulted in five Coalition and 4 Iraqi Security Forces casualties and extensive damage to the cult compound. More than 500 Ak-47 assault rifles, 11 complete mortar systems, several heavy machine guns, and rocket launchers were found in the fortified compound's more than 50 buildings.
- January 28: Iraqi soldiers were able to capture multiple terrorists accused of killing, kidnapping, and displacing Iraqi families in a successful operation in Diyala province. A terrorist leader who confessed to the killing of 33 people was also arrested during the operation.
- February 4: Iraqi Army forces killed a reported leader of rogue Jaysh Al-Mahdi violence and criminal activity within Diyala Province during operations near Baqubah. The suspect was killed during a raid by Iraqi forces, and Coalition. The suspect is believed to have facilitated and directed numerous kidnappings, assassinations and other violence targeting Iraqi civilians and Iraqi Police. He is reportedly responsible for several attacks against Coalition and Iraqi Forces in the area. Reporting indicated he was directly linked to rogue JAM leadership in western Diyala Province and Baghdad.

- February 13: Iraqi Special Operations Forces captured a suspected weapons supplier and financier of sectarian violence conducted by rogue Jaysh Al Mahdi cells. The capture occurred during operations with Coalition advisors in Raminiya, in northern Baghdad.
- February 14: Iraqi Army forces killed four armed terrorists in a confrontation in al-Sina'a neighborhood in Ba'qubah. Four others were captured in al-Muqdadiya while emplacing improvised explosive devices.
- February 18: Iraqi Special Operations Forces captured two suspected members of a rogue Jaysh Al-Mahdi militia cell during operations with Coalition advisors Feb. 18 in southern Baghdad.
- February 20: During a combined operation, Iraqi soldiers and their Coalition counterparts targeted individuals in a cell responsible for creating and planting improvised explosive devices and other terrorist activity in Balour, Iraq. The cordon and search operation led the forces from 3rd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition advisors to detain seven suspected terrorists, one of whom is suspected of placing an IED at a cell phone shop in November 2006 which killed 12 people.
- February 24: Iraqi soldiers, in conjunction with Coalition advisors, conducted a cordon and search operation targeting improvised explosive device and insurgent cells in Titten, Iraq.
- February 24: Iraqi Special Operations Forces detained five suspected rogue Jaysh Al-Mahdi militiamen with Coalition advisors in Husayniyah, east of Taji.
- February 26: A Unit from the Iraqi Army, backed by Coalition forces, executed a security siege in al-Ghammas area (al-Nabhanv and al-Shuwarif) and raided several safe houses based on intelligence information which stated the presence of armed groups of the "Heaven's Soldiers" movement, resulting in the capture of 65 suspects. The soldiers also defused an IED.
- February 28: Iraqi army forces dismantled 15 improvised explosive devices in al-Latifi yah, al-Mahmoudiya, al-Youssifi yah, and al-Radwaniyah. During the IED disarming operations, Iraqi soldiers freed a kidnapped child in al-Mahmoudiya and captured two of the kidnappers.

The January 2007 "Surge" Strategy

On January 10th, 2007, President Bush announced a new security strategy for Iraq that attempted to respond to many of the ISF development and effectiveness problems outlined in this report. The new strategy called for a surge of additional American troops to help stabilize the situation in Iraq. The equivalent of five combat brigades, or 17,500 troops U.S. combat troops, was to be sent to Baghdad. A further 4,000 soldiers would be added to Anbar. The deployment of the full 21,500 troops would be dependant upon the Iraqis meeting certain benchmarks, including the sending of adequate Iraqi forces to the capital, and the willingness to carryout operations in Shi'ite neighborhoods and against Shi'ite militias.

The Bush strategy called for adding two brigades and some 7,000 combat troops to the force in Baghdad. This meant raising the 24,000 US troops then in Baghdad to a total of 31,000. Some three additional brigade equivalents were to be added in waves, with around 10,500 more troops slated to arrive in Baghdad in February and March. In March 2007, President Bush announced that an additional 2,200 soldiers, mostly military police and support troops, would be sent to Iraq. The extra troops were sent to help with the expected growth in detainees resulting from the Baghdad security operations.⁶³⁵

Although this surge meant strengthening the Baghdad security forces, it would not be larger than previous troop commitments to Baghdad. There were close to 50,000 US troops in Baghdad during the peak of the fighting in 2004-2005, plus more than two brigades, covering an area about half the size of the one that the US now plans to clear.

At most, the President's plan would provide 41,500. As retired col. Andrew Bacevich noted, "The 'surge' is actually quite small."⁶³⁶

A US Force Build-up Leads the Way

The overall changes in US deployment plans involved retaining and moving forces already in theater as well as adding new forces. Their stated mission is to: "help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods while protecting the local population. These actions will build the capacity available to commanders to 20 brigade or regimental combat teams to assist in achieving stability and security and accelerate Iraqi Security Force development."⁶³⁷

The overall changes in US deployment plans were complicated, since they involve retaining and moving forces already in theater as well as adding new forces, but involve some high capability Army and USMC units:

2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, based at Fort Bragg, N.C., and currently assigned as the call forward force in Kuwait, will move into Iraq and assume a security mission there.

1st Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, Minnesota Army National Guard, will be extended in its current mission for up to 125 days and will redeploy not later than August 2007.

The 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, based at Ft. Riley, Kan., will deploy in February 2007.

Three other Army combat brigades were to deploy as follows:

3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, based at Ft. Benning, Ga., deploys in March 2007.

4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, based at Ft. Lewis, Wash., deploys in April 2007.

2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, based at Ft. Stewart, Ga., deploys in May 2007.

The Marine Corps was to extend two reinforced infantry battalions for approximately 60 days. Additionally, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) remained in Iraq for approximately 45 additional days. Other combat-support and combat-service-support units were to be deployed as necessary once new requirements are assessed. All of these troop increases were contingent upon the Iraqi government meeting vaguely defined benchmarks on security and political cooperation

Iraqis "In Charge" Under US Command

Baghdad was divided into 10 "Security Framework Districts," with an Iraqi brigade, partnered to a US battalion, in each.⁶³⁸ These 10 districts are identical to the older system dividing Baghdad into 9 districts, only with the Karadah district being divided in half.⁶³⁹ Iraq, through the commander of Iraqi forces in the capital Lt. General Abboud Gambar, was to be technically "in charge" of the operation. However, in keeping with historical trends, it is likely that the most challenging missions will be conceived of and carried out by American troops.

Gen. David Petraeus was put in overall command of US forces in Iraq, and was confirmed by the Senate on January 23, 2007. Petraeus, who had directed much of the effort to create a new US Army field manual for counterinsurgency operations, was considered one of the military's foremost counterinsurgency experts. General Petraeus

described his mission: “I plan to ensure that some of our forces locate in the neighborhoods they protect.”⁶⁴⁰

He also noted that the new strategy placed US soldiers in neighborhoods they had previously only sporadically patrolled. The soldiers were to isolate a neighborhood and then secure it, creating a “gated community”⁶⁴¹ of safety and expanding out from there.

General Pace, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, in his testimony to the House Armed Service Committee provided further details of the strategy:

“in each sector, there will be three or four police stations that will serve as the hub of operations from which the forces that are located there -- which will be a mixture of Iraqi army, Iraqi national police, Iraqi local police and U.S. and coalition forces -- from which they will do their daily patrolling, the door-to-door work to let the population know that they're there, to take census-type information and to provide the street awareness and presence that allows security to come to fore. From those stations will be conducted the raids that may be necessary, and from those stations will be the quick reaction forces should some of the Iraqi forces get into trouble.”⁶⁴²

The strategy was modeled to some extent on the success of US operations in Tal Afar. Similar tactics were employed in there in 2004, resulting in large decreases in the level of violence. Col. H.R. McMaster is credited with devising the Tal Afar strategy that has since been expanded to Baghdad.⁶⁴³ The “gated community” approach to counterinsurgency warfare has a long history. It is essentially an update of the “Strategic Hamlet” strategy employed in Vietnam, which was a failure. However, the British successfully employed a similar strategy in Malaya in the 1950s.

The new US strategy called for both increasing US troop contact with Iraqi forces and Iraqi people and their potential vulnerability. American troops had been staying on in relatively secure military bases in and around Baghdad for most of the conflict before 2007. Units would leave for patrols or offensive operations, but would eventually return to the relative safety of their bases. They now were to be in much more intimate contact with Iraqi troops, police, and the Iraqi people, and dependent on the more than 40 ISF “joint security sites.”

The new security plan also increased the chances of US and Iraqi units fighting protracted urban battles. This type of fighting has historically resulted in higher casualties for American forces in Iraq. Protracted urban fighting is generally something most commanders seek to avoid in conventional wars. However, the spiraling violence in Baghdad had left US commanders with little choice but to conduct major operations in urban areas.

The Iraqi Force Component and US Advisory Support

The President’s plan also hinged on the successful cooperation of the Iraqi Security Forces and the addition of three Iraqi Army brigades to Baghdad. The plan called for an increase in Iraqi security force capacity – both size and effectiveness – from 10 to 13 Army divisions, 36 to 41 Army Brigades, and 112 to 132 Army Battalions. There are 42,000 men in these Iraqi forces in Baghdad. Sending in an additional two brigades will add at most 8,000 men, bringing the total to 31,000. “In effect, Bush is counting on Iraqis to pull our bacon out of the fire” stated retired Col. Andrew Bacevich.⁶⁴⁴

The President’s plan called for increasing the embedding of American advisers in Iraqi Army units – partnering a Coalition brigade with every Iraqi Army division, and giving US commanders and civilian’s greater flexibility to spend funds for economic assistance.

General George Casey, commander of US forces in Iraq until January 23, 2007, was explicit about the timing of the “surge” In a briefing to reporters on January 19th, he said that it should be possible within the next 60 days to 90 days to evaluate the effect of putting additional Iraqi and U.S. forces into Iraq's capital. However, as counterinsurgency tactics, in particular winning “hearts and minds,” takes considerable time, it is difficult to see how the strategy could be evaluated in so short a time frame. Gen. Petraeus, Casey’s successor, was less specific about timelines for the security plan.

Lt. General Abboud Gambar was chosen by the Iraqi government to command the overall security plan in Baghdad. He took command of Iraqi forces in Baghdad on February 5th 2007. Gambar was a relatively unknown officer who had not previously worked with American officials. He was chosen over the objections of US General George Casey. Gambar was a commander in the navy during Saddam Hussein’s reign, and was taken prisoner by American forces in the 1991 Gulf War. American commanders were concerned that Gambar would block attempts to arrest prominent members of Shi’ite militias. He had two deputy commanders, a Shi’ite and a Sunni, posted to either side of the Euphrates River in Baghdad.

The strategy announced by President Bush on January 10th also relied heavily on the 30,000 men in the Baghdad police forces. As already discussed, the loyalty of these forces is questionable – at best. These Iraqi forces were to operate from local police stations – conducting patrols, setting up checkpoints, and going door-to-door to gain the trust of Baghdad residents.

The President’s plan established 30 to 40 “joint security stations”, spread across the 10 military districts (or “beladiyah”) in Baghdad. A US battalion of 400-600 men will be embeds in each of the nine Military Districts in Baghdad.... Each “joint security site” was to have at least a platoon of US troops, with another platoon on patrol nearby as backup.

The Shortcomings of ISF Units Deployed to Baghdad

By April 2007, there were three brigade headquarters and nine battalions deployed to Baghdad. The number of IA forces had topped 4000, but the combat strengths of these units fluctuated on a daily basis as they report their present for duty numbers. These units retained a rear detachment at homestation and had about a quarter of the unit on leave at any one time. Lessons learned from previous deployments have been integrated into a “deployability training” concept which involved home station preparation, and deployment to Besmaya Training Center for up to two weeks of training before commitment to combat operations in FAQ.

Two of the three Iraqi brigades being brought into Baghdad were largely Kurdish. By late April, 2007, 2,100 Kurdish troops had arrived in the capital.⁶⁴⁵ These brigades were formed out of the Kurdish Peshmerga militia, and are recognized as some of the Iraqi Army’s best-trained forces. The Peshmerga militia helped to maintain a quasi-independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq in the late 1990’s, fighting the Iraqi army of Saddam Hussein for years. Many of its troops are veterans of that conflict.

The Kurdish brigades had undergone extensive training in urban warfare tactics, expecting to take on the Mahdi army in Baghdad. The commander of one of the brigades slated to go to Baghdad, Brig. Gen. Nazir Assem Korran of the 1st infantry brigade, 2nd

Division, stated that his troops were also being trained in “how the army should act inside a city.”⁶⁴⁶

There were, however, serious concerns about sending two Kurdish brigades to Baghdad (which is mostly Arab) as part of President Bush’s “surge.” Mahmoud Othman, a prominent member of the Iraqi Kurdish Coalition, stated: “There are fears that a fight like this, pitting Kurds against Arabs, is bound to add an ethnic touch to the conflict. I am against the move . . . and there are many in the Iraqi parliament who are against it too.” Anwar Dolani, a former Peshmerga commander and commander of one of the two Kurdish brigades, stated: “The soldiers don’t know the Arabic language, the Arab tradition, and they don’t have any experience fighting terror.”⁶⁴⁷

A lack of Arabic speakers in the Kurdish brigades was only one problem facing Iraqi commanders in Baghdad. There were serious concerns about the loyalty of the Kurdish units. Former US ambassador Peter Galbraith added that the Kurdish fighters “are ultimately loyal not to the national chain of command or the nominal chain of command, but to their political party leaders.”⁶⁴⁸ Protracted urban fighting or a drop in Kurdish political support for deploying the Kurdish units to Baghdad may sorely test the loyalty of the two Kurdish brigades.

Despite these concerns, bringing in Kurdish dominated Iraqi units was seen by the US as the lesser of two evils, as it avoided the sectarian ties of Shi’ite-dominated units. It does, however, remain to be seen how effective the Kurdish units will be in Baghdad. On January 21, the Boston Globe reported that many soldiers in the 2 Kurdish brigades slated to go to Baghdad were deserting. Anwar Dolani, a Kurdish commander, stated: “I can’t deny that a number of soldiers have deserted the army, and it might increase due to the ferocious military operations in Baghdad.”⁶⁴⁹

The sentiments of Ameen Kareem, a deserting Kurdish soldier from one of the brigades, reflect the problems of sending the Kurdish brigades to the capital: “I joined the army to be a soldier in my homeland, among my own people. Not to fight for others who I have nothing to do with.” Another deserting Kurdish soldier, Faram Mohammed, added: “The fanatic Sunnis in Baghdad kill the Shi’ites and vice versa. Both of them are outraged at the Kurds. They will not hesitate to kill us and accuse us of being collaborators with the occupiers.”⁶⁵⁰

According to Deputy Prime Minister Salam Z. al-Zobae, as of early February 2007, Iraq was not even “5- percent” ready to roll out the Baghdad security plan.⁶⁵¹

Initial Developments in “The Surge”

“As we have surged, we find the enemy surging as well”

- Commander Multinational Division-Center and 3rd Infantry Division
Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, May 4, 2007⁶⁵²

In a response to the American buildup, the Mahdi Army Shi’ite militia was ordered by Moqtada al Sadr on January 14th to temporarily lower its profile in Baghdad. The Mayor of Sadr city, Rahim al-Darrajii, stated that a deal had been reached with political and religious groups to keep armed men off the streets, allowing the Iraqi army to be in

charge of security.⁶⁵³ The militia stopped publicly wearing uniforms, hid most of its weapons, and abandoned its checkpoints in the week following Moqtada al Sadr's order.

One Mahdi Army official stated: "We have explicit orders to keep a low profile . . . not to confront, not to be dragged into a fight and to calm things down."⁶⁵⁴ This strategy appeared to be a direct response to the imminent buildup of US forces in the capital. One Mahdi Army official even seemed to tacitly endorse the security plan for Baghdad, stating: ""We will fully cooperate with the government to make the plan successful. If it is an Iraqi plan done by the government, we will cooperate." ⁶⁵⁵ These actions may in part be a response to the perception that the security plan for Baghdad will give US forces more leeway in confronting the Mahdi Army. On January 19th, US and Iraqi forces arrested a top aid to Moqtada al Sadr. An advisor to Mr. al-Maliki, however, denied that the government knew ahead of time about the arrest. ⁶⁵⁶ This may indicate continuing reluctance on the Iraqi government's part to confront the Mahdi Army.

Furthermore, it was unclear whether Sadr's order to stand down demonstrated a genuine commitment to peace, or rather a temporary measure aimed at eliminating rivals. The Security plan for Baghdad risks employing American troops to attack the Sunni insurgents, while the Mahdi Army lies low and out-waits the American troops. According to Suha Azzawi, a professor of political science at Baghdad University, "He's [Moqtada al Sadr] ordered the militias to temporarily leave their positions. They will continue their activities after the crackdown."⁶⁵⁷

By early February, there were already signs of the militia's plan to out-wait the American/Iraqi crackdown. Residents of Sadr City familiar with the Mahdi militia's operations, speaking anonymously, told of weapons being hidden in places like grocery stores, ice cream and soda kiosks, and underground.⁶⁵⁸ Additionally, as reports of internal divisions within the Mahdi Army increased in the winter of 2006-2007, concerns grew that Sadr might use the American forces to selectively attack rival groups within the Mahdi Army itself.

The extent of Sadr's willingness to stand down and support the Baghdad security plan was tested on January 20th. US and Iraqi troops arrested a top leader of the Mahdi Army, Sheik Abdul-Hadi Darraji. "Let the Americans know that in these provocative acts against the Sadr movement they are playing with fire," stated a spokesman for the Shi'ite militia.⁶⁵⁹ However, despite harsh words, there were no retaliatory strikes by the Mahdi army, nor any change in their policy of 'standing down.'

Not surprisingly, Iraqi forces were slow in arriving in Baghdad to carry out the security plan. A senior Iraqi General noted in late January that, "preparations are not complete," perhaps understating the lack of Iraqi preparations somewhat. ⁶⁶⁰ According to local Baghdad commanders, by late January, only 2,000 of the planned 8,000 Iraqi troops had reached Baghdad. Many of the units that did arrive were around half strength, keeping with historical manpower levels of Iraqi units deployed away from their home bases.⁶⁶¹ There were reportedly 22,000 ISF troops already stationed in Baghdad before the security plan of 2007 went into effect, as well as 20,000 police and MOI officers. ⁶⁶²

However, by March 7, 2007, 18 battalions of ISF forces had moved into Baghdad as part of the security plan for Baghdad, (dubbed Operation Imposing Law). Seven of the battalions deployed to Baghdad were only at 55 to 65 % of their end strength, and another 7 battalions were at 65 to 85%. Four battalions were deployed at 95% of their end

strength. While not perfect, these deployment numbers represent a significant improvement over historical manpower rates for units deployed away from their home base.

This improvement in deployment rates was most likely due to policy changes enacted by the ISF after the failures of "Operation Together Forward." In August 2006, the MOD formed a committee to investigate the deployability problem. Among many other problems, it was discovered that deployment rates were low in part because units left some troops home in order to guard their bases. The committee recommended creating: "a battalion from each Iraqi Army Division to serve as the rapid deployment force for that division, and provide incentive pay for soldiers who volunteer to serve in this elite battalion." The committee also recommended using "a four-phase, 150-day deployment cycle that all units complete prior to movement from their home base."⁶⁶³

Partially as a result of the stand-down of the Mahdi Army in Baghdad, and the slow pace of ISF deployment to the capital, "a growing number of Iraqis," according to the New York Times, believed that the security plan for Baghdad had left Shi'ite neighborhoods more vulnerable. A massive bombing in the market of the Sedriya neighborhood of Baghdad, killing 135, on February 3rd, was widely blamed on the shortcomings of the 2007 Baghdad security plan.⁶⁶⁴ Tariq al-Hashimi, the Vice President of Iraq, called on the US to speed up its implementation of the "surge" in Iraq "because people cannot tolerate in fact this sort of chaos and the killing round the clock."

On February 6, 2007, Prime Minister Maliki acknowledged that Iraqi forces were delayed in enacting the security plan. "I feel that we are late. This delay is giving a negative impression and has led some people to say that we have already failed."⁶⁶⁵ However, despite the delays in Iraqi deployments, the Iraqi officers in charge of the plan had all been chosen, and by early February a few new checkpoints were erected. The operational command center officially opened in the Green Zone next to the Prime Minister's office on February 5th.⁶⁶⁶ On February 11th, Maliki publicly vowed to speed the deployment of Iraqi forces to the capital, although it was unclear how he would go about accomplishing this.⁶⁶⁷

The Iraqi government announced that as part of Operation Imposing Law (Operation Fardh al-Qanun in Arabic) all Baghdad residents who had illegally occupied vacant houses were to be evicted. The move was seen as a response to the ethnic cleansing of many large neighborhoods in Baghdad. Again, it was unclear how the government would go about enforcing the order. By early March, 2007, as many as 1,000 families had moved back into their once-abandoned houses in Baghdad. It was unclear whether these families would be quickly forced out again, and a major resettlement of civilians seemed unlikely. Lt. Gen. Aboud Qanbar, on February 13th, announced several measures to restore order as part of Operation Imposing Law, including the closing of the borders with Iran and Syria, a later curfew for Baghdad, and the erection of several new checkpoints.⁶⁶⁸

In another positive sign, the first Joint Security Station opened in Sadr city in early March. The US also announced that by April 20, 2007, 3 "gated communities" were up and running in Ameriyia, Khadra and Adhamiyah.⁶⁶⁹ By early May, 2007, 57 joint security stations had been set up across Baghdad, each staffed by 50 Iraqi soldiers and police officers.⁶⁷⁰

The increase in ISF and American troops in Baghdad, combined with the stand-down of the Mahdi militia, quickly led to a decrease in sectarian killings and civilian casualties in Baghdad. The Ministry of Defense announced on March 14th, 1 month into the Baghdad security operation, that civilian casualties were 265 in Baghdad between February 14th and March 14th, compared to 1,440 for the previous 4 week period. MoD civilian casualty counts usually underestimate civilian casualties by 50% when compared with independent studies.⁶⁷¹ An Associated Press report found 1,586 civilians killed in Baghdad between February 14 and April 14, 2007, compared with 2,871 killed in Baghdad during the 2 months prior.⁶⁷² However, January and early February had witnessed some of the highest civilian casualty rates of the war. , Regardless of the exact numbers used it was clear that a significant reduction in violence had occurred in Baghdad in February and March, 2007.

Despite the drop in violence in Baghdad, the overall levels of violence in Iraq did not fall. A trend emerged in March of attacks shifting from Baghdad to outlying regions. While Baghdad proper saw a lull in casualties and sectarian killings in February and March, the rest of Iraq, and particularly the “belt” of cities that ring Baghdad, all witnessed an increase in violence. Some smaller cities near Baghdad, such as Haswah, began to witness major violence for the first time in years.⁶⁷³ Civilian casualties across the country, fueled by several high profile bombings, climbed to 1,861 in March, from 1,645 in February according to an Iraqi government report.⁶⁷⁴ The Associated Press found 1,504 civilian deaths had occurred outside of Baghdad between February 14 and April 14, 2007, compared with 1,009 killed during the 2 previous months.⁶⁷⁵

In response to the increase in attacks outside of Baghdad, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Mixon, US commander for northern Iraq, requested reinforcements for Diyala province. On March 13, 2007, an Army battalion of 700 soldiers was transferred from Taji to Baqubah to help quell the rise in violence there..

The increase in American operations in Baghdad, combined with the new tactics of the Joint Security Stations and the “gated Communities,” led to an increase in US casualties in the city. The proportion of US combat deaths suffered in Baghdad rose from 24% to 36% for the first month of Operation Fardh al-Qanun.⁶⁷⁶

Sharply contrasting with the American surge, On February 21st, 2007, British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced that 1,600 British troops would be withdrawn from Iraq in the following months. Although not portrayed as a defeat by the British, the withdrawal acknowledges the fact that Southeastern Iraq has long been under the de facto control of SCIRI and Sadr factions. The Iraqi forces that Britain helped create in the area were little more than an extension of Shi’ite Islamist control by other means. The Iraqi police in areas like Basra were part of the problem, rather than the solution, with extensive police operations against Sunnis. The British won some tactical clashes in Maysan and Basra in May-November 2004, but Operation Telic’s tactical victories over the Sadristes did not stop Islamists from taking steadily more local political power and controlling security at the neighborhood level when British troops were not present. Security conditions in the British controlled areas deteriorated in Winter 2006/2007. April, 2007 saw 11 British casualties, the highest monthly total since the invasion in 2003. British forces recorded an average of 20 significant attacks in the 4 provinces under their control during most of 2006. However, this number began to steadily rise

after September, peaking at 90 incidents in February 2007. March and April saw 50 attacks.⁶⁷⁷

XIII. Looking Ahead

There is no way to summarize Iraqi force development in simple terms. Iraq is already in a state of limited civil war, and may well be escalating to the level of a major civil conflict. The current combination of insurgency, Sunni Arab versus Shi'ite Arab sectarian conflict, and Arab versus Kurdish ethnic conflict could easily cause the collapse of the current political structure, leading to a Shi'ite or Shi'ite-Kurdish dominated government, with strong local centers of power, and an ongoing fight with Iraq's Sunnis. It could escalate to the break up of the country, far more serious ethnic and sectarian conflict, or violent paralysis. It has already led to widespread ethnic cleansing in urban areas by militias and death squads of all three major ethnic and religious groups.

Iraqi Force Development if Things Go Well

The US failure to prepare for stability and operations before the war, the uncertain and conflicting policies of the CPA, the failure to anticipate the seriousness of Iraq's ethnic and sectarian tensions, and the delays in taking ISF development seriously until 2005 have all wastes time and resources that the US and Iraq did not have. Mistakes have been made in many aspects of our mission in Iraq, although adaptations have been made to the development of Iraqi security forces, time is working against us.

The odds of success are less than even, and may be less than one in four. At best, the development of effective Iraq forces is only one of the steps necessary to bring stability and security, and rollback the forces that can lead Iraq towards more violent forms of civil war. It is, however, one of the critical elements of success.

There is no way to predict Iraq's future or the exact role Iraqi forces will play over the coming months and years. All that can be predicated is that the US and Iraq must honestly and systematically address each of the current failures in Iraqi force development identified in this report, and do so at a pace that can produce an effective and meaningful result. At a minimum, this means reconfiguring the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of the Interior (MoI), creating Iraqi regular forces designed to fight serious counterinsurgency battles and end civil fighting on a national level, and giving the Iraqi police the aid and advisory resources necessary to make them effective and far less divided and corrupt.

This will take major new amounts of money and more capable US advisors and embeds. It will take 3-5 years, not 18-24 months – although this does not mean enough success to allow major US and allied troop withdrawals cannot come far earlier. In any case, the rate of the ISF's progress or failure will depend at least a much on Iraqi political compromise and conciliation. If that succeeds, much of the pressure on ISF development will ease; if it fails, ISF development will fail regardless.

If things go well, Iraqi forces will steadily improve with time and play a critical role in bring the level of security Iraq needs to make political compromise and conciliation work.

Iraqi forces will largely replace Coalition and other foreign forces, at most seeking aid and limited assistance. Iraq's military will shift its mission from counterinsurgency to defense of the nation against foreign enemies, Iraq's National Police will defend the nation's internal security interests and not those of given ethnic and sectarian groups, deal with counterterrorism rather than counterinsurgency, and focus on crime and corruption. Iraq's other police and security forces will act like the police and security forces of other nations, focusing on crime, local security issues, and providing border security against smuggling and low-level infiltration.

Things can only go well, however, if Iraq can create a working compromise between its sects and ethnic groups, and if US and other outside powers will have the patience and will to support Iraq as it develops into such a state for at least two to three more years of active fighting. Iraq will also need massive additional economic aid to help Iraq unify and develop. Major assistance and advisory programs will be in place until at least 2010, and probably 2015.

Iraqi Force Development if Things Go Badly

The present odds of such success are less than even. In fact, Iraq is more likely to have one of three far less positive futures:

- ***Years of turmoil: No side truly wins.*** The nation does not devolve into all out civil war or open forms of division or separation. The result will be an agonizing extension of the status quo in which real political conciliation fail and every new compromise will be the source of new tensions and fighting. Warring sectarian and ethnic groups struggle for local control and dominance, dividing the country internally by city and governorate.

The Iraqi people lose faith and hope, struggling only to survive. The military, National Police, regular police and other instruments of government become an awkward mix of sectarian and ethnic enclaves and struggles for power and control. The economy will splinter, with a few secure ethnic and sectarian enclaves, but largely dominated by internal tension, insecurity and crime.

The US and other outside powers keep some form of presence in Iraq and seek to maintain a partial state of order, but every effort to produce lasting solutions and true national unity will collapse.

- ***Internal separation, ethnic cleansing, and the façade of unity:*** Civil conflict lead to the de facto separation of the nation into Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, and Kurdish enclaves on either a regional or local basis. The nation maintains the appearance of unity, but the reality is a level of soft and hard ethnic cleansing that divides most governorates on sectarian and ethnic lines, and most cities into sectarian and ethnic neighborhoods.

Most governorates and major cities are dominated by Shi'ite or Kurdish control. An impoverished Sunni enclave will exist in the West, continuing to present at least low-level security challenges. Every "national" decision will be an awkward and unstable compromise. Compromises over key issues like development and modernizing Iraq's energy industry and infrastructure are sectarian and ethnic nightmares with Shi'ite, Sunni, and Kurd all seeking their own advantage and that of their respective enclaves.

The Iraqi people are forced into clear sectarian and ethnic divisions, each tending to aid the extremist elements in each group. The military, National Police, regular police and other instruments of government are divided into clearly defined sectarian and ethnic enclaves. The US and other outside powers withdraw all or virtually all forces, and reduce aid to token levels. Iraq becomes the scene of constant outside struggles for influence between Turkey, Iran, and the Arab Sunni states.

- ***Outright division with at least continuing sectarian and ethnic fighting:*** The central government diminishes to total impotence and/or collapses under the pressure of civil conflict. The softer

forms of sectarian and ethnic cleansing that take place in the previous scenario are replaced by vicious fighting for control of given governorates and cities, mass killings, mass forced relocations and migrations, and the ruthless control of remaining minorities.

Iraq has openly split into three parts, dominated by Shi'ite and Kurdish control in most areas, Shi'ite domination of the central government and most of the country, or a Shi'ite-Kurdish federation of convenience whose reality are the same. An impoverished Sunni enclave exist in the West, struggling to survive, continuing to present at least low-level security challenges and dependent on outside aid from Sunni states. Economic development and efforts to modernize Iraq's energy industry and infrastructure are divided on sectarian and ethnic lines, with the possible exception of pipelines and some limited infrastructure that crosses Shi'ite, Sunni, and Kurdish zones. Export capabilities, ports, and water will all be continuing sources of contention.

The Iraqi people will be forced into clear sectarian and ethnic divisions, each tending to aid the extremist elements in each group. The military, National Police, regular police and other instruments of government will divide along clearly defined and possibly warring sectarian and ethnic lines. The economy steadily declines if it does not implode. The US and other outside powers withdraw all or virtually all forces, and reduce aid to token levels. Iraq becomes the "sick man" of the Gulf, and the scene of constant outside struggles for influence between Turkey, Iran, and the Arab Sunni states.

Looking Ahead

There is no way to summarize Iraqi force development in simple terms, particularly because so much depends in the near term on whether Iraqi efforts at political conciliation, effective governance, and a government presence in the field, do or do not succeed. The ISF development effort cannot succeed without major progress in all of these areas, any more than they can succeed without the creation of effective Iraqi forces and Iraqi popular belief that MNF-I forces will leave as soon as possible and Iraq will be truly sovereign.

It also seems very unlikely that Iraqi force development can ever be truly successful a mutually acceptable long-term security arrangement that can provide for the interests of both countries, and one that prepares the ISF to deal with external as well as internal threats.

If Iraq is to avoid split-up and full-blown civil war, it must do far more than create effective Security Forces. No such effort can succeed without an integrated strategy to forge a lasting political compromise between its key factions: Arab-Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, and Kurd – while protecting other minorities. Political conciliation must also address such critical issues as federalism and the relative powers of the central and regional governments, the role of religion in politics and law, control over petroleum resources and export revenues, the definition of human rights, and a host of other issues. Security cannot come through force alone. The creation of a strong and capable ISF may even do more harm than good if it is used to further narrow, Sectarian goals.

This means that the most important developments in making Iraqi forces effective have nothing to do with the forces themselves, or the nature of the US support and advisory effort. They are rather the ability to create levels of political compromise and conciliation that deprive the insurgency and Iraq's civil conflicts of their popular base. This means actually implementing:

An oil law and technical annexes that assure all major Iraqi factions of an equitable share of today's oil revenues and the future development of Iraq's oil and gas resources.

Giving the Sunnis real participation in the national government at every level, and creating ministries and government structures that fairly mix Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, Kurd, and other minorities.

ReBa'athification and giving a clean slate or amnesty to all who served under the Ba'ath not guilty of violent crimes.

Amending the constitution to create a structure that protects the rights of all Iraqis, and which creates viable compromises, or clearly defers or omits, areas of critical sectarian and ethnic division.

As part of this, working out an approach to federation that will avoid civil conflict.

Creating and implementing local election laws, particularly at the provincial level.

Disbanding or assimilating militias, or creating retraining centers and funding programs to deal with members.

At the same time, US, allied, and Iraqi government policy can only succeed if it recognizes that there is no near term prospect that Iraqi force development will allow major reductions in MNF-I forces without serious risk, and that ISF force development can only succeed if the MNF-I provides active combat support well into 2008 and major advisory and aid support through 2010. The goal must be to diminish the active combat role of US and other Coalition forces as soon as practical, and to refocus US efforts on reinforcing ministerial and institutional development, and on enhancing the role of transition teams. It must not be rushing US forces out as soon as possible without regard to the realities of Iraqi force development and the political conditions and levels of civil violence under which the ISF must develop and operate.

The January 2007 NIE on Iraq stated, without reservation, that a rapid withdrawal of US forces in the next 12-18 months "almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq."⁶⁷⁸ Every element of ISF development still requires years of effort and support, and any successful policy towards Iraq that offers serious hope of avoiding massive increases in sectarian and ethnic violence, and continued insurgency, requires an honest recognition of this fact.

The Bush Administration can only do more harm to Iraqi force development if it continues to exaggerate Iraqi capability, attempts to expand Iraqi forces even more quickly in response to American domestic political, and actually transfers responsibility before Iraqi forces can do the job. As in Afghanistan, the US can only win in Iraq if it is willing to fight a "long war." Rushing Iraqi forces in, and American forces out, is a strategy where "exit" is given far higher priority than success. It may provide a cosmetic rationale to disguise failure and defeat, but it will not prevent it and may well make them happen

To put it bluntly, this means that US government must stop exaggerating about the true nature of Iraqi readiness and the Iraqi force development, and seek bipartisan agreement on a longer-term program based on patience, persistence, actual progress, and adequate resources. As this report describes in detail, there are many very real successes in ISF development, and the ISF has great potential if the Iraqi political system can achieve the level of conciliation that makes a military effort both feasible and effective.

Partisanship and spin, however, can make the all too real possibility of failure a certainty. The nearly meaningless unclassified metrics and reports of success the Administration has presented have done far more to discredit the ISF development effort than build support. Credibility, transparency are the price of any realistic change of victory. Without them, the twilight of this Administration will end with the US choosing the wrong options in Iraq, failing to provide adequate time and resources, and US and allied withdrawals because of political decisions made for the wrong reasons. Like all elements of a successful US strategy, Iraqi force development needs to be based on honesty and realism, not “spin,” unrealistic claims, and political expediency.

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based on experienced local pollsters going from location to location in a statistically relevant number of points throughout the country. The survey was conducted for ABC News, USA Today, the BBC and ARD German TV by D3 Systems of Vienna, Va., and KA Research Ltd. of Istanbul. Interviews were conducted in person, in Arabic or Kurdish, among a random national sample of 2,212 Iraqis aged 18 and up from Feb. 25 to March 5, 2007.

Four-hundred-fifty-eight sampling points were distributed proportionate to population size in each of Iraq's 18 provinces, then in each of the 102 districts within the provinces, then by simple random sampling among Iraq's nearly 11,000 villages or neighborhoods, with urban/rural stratification at each stage.

Maps or grids were used to select random starting points within each sampling point, with household selection by random interval and within-household selection by the "next-birthday" method. An average of five interviews were conducted per sampling point. Three of the 458 sampling points were inaccessible for security reasons and were substituted with randomly selected replacements.

Interviews were conducted by 103 trained Iraqi interviewers with 27 supervisors. Just over half of interviews were back-checked by supervisors – 28 percent by direct observation, 14 percent by revisits and 10 percent by phone.

In addition to the national sample, oversamples were drawn in Anbar province, Sadr City, Basra city and Kirkuk city to allow for more reliable analysis in those areas. Population data came from 2005 estimates by the Iraq Ministry of Planning. The sample was weighted by sex, age, education, urban/rural status and population of province. The survey had a contact rate of 90 percent and a cooperation rate of 62 percent for a net response rate of 56 percent. Including an estimated design effect of 1.51, the results have a margin of sampling error of 2.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

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Conventional shaped charges are constructed with a charge case, a hollow conical liner within the case, and a high explosive material positioned between the liner and case. A detonator is activated to initiate the explosive material to generate a detonation wave. This wave collapses the liner and a high velocity metallic jet is formed. The jet pierces the well casing and geologic formation, and a slow moving slug is simultaneously formed. The jet properties depend on the charge shape, the energy released, and the liner mass and composition. A Monroe-effect shaped-charge warhead can be expected to penetrate armor equal to 150-250% of the warhead diameter."

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