Withdrawal from Iraq
Assessing the Readiness of Iraqi Security Forces

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Iraq and the United States face a critical transition during the period through 2011 and beyond. There is still a war to finish, but this is only part of the challenge both countries face. No one can be certain whether Iraq can achieve a stable level of political accommodation to deal with its internal problems. Iran seeks to expand its influence, and Turkey will not tolerate a sanctuary for hostile Kurdish movements like the PKK. Arab support for Iraq remains weak, and Iraq’s Arab neighbors fear both Shi’ite dominance and what that could mean in terms of Iran’s role in Syria and Lebanon as well as Iraq.

Iraq’s internal politics still create tensions between the U.S. and Iraqi governments over the status of U.S. forces in Iraq and the timetable for U.S. withdrawal. Iraqi politics reflect the fact that public opinion generally sees the United States as an occupying force and wants U.S. and other Coalition forces to leave as soon as possible. As a result, Iraqis will continue to debate the implementation of the Status of Forces Agreement—Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq—and the Strategic Framework Agreement—Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation—including debate on the timing and conditions for U.S. withdrawal, Iraqi jurisdiction over U.S. military personnel and contractors, basing rights, and the U.S. ability to conduct operations without Iraqi approval.

Even if it moves forward toward stability and political accommodation and largely ends the insurgency, it will be extremely difficult for Iraq to develop all of the security capabilities it needs for even the counterinsurgency mission before the full U.S. withdrawal scheduled to take place by the end of 2011. This could force the United States to hand over responsibility to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) before these forces are fully able to do the job. It could also force the United States to withdraw prematurely the U.S. trainers and partner units that the ISF needs to secure the country and defend it from any threat from its neighbors. If the divisive Iraqi internal political debate over U.S. withdrawals, the Strategic Framework Agreement, and the Status of Forces Agreement leads to earlier deadlines, this situation will become far worse.

**Looking toward 2011 and Beyond**

Dealing with these issues will be a critical priority for the United States for at least half a decade to come. The ISF must be brought to the highest possible level of readiness if a 2011 deadline for withdrawal is to involve minimal risk. This will mean dealing with a range of remaining barriers to rapid progress, including eliminating most of the 6-month delay in the U.S. process of arms sales and deliveries—and the 12-month Iraqi delay in planning and executing them. These problems now place important limits on force expansion and improvements in force quality.
At the same time, both Iraq and the United States need to look beyond the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces and 2011. Iraq may well need several years of additional aid from the United States to create an effective army, air force, and navy that can defend the country against any outside threat without U.S. reinforcements. Such developments may well require continuing support from U.S. trainers and possibly some form of U.S. guarantees to provide air support and other “enablers” until Iraqi forces are fully ready. Forming such a transition plan and obtaining an Iraqi-U.S. agreement on its shape, timing, and funding will be a critical step in ensuring Iraq’s long-term security and sovereignty.

There are important areas of consensus. The issue for both Iraq and the United States is not whether the United States should fully withdraw but how it can do so and ensure that the ISF can take over all of the required missions. Both the Iraqi and U.S. governments agree that U.S. forces should not remain a day longer in Iraq than is necessary to develop effective Iraqi security forces as a replacement, help Iraq achieve stable political accommodation, and secure Iraq from its neighbors. The United States wants to leave Iraq as soon as this is feasible. The goal is a fully sovereign and independent Iraq.

There also is nothing wrong with the present goals for a phased withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq as long as both Iraq and the United States treat these goals with some flexibility. There are risks in leaving too early but there are risks in staying too long. It is impossible to be certain that the risks of early withdrawal will be greater than the risks of trying to stay longer than Iraqi politics permit, and setting flexible goals can help both Iraqi and U.S. leaders move forward toward a common role.

Deadlines like 2011 may prove practical—if all goes well in Iraq—particularly if such deadlines do not preclude keeping in place a large number of U.S. military advisers. The U.S. “occupation” is so controversial and unpopular that the cost of staying long enough to do every job right could be higher in terms of Iraqi resentment and political backlash than the security benefits would be worth.

At the same time, both sides need to be realistic about the speed with which they can act. It is not a good idea to bet a country—and the outcome of a war—on the strategic equivalent of filling an inside straight. There are good reasons to extend the U.S. military and advisory presence at steadily diminishing levels until Iraq has developed security forces that are fully ready to take over key missions without U.S. support, and until Iraq has achieved a greater degree of stability.

The Need for Continued Partnership in Developing Effective Iraqi Forces

There is a clear need for the kind of continued Iraqi and U.S. partnership that puts Iraq in the lead as soon as possible. Creating effective Iraqi security forces that can defeat the insurgency, provide national defense, and serve the nation—not sectarian or ethnic interests—is critical to Iraq’s future. The key to success will be realistic and fully resourced plans for the development of the Iraqi Security Forces, developing realistic measures of ISF capability, and carefully reviewing plans for U.S. withdrawals to make sure they reflect the progress various elements of the ISF have actually made and the level of overall security, stability, and political accommodation in Iraq.
Realism is another key to success, and Iraqi and U.S. leaders need to be careful about exaggerating Iraqi capabilities and the speed with which the United States can safely withdraw its forces and advisory teams from Iraq. The Iraqi Security Forces are still very much a work in progress. U.S. forces still play a critical role in developing effective Iraqi forces, providing stability in areas with deep sectarian and ethnic tensions, and helping Iraq achieve political accommodation and more effective governance. If at all possible, U.S. withdrawals need to be “conditions-based,” not tied to political timelines.

Iraq needs equal realism. Iraq’s internal politics and the debate over the Iraqi-U.S. Strategic Framework Agreement and Status of Forces Agreement have led many in Iraq to ignore these realities. It is important to remember that both Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, the head of the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) advisory effort from July 2007–July 2008, and the Iraqi minister of defense, Abdul Qader al-Obeidi, have stated that Iraq’s security forces were unlikely to be able to take full responsibility for internal security before 2012. The analysis in this report indicates that this may still be the case.

Unfortunately, the political and media debates over the SOFA, Strategic Framework Agreement, and U.S. withdrawals that have taken place since the summer of 2008 have shown that many Iraqi and U.S. politicians still seem to be unaware of how much remains to be done. Both Iraqis and Americans need to understand the level of incremental progress that Iraqi forces have actually made and how far they still have to go.

The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraqi cities on June 30, 2009, was indeed an important milestone in the development of a sovereign and stable Iraq. Yet this withdrawal may fuel an inflated view of the ISF’s capabilities. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki stated on June 30 that “the national united government succeeded in putting down the sectarian war that was threatening the unity and the sovereignty of Iraq,” as if the ISF had accomplished this on its own.

ISF capabilities are steadily improving in every area and Iraqi forces are experiencing growing success in combat. But the analysis that follows shows that they still have serious flaws and face major uncertainties. Furthermore, ISF capabilities need to be judged in the broader context of the risk of sectarian and ethnic tensions and conflicts and the need for much greater progress in national political accommodation.

Correcting the Problems in Iraqi Security Forces in Detail

There is also a need to keep the Iraqi-U.S. effort firmly grounded in the realities emerging in the field. A detailed examination of both the broad challenges affecting the ISF and the progress to date in each major force element shows that there are still grave problems in the quality and unity of the ISF, problems that are compounded by Iraq’s sectarian and political divisions and its slow movement toward political accommodation. Political rhetoric often makes “bets on the come”; it

also often loses the bet. Iraq still faces a large number of risks and problems where a U.S. military presence does more to stabilize the situation than destabilize it, and where both Iraqi and U.S. leaders will need to be careful and realistic about how quickly they can move.

Creating Truly National Forces

Iraqis need to pay particular attention to the fact that the best way to both serve the nation and protect given sectarian and ethnic groups is to create truly national forces that all Iraqis can trust. No faction can really “win” by dominating the security forces. Everyone will lose as a result of the divisions, weakened governance and development, and risk of new forms of violence that will follow.

These issues cannot be solved by rhetoric and denial. They will need constant effort and should be given the highest priority, particularly after the competition to win the next national election is over and Iraq’s leaders can concentrate fully on the national interest:

- Although Iraqi security forces are performing with increasing effectiveness, they reflect many of the internal divisions that threaten Iraq’s stability and security. Iraq made progress toward more effective governance in its January 2009 local and provincial elections. However, those elections also exposed the still-serious ethnic and sectarian divisions and tensions throughout the country, some of which are reflected in the ISF.

- Kurdish-Arab tensions remain a critical problem. As yet, there is no agreed dividing line between Kurdish areas of control and the control of the central government. The Kurdish Regional Government is a de facto autonomous region, but there is no clear constitutional or legal definition of this autonomy. Major divisions remain over the status of Mosul, Kirkuk, and the role of Kurdish security forces and the role of Kurds within the regular ISF.

- Sunni-Shi’ite tensions are an equally serious issue, compounded by the uncertain future of the Sons of Iraq and efforts to increase the Sunni share of the ISF, along with the challenges Iraq still faces in eliminating the sectarian character of some elements like the National Police. Furthermore, the Iraqi government’s continued refusal to incorporate large numbers of the Sons into the ISF could lead to a serious confrontation between the Awakening movement and the central government.

- Sunni-on-Sunni tensions could divide the ISF, as could Shi’ite-on-Shi’ite power struggles. The Mahdi Army has been sharply weakened since the battle of Basra, but cadres and key elements still exist, and at least some elements of the ISF may be loyal to Sadr. Similarly, some elements are dominated by former members of the Badr Brigade. These problems have been compounded by growing rivalries between Prime Minister Maliki’s Al Dawa Party and the larger Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, led by Abdul Aziz al-Hakim.3 Shi’ite unity is steadily fragmenting in the wake of the local/provincial elections in January 2009, and the prospect of new national elections in late 2009 or early 2010 will likely cause further divisions among Shi’ites.

The problems the ISF face in the future may be shaped more by the mix of Arab-Kurd tensions, problems in dealing with the Sons of Iraq and Sunni expectations, and Shi’ite-on-Shi’ite ten-

3. Also known as Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (ISCI) and previously known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)). Sometimes referred to by its militia, which has been renamed the Badr Organization, having previously been called the Badr Corps.
sions between the Sadr faction and Maliki’s Al Dawa and the ISCI, than by the diminished threat posed by Al Qa’ida in Iraq.

**Developing the Necessary Force Strength and Force Quality for the Counterinsurgency Mission and for National Defense**

These lingering sectarian and ethnic issues will take years to resolve, and ISF capabilities will be heavily shaped by the future success or failure of Iraqi political accommodation. At the same time, they are only part of the story. As this report shows in depth, there are still serious qualitative problems in all elements of the ISF. For example, there are major shortages of qualified officers and NCOs, and Iraqi Army forces are still in the process of a major expansion. The number of battalions that can operate on their own continues to increase, as do capabilities at the brigade, division, and rear area support level. Nevertheless, they will need U.S. partner units; embedded advisers; help with logistics and sustainability; artillery and armor support; air combat and helicopter support; and support in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) for at least several years to come.

Creating sustainable, effective, and affordable national defense capabilities remains a major challenge for both Iraq and the United States. Half a decade after the fall of Saddam, there still is no clear plan for the future structure of Iraqi military forces that defines the role the United States will play in making Iraq strong enough to defend its own sovereignty.

Iraq is only beginning to create the kind of armored, artillery, armed helicopter, and other “heavy” combat units it needs to fully defend itself. The Air Force and Navy still do not have clear procurement plans to acquire the combat systems they need. They are making real progress, but they remain cadres that are years away from becoming mature forces. How many years? Once again, there still is no agreed plan to make them into the kind of forces Iraq needs to deter its enemies and defend its interests.

The Iraqi Air Force only began to order small numbers of modern combat aircraft in mid-2008, and these will not be ready for years. Iraq has no modern surface-to-air missile defenses. It has only a token Navy. These shortfalls are compounded by serious problems in mobility forces, ISR and battle management assets, and the resources needed for combat logistics and sustainability.

The United States does not need to help Iraq rebuild the grossly inflated force structure it had under Saddam Hussein, but it has a major strategic interest in making Iraq fully capable of deterring and defending against its neighbors. It also has a critical political and diplomatic interest in showing it is fully committed to supporting Iraq in reaching these goals in ways that are public, that ordinary Iraqis can understand, and that make clear to both Iraq and the region that the United States has never intended to stay an occupation power or play some form of neocolonial role.

**Developing Forces to Meet Civil Needs and Establish a Rule of Law**

Creating Iraqi military forces that can fully replace the United States is only one of the challenges involved in creating an effective ISF. Iraqi instability is driven by far more than politics. A lack of governance, rule of law, essential and government services, and government spending helps create further sectarian and ethnic problems for the ISF, as well as forcing the ISF to deal with high levels of crime and corruption. It is still more dangerous to be a member of the Iraqi police than to be
an Iraqi soldier, and police support and facilities are inadequate. Even where sectarian and ethnic issues are not a major factor, the police still tend to be passive unless paid to act, and to force confessions rather than investigate and gather evidence.

If Iraq is to make the transition from the defeat of insurgent movements and militias to stable political accommodation, it needs effective police forces and local rule of law to go from “win” to “hold,” and government services and local development and economic activity to go from “win and hold” to “win, hold, and build.”

It is not clear when this will happen; the Iraqi police are making substantially less progress than the Iraqi regular forces. There was no “year of the police” in 2007 or in 2008. The United States is still experimenting with how to train and equip the police and other security forces, and there are major shortfalls in police and other Ministry of Interior advisers, Iraqi leaders, equipment, and facilities. Creating a clear plan to ensure that Iraqi police forces and a local rule of law become effective will be a critical priority for action in 2009 if a 2011 deadline for withdrawal is to involve minimal risk.

The Interaction between the Development of Iraqi Security Forces and Solving the Broader Problems in Promoting Stability

Security forces are only part of the issues involved in shaping conditions-based U.S. withdrawals. As has been touched on earlier, Iraq’s successes during the course of 2008, local and provincial elections in 2009, and the prospect of national elections have created a new political climate in Iraq. The Shi’ite-dominated government now feels far less dependent on U.S. aid and military support and freer to ask for rapid U.S. withdrawals. But this is only part of the story.

The ISF cannot succeed without political accommodation; political accommodation cannot succeed without the right ISF.

The awkward reality is that an Iraq-U.S. failure to properly manage U.S. withdrawal and the creation of effective Iraqi forces is now at least as serious a threat to Iraq’s future stability and security as any internal or outside threat. Both Iraqi and U.S. leaders need to be more realistic about the real glue necessary to bind Iraqis together into some form of stable political accommodation. Elections are important, but money and oil revenues are at least equally important and are the prize in Iraqi politics. Iraq is making slow progress in using its money, but it has no oil law, no accepted plan to develop its resources, and no ability as yet to spend on the overall development of its petroleum and electricity sectors.

The Shi’ite coalition that won the last election is breaking up, and every major Shi’ite party and political faction is now jockeying for national, regional, and local power. In the process, each is reacting to the unpopularity of the U.S. presence, the desire of Iraqis to reassert full sovereignty, and the need to distance themselves as much as possible from the United States. Iranian influence has helped exacerbate these tensions, as have U.S. mistakes in respecting Iraq’s sovereignty and in

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controlling the actions and abuses of U.S. forces and U.S. contractors. The result is growing pressure for U.S. forces to leave as soon as possible, for a degree of Iraqi control and jurisdiction over U.S. operations and forces that the United States may be unable to accept, and for an effort to assert Iraqi operational control over every aspect of military operations. It is also a climate that Iran has exploited with considerable success in trying to prevent Iraqi acceptance of a workable Status of Forces Agreement and to push the United States out of Iraq as soon as possible.

Iraqi Sunnis are more ambiguous about the future role of the United States. Public opinion polls have shown since 2003 that the vast majority of Iraqi Sunnis opposed the U.S. invasion and supported military action against U.S. and Coalition forces. The polls have shown that Iraqi Arab Sunnis and Shi’ites share a common desire to see U.S. forces gone as soon as possible. At the same time, U.S. cooperation with Sunni tribal groups like the Sons of Iraq during 2007 and 2008 persuaded many Sunnis that the United States was not anti-Sunni and provided a critical counterbalance to Shi’ite domination of the central government and Iraq. There is no Arab Sunni support for a lasting U.S. presence in Iraq; there is Arab Sunni fear about what Arab Shi’ites will do once the United States cannot provide that counterbalance.

Iraq’s Kurds are the only group that has consistently supported both the U.S.-led invasion and a longer-term presence for U.S. forces. That support, however, is closely tied to the perception that this is the best way of guaranteeing a maximum degree of Kurdish autonomy, limiting Turkish military incursions to deal with the PKK, and securing Kurdish areas against Arab and minority control or power. Kurdish ambitions in terms of territory, control over oil resources and revenues, and political power also present major problems for the United States. They threaten new ethnic power struggles and violence, and seek to tie the United States to the interests of a minority rather than to Iraq as a nation.

The Iraqi political process presents further problems. Iraq’s local and provincial elections in January 2009 have already revealed a growing series of political struggles at the local and national level. National elections, although so far unscheduled, should take place in late 2009 or early 2010. Meanwhile, the winners of the local and provincial elections are already beginning to expand their political power and influence. This is almost certain to accelerate as the national elections draw near.

These political struggles are creating new tensions between Iraq’s sectarian and ethnic groups, and there will be new intra-Shi’ite and intra-Sunni power struggles as well. These struggles already have led to growing rivalry between all of the major Shi’ite parties in the central government and have cast doubt on the strength of the main Sunni parties. Neither Iraq’s exile-party-dominated central government nor its national Sunni parties have ever faced truly competitive and fully democratic elections where Iraq’s people get to vote for more than closed lists and largely unknown politicians.

Several key aspects of Iraqi politics could turn violent in ways that threaten the development of the ISF and create major uncertainties about the timing and nature of U.S. withdrawals: the Sadr movement and JAM; the Sunni Sons of Iraq; and the Kurdish, Arab, and minority factions along the ethnic fault line in the north. Major problems also still remain in mixed areas, particularly Baghdad, Diyala, and the greater Kirkuk and Mosul areas. Moreover, Al Qa’ida in Iraq has shown that it can sustain its past levels of potentially destabilizing suicide bombings in spite of its defeats and the reductions in virtually every other kind of attack.
The ISF must be shaped in ways that are affordable and sustainable.

Iraq faces an international financial crisis at a time when it still has vast numbers of unemployed and underemployed young men. There is no viable business sector or free market, and virtually all job creation comes from government spending on either the security forces or civil service and government-dominated industries. It also cannot count on the high oil prices and export revenues that eased its transition from aid to self-funding in 2008.

The full impact of these revenue problems may not yet be known, because Iraq’s problems in managing its finances and budget remain so serious. The limited data available indicate that the flow of money allowed only limited spending in key provinces like Anbar, and that the critical oil and electricity ministries had to count on “advances” for maintenance and development spending in 2008 that might not be spent until 2009 or beyond.

Iraqi Force Development and Conditions-based Withdrawals

A continued U.S. troop presence is not the answer to Iraq’s internal political divisions or to the lack, or mismanagement, of government spending. However, a combination of U.S. help in enforcing stability, coupled with the presence of civilian U.S. advisers, is potentially critical to assisting and encouraging Iraq to spend its money. U.S. influence has so far proved vital in pushing Iraq’s leaders to spend in ways that show all factions they can get a fair share, and in buying time for the post-election mix of central, provincial, and local government officials to work out a practical way to spend their budgets.

None of these points means that the United States should not agree to Iraqi efforts to set potential goals for withdrawal, or that 2011 is necessarily a bad goal. Neither the United States nor Iraq have reason to want U.S. forces to stay any longer than necessary, and creating a joint set of pressures for the United States to leave as soon as possible is likely to be more constructive than destructive.

At the same time, it is not enough to sign agreements that call for cooperation in vague and general terms. Both Iraq and the United States need to act now to develop far clearer plans for such a transition, determine what goals are really feasible, and be prepared for problems and delays. Both sides need to be careful in managing exactly how fast and when given elements of U.S. forces leave. U.S. forces may not be popular, but they do have a stabilizing effect that helps damp down the risk that these power struggles may turn violent. Their stabilizing effect is also likely to increase during the critical transition period involving elections and political accommodation between 2009 and 2011 if it is clear to Iraqis that the United States is really going to leave and that their own forces and government are really going to take over.

On the one hand, setting broad targets for U.S. withdrawal can help. On the other hand, enforcing the wrong targets can push out U.S. forces and influence too quickly if things do not go smoothly. If things go wrong, or there are delays, a year or two more of a limited U.S. presence might make all the difference.

It is critical to remember that money, governance, and government services are the critical “build” element in “win, hold, and build.” Until Iraq is successful in these areas, Iraq and the United States need to be as cautious about eliminating a stabilizing U.S. presence as they need to
be about eliminating U.S. advisers, embeds, and partner forces before Iraqi security forces and the 
rule of law are ready. Joint, real-world U.S. and Iraqi planning and cooperation to achieve these 
goals will be just as high a priority for the next administration(s) as creating effective Iraqi forces.

Iraqi and U.S. leaders need to make most of the details of their plans unclassified and actively communicate them to the legislatures, political leaders, media, and people of Iraq and the United States. Iraqis need to understand how fast the ISF can and cannot develop. They need to believe that the United States has no intention of maintaining even an advisory or support presence except as an honest response to the desires of the Iraqi government and the Iraqi people, and that the United States really is willing to totally withdraw all of its forces.

Iraqis need to see that progress in creating fully independent Iraqi security forces is occurring as rapidly as is feasible—given the security situation and speed with which the ISF can be made effective. They need to see force plans that show that the United States is not favoring any sect or ethnic group and is steadily letting Iraq take charge of the force development effort. Americans need to see that there is a clear endgame that can result in success and in an end to a U.S. combat presence and the spending of U.S. resources.

Americans need to understand just how sensitive Iraqis are to what many see as an unjust occupation, and that many Iraqis still see the U.S.-led invasion as unjustified and think that the United States intends to stay in Iraq and/or seize control of Iraqi oil. They also need to understand that stability in Iraq cannot be achieved simply by setting rigid deadlines for U.S. withdrawals or imposing unrealistic demands for Iraqi progress and for reducing U.S. aid and the U.S. military and civil advisory efforts.

The result should be a “conditions-based” approach to dealing with real-world problems and progress that takes advantage of the provisions calling for Iraq and U.S. security cooperation in Article 27 of the Status of Forces Agreement and the Strategic Framework Agreement. If all goes well, the United States should be steadily able to phase out its combat forces and then remove its entire military presence if this is what Iraq desires. Alternatively, withdrawing all combat troops will allow Iraq to retain a limited amount of U.S. air, naval, and ISR support, as well as teams of U.S. advisers until the ISF is fully ready.

Under other conditions, a slower pace of U.S. withdrawals might lead to more Iraqi political accommodation, allow the pace of development to increase, and give Iraqi forces time to become fully capable of defending the country without U.S. support. If Iraq does need the United States to provide a stabilizing presence, the delays in reducing U.S. troops will almost certainly be limited. The United States cannot intervene in an Iraqi civil conflict; all it can do is provide a temporary stabilizing presence. If there is any delay in total U.S. withdrawal— as distinguished from temporary slowdowns—the difference at most is likely to be full withdrawal between some point in 2011 and some point in 2013. Furthermore, such a conditions-base scenario will still see Iraqis taking more control, and the ISF growing in capability, with each passing month.

Indeed, Iraqi politicians may be warming up to this approach. Despite his increasingly nationalistic tone in the run-up to Iraq’s national elections, Prime Minister Maliki indicated in July 2009 that keeping U.S. personnel in Iraq after the 2011 deadline may prove necessary. Maliki stated that the Status of Forces Agreement would “end” the American military presence, but that “nevertheless, if Iraqi forces required further training and further support, we shall examine this
at that time based on the needs of Iraq. . . . The nature of that relationship—the functions and the amount of [U.S.] forces—will then be discussed and reexamined.”

**Washington Needs to Join the Country Team in Focusing on the Strategic Framework Agreement**

Finally, the United States needs to look at its own policy priorities in dealing with the ISF and every aspect of U.S. policy in Iraq. Many Americans are turning away from U.S. investment in Iraq as if the task was simply how to leave. The United States will be judged far more by the way we leave Iraq and what we leave behind than by the way we entered Iraq and how we fought the counterinsurgency campaign. Its goal should be to create an Iraq that is both fully independent and secure on a lasting basis.

This means creating a form of strategic partnership that can contain Iran without provoking it. It means sustaining the kind of relations with Iraq that can help build a nation that is wealthy and secure enough to assume there will be no further crises with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It means a continuing effort to help create an Iraq that bridges the sectarian tensions in the Arab world rather than becoming another source of extremism or a proxy to Iran or any other power. It means helping Iraq become a state that reassures the Arab Sunni states rather than one that helps lead to regional struggles between those states and Iran to win influence over Iraq’s Sunnis and Shi’ites.

A successful implementation of the Strategic Framework Agreement is vital to creating a new and critical source of increased oil exports, as well as providing the revenues to both improve the lives of Iraqis and provide the financial “glue” that can help unify them. This is vital to bringing stability to a part of the Gulf that has been a source of conflict and tension since 1979.

Both the diplomatic and military sides of the country team in Iraq already put the proper focus on these issues and on making the Strategic Framework Agreement a central part of U.S. policy, rather than simply focusing on “responsible withdrawal.” It is not clear, however, that there is the same understanding in Washington that the Strategic Agreement is not simply a cover for U.S. withdrawal, but a way of shaping U.S. relations with Iraq that can help develop a strong and independent nation in the Gulf.

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Although this analysis focuses on the current and future challenges in developing Iraq’s security forces, it is important for Americans to consider why the Americans and Iraqis face the present force level challenges, the level of American responsibility for these challenges, and the lessons that the United States should learn for the future. It is far too easy for Americans to focus on Iraq’s mistakes and problems and to ignore the role that the United States played in creating the tensions that now make effective cooperation so difficult.

Historians will debate one key issue indefinitely into the future: whether the United States should have led a coalition to war in the first place. There is, however, no serious debate over the fact that the Bush administration made serious grand strategic mistakes in planning and executing the war once it chose to fight. The administration did not make a credible assessment of the risks in going to war, and did not properly plan for the stability operations and nation-building activities necessary to transform the defeat of Saddam Hussein’s military forces and his fall from power into any form of stable strategic or grand strategic success. The administration’s intentions may have been good, but the transformational goals and ideology-driven nature of its actions were decoupled from reality.

This was not the fault of the U.S. intelligence community or of the interagency process. Career diplomats and civil servants, intelligence analysts, and military professionals warned again and again of the perils of insurgency and armed nation building in the period leading up to the war. Their warnings were not perfect or prophetic; such warnings never are. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the Bush administration went to war without meaningful plans that looked beyond the fall of Saddam Hussein. Key leaders such as President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld—and a host of their political and ideological supports inside and outside of government—chose to ignore and suppress advice and warnings about the course of such actions.

America’s political leaders then took years to fully recognize the cost of these mistakes and go from denial and underreaction to realism, making the proper changes in policy and plans, providing adequate forces, and taking the initiative against the insurgency. Responsibility begins with a nation’s leaders, and the grim fact remains that their names are written invisibly on every grave and body bag that has followed. These leaders must take personal blame for scale of today’s problems in Iraq.

These mistakes are more than a matter of past history; they have direct relevance to the creation of effective Iraqi security forces and the overall effort to provide Iraqi stability and security. Iraq’s leaders have made many mistakes of their own, but the insurgency, the militias, Iraq’s internal divisions, and problems such as Iranian influence would never have presented the past or
present level of challenges if the United States had planned for stability operations and had made an immediate effort to provide Iraq with aid in counterinsurgency, governance, the rule of law, and economic development.

Had the United States planned ahead, Iraqi resentment and anger would never have reached its present level. It would have been far easier to build on the base of Iraq’s prior military development, regardless of the massive damage to Iraqi military forces during the conventional fighting in 2003. Iraqi military forces would have been strong enough to take the initiative long before mid-2007. The advice of U.S. military professional about the need to create effective Iraqi forces would have been acted on years earlier.

**Shaping the Future: U.S. versus Iraqi Force Levels**

It is important to keep these problems in context. For all of the tensions between them, Americans and Iraqis share several common goals. Both want to see the United States withdraw as soon as Iraq can defend itself and as soon as Iraq can reach the level of political accommodation needed to provide both stability and security. Both want Iraqi forces to grow and be effective, and both want Iraq to take over the burden of funding them.

*Figure 1.1* shows that Iraq is already making major progress towards developing forces of the size that it needs to take over the counterinsurgency mission, and defend the nation. It illustrates that U.S. forces have already declined since the height of the “surge,” and changes that are far more serious are under way. The United States is already closing many of its bases. Its combat forces withdrew from Iraqi cities by June 30, 2009, and all combat forces are scheduled to leave Iraq by mid-2010. If these withdrawals proceed on schedule, U.S. forces will be reduced to a total of 50,000 and to a strength of six Advisory Assistance Brigades. All U.S. forces, other than a possible advisory presence, are scheduled to leave Iraq by the end of 2011.

The remaining U.S. forces are already letting Iraqi forces take the lead in fighting insurgents like Al Qa’ida in Iraq. At the same time, U.S. forces are still critical to training and supporting Iraqi forces in the field and helping to secure large parts of the country against sectarian and ethnic violence. Accordingly, the key question is how soon and how safely can U.S. forces turn the security mission over to Iraqi forces.

The trends shown in Figure 1.1 would have been very different if the United States had not made so many mistakes in Iraqi force development during the years following the fall of Saddam Hussein. One can argue whether the decision to disband Iraqi forces soon after Saddam’s fall really altered Iraqi security capabilities. So much damage had been done to Iraqi facilities and equipment, so many had deserted, and so many forces had disbanded themselves that this was probably not—in itself—a critical decision.

What was far more important was the failure to provide pensions, careers, or financial support for the officers and NCOs that had served in the Iraqi forces, and to reach any credible decision about how Iraq’s forces should be rebuilt. The United States and its allies failed to provide security for Iraq and failed to show respect for the many Iraqi military who had served their country without serving Saddam Hussein. They did not show Iraqis that Iraq would be given back a key aspect of its sovereignty, and they did not show them that Coalition forces would depart as soon as possible. They provided no picture of how Iraq’s former military and security personnel would be treated and brought into the post-Saddam political and security process.
The detailed history of U.S. efforts to create Iraqi security forces—and the mistakes made during this process—has been explored in two previous studies: *Iraqi Security Forces: A Strategy for Success* and *Iraqi Force Development: Conditions for Success, Consequences of Failure*. It is also documented in detail in reporting by the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR), *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. The lack of meaningful U.S. plans is also reflected in the slow increase in force goals for the Iraqi Army and police, as shown in Figure 1.3. The extent to which the growth of Iraqi forces has been reactive and driven by the increase in tension and violence is shown in Figure 1.4. It is also reflected in the growth of Iraqi forces as shown in Figure 1.5.

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MoD end-state requirements:

- 2003: The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) envisioned three light motorized divisions over a period of several years that were designed for border defense. These were to be built from the ground up and gradually become heavier, mechanized divisions, with the (vague) longer-term goal being the creation of 6–9 divisions over a period of five years or more.¹
- December 2003: Army 40,000; National Guard 40,000 ²
- September 2004: Army 33,589; National Guard 61,904 (forces merged in January 2005) ³
- July 2005: ~102,000 total MoD ⁴
- October 2005: 130,000 ⁵
- May 2006: 137,000 ⁶
- October 2006: 161,000 (prime minister’s expansion initiative) ⁷
- June 2007: 199,000 ⁸
- December 2007: 271,000–278,000 total MoD. 261,000–268,000 Iraqi Army (IA) personnel; to 5,000 in the Iraqi Air Force; 1,500 in the Navy; and 4,000 special operations forces. (This expansion is due to the prime minister’s expansion plus three additional divisions, two of which are Kurdish.) ⁹

Iraqi Police end-state requirements:

- December 2003: 40,000 ¹⁰
- January 2004: 71,000 ¹¹
- February 2004: 75,000 ¹²
- May 2004: 89,369 ¹³
- September 2004: 135,000 ¹⁴
- October 2005: 195,000 ¹⁵
- May 2006: 188,000 (merger with Iraqi highway police caused decrease) ¹⁶
- March 2007: 194,800 ¹⁷
- September 2007: 297,000 ("The MoI has hired a significant number of police beyond those trained by MNSTC-I, mainly as a result of pressure from provincial and local governments that want additional police in their jurisdictions." ¹⁸)
- December 2007: 307,000–347,000. (The MoI force expansion is driven by increases in police authorizations requested by several provinces and by the creation of auxiliary police forces.) ¹⁹

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Notes to Figure 1.2:

2. Ibid., 124,125.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
7. Anthony Cordesman with Adam Mausner, _Iraqi Force Development: Conditions for Success, Consequences of Failure_ (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2007), 33. “On October 31, Defense Minister Abdul-Qadir announced at a Baghdad news conference that Iraq would expand the army beyond previously planned limits. He said the expansion was done in consultation with General Martin Dempsey and General Casey. "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 and that it would expand the Army by the equivalent of eight brigades (approximately 18,700 soldiers). Major General William Caldwell supplemented that briefing on November 2, 2006." DOD also reported in its March 2007 Quarterly Report: "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.”

8. DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2007, 37. This figure was supplemented in the DOD March 2007 Quarterly Report to Congress, 27: “Prime Minister’s Army Expansion Initiative. In consultation with the U.S. Government, the GOI [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 GoI initiative also came with fiscal resources from the MoD budget.”

9. DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, December 2007, 30: “The increase in authorized MoD and MoI forces’ end-strength from 389,000 personnel, as previously reported, to the current 555,789, and likely beyond, reflects the GoI’s upward reevaluation of force ratio calculations originally developed by the Coalition in the 2003–2005 timeframe. Specifically, for the MoD it represents five new divisions (the previously reported two divisions of the Prime Minister’s Expansion Initiative as well as three additional planned divisions).”

11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, October 2005, 37
19. DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, December 2007, 30: “The MoI force expansion is driven by increases in police authorizations requested by several provinces and by the creation of auxiliary police forces. These auxiliary forces are elements of the current strategy, which seeks to gain the support of local populations through the inclusion of select elements of the community in the permanent structure of Iraqi forces.”

Figure 1.3 The Slow Growth of Iraqi Force Goals by Year, 2004–2008

The United States set hopelessly small initial goals for the development of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and slowly increased them only after the rise in insurgency and civil conflict forces reached a new crisis level. For all of the gains made since the beginning of 2007, the end result is that force goals are still rising, major qualitative problems still exist in Iraqi forces, and there are many areas in which Iraq still lacks the military leadership and resources to properly implement and develop its forces.

It is fair to argue that the U.S. military has had to learn how to adapt from a force oriented toward conventional conflict to a force capable of meeting the challenges of irregular war, armed nation building, and playing a political and economic role as well as a military one. At the same time, one can only speculate as to how much more quickly Iraqi forces would have been built up if America’s political leaders had heeded the warnings they were given before the invasion.
It is also clear that senior U.S. military officers warned their civilian leaders before the fall of Saddam Hussein and during the critical year that followed that major resources and troop levels would be needed. There would be far fewer problems in the Iraqi forces and far fewer risks in the early withdrawal of U.S. forces if the reports and recommendations of officers like Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton, Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, Gen. David H. Petraeus, and many of their advisers and subordinates during the period from 2003 to 2007 had been acted upon quickly and decisively.

The military and security situation would have been very different if senior U.S. commanders had operated in a climate in which those political leaders were willing be realistic about the rise of the insurgency and Iraq’s political divisions. Iraq’s forces would have been ready far more quickly, the insurgency and militias could never have grown so strong, and Iraqis would have had far more reason to trust that the United States would leave. The United States would have been able to leave far sooner, with far fewer casualties at far lower cost, and with far more confidence in the ultimate result.

The Matter of Resources

The problems in setting realistic force goals and plans were compounded by equally serious problems in the flow of resources sufficient to actually create the forces involved. For several years, U.S. and Coalition efforts to develop effective Iraqi forces were crippled by insufficient resources in many areas. It took far too long to create effective training programs and key facilities and to

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3. Ibid. This is documented at some length in the chapters on Iraqi security.
provide equipment. U.S.-led contracting efforts also suffered from poor planning and incompetent and corrupt construction plans. Nothing like a pool of adequate trainers was available and many of the trainers that were deployed had to learn on the job—if they could.

Part of this was a learning curve for the U.S. military. It took years to realize that simply turning out trained and equipped personnel was a recipe for failure unless embedded advisers were present to turn theory into practice and assist newly training officers, NCOs, and enlisted men. The same was true of the need to give Iraqi units in the field Coalition partner units that could assist them, provide practical examples, and enable them in terms of command and control, communications, intelligence and surveillance, and support and logistics. The same was true of finding ways to compensate effectively for the lack of Iraqi armor, artillery, and airpower.

Iraqi force development is still paying for these mistakes today. As in Afghanistan, the United States and its Coalition allies still have not reached clear decisions about the relative role of the regular military and police and other security forces. Years were wasted by denying that police needed to have paramilitary capabilities, and by assuming that regular police could be effective—particularly in areas without effective Iraqi local government or an effective criminal justice system. As the following analysis shows, the end result is that police and security force development remains are experiments in progress.

It is not possible to document and quantify all of these mistakes. Summary statistics are lacking on many of these shortfalls during 2003–2007, particularly concerning the number of qualified trainers and embeds relative to requirements. There also is far too much rhetoric in the available literature about leadership and morale and far too little real-world data on actual pay and corruption, real versus phantom soldiers, retention of trained personnel, merit-based promotion, creation of national versus sectarian and ethnic forces, and all of the other material factors that actually shape effective forces. Slogans and inspirational lectures do not create effective forces; pay and allowances, adequate facilities and equipment, promotion for performance, medical treatment, and death benefits do.

There are, however, substantial data on the funding of Iraqi force development that make it clear is that the United States was far too slow in providing adequate funding for Iraqi force development, either through its own spending or its influence and control over Iraqi funds. Some key details are not available from unclassified reporting. Available Defense Department, Government Accountability Office (GAO), and Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction reporting does not always break down funding by ministry, but rather lumps both together in the category of "Iraqi security forces."

Rather than year-by-year allocations by ministry, DOD sought budget authorizations for a series of funds (the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund [IRRF] and the Iraq Security Forces Fund [ISFF]) that were drawn upon as needed for the Iraqi Security Forces. This makes tracking expenditures by ministry difficult at best. Similarly, it is often difficult to determine whether numbers quoted for Iraqi allocations and expenditures are converted in a consistent basis to dollar figures from Iraqi dinars.

Figure 1.6 shows, however, that two main funding sources have provided appropriations to the Iraqi Security Forces since the beginning of calendar year 2004: the IRRF and ISFF. The IRRF comprised an initial allocation of $3.2 billion and an additional reallocation of $1.8 billion, but was replaced in fiscal year 2005 by the ISFF, which from FY 2005 to FY 2008 allocated a total of $15.7 billion.
These spending levels tell only part of the story. The fact that money was allocated in FY 2004, after the rise of a major insurgency, says nothing about planned spending rates or military facts on the ground. Much of the spending in Figure 1.6 initially had no real sense of urgency or went toward the building of expensive training facilities rather than the creation of effective forces. This is all too clear when one compares the spending data in Figure 1.6 with the force goals shown in Figures 1.2–1.5. There is almost no correlation between the two during 2003–2005.

The critical difference between the allocation of money and use of money is shown in Figure 1.7 and Figure 1.8. It is clear just how underfunded critical aspects of the development of the regular military forces in the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the police and security forces in the Ministry of Interior (MoI) still were as of October 2008. These gaps do not reflect the impact of ongoing increases in Iraqi force goals on necessary spending, but far more would have been accomplished if the United States and its allies had set realistic force and spending goals from the start.

4. Ibid.
Figure 1.7 Gap between ISFF Allocation and Expenditure as of October 2008 (in US$ millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of ISFF Allocations, by Sub-Activity Group, by Fiscal Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>$ Millions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment and Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undistributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoD Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Data indicate Status of Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF) allocations by sub-activity group by fiscal year. Numbers affected by rounding. Allocations do not include $604 million in the MoD budget activity group and $856 million in the MoI budget activity group that have not yet been distributed to sub-activity groups.

Figure 1.8 Gap between ISFF Allocation and Expenditure by Key Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment and Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undistributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoD Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1.8 (continued)

ISFF Status by Sub-Activity Group (in US$ millions): Ministry of Interior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Activity Group</th>
<th>Allocated</th>
<th>Obligated</th>
<th>Expended</th>
<th>% Obligated</th>
<th>% Expended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment and</td>
<td>$1,367.05</td>
<td>$1,346.73</td>
<td>$926.39</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>1,442.31</td>
<td>1,299.15</td>
<td>970.95</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainment</td>
<td>544.51</td>
<td>521.48</td>
<td>452.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training and</td>
<td>1,904.91</td>
<td>1,877.40</td>
<td>1,859.05</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
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<td>Operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undistributed</td>
<td>856.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoI Total</td>
<td>$6,114.78</td>
<td>$5,044.76</td>
<td>$4,108.62</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


MoD and MoI Funding by Sub-Activity Group (in US$ billions):

Total ISFF Spending

The resulting tragedy affected casualties, opportunities for Iraqi political accommodation, and Iraq’s economic and refugee crisis, but there is no way to directly quantify such impacts. As Figure 1.9 shows, Iraqis made—and are making—the same sacrifices in killed and wounded as U.S. and Coalition troops. At least twice as many Iraqis as U.S. and Coalition forces had died in combat by October 2008. However, how many of those casualties, and those of Iraqi civilians, could have been avoided will always be a matter of speculation.

What is clear is that the total bill in terms of direct force development costs rose to more than $17 billion by 2008. (See Figure 1.10.)

These mistakes are also reflected in the total distribution of U.S. reconstruction funds to Iraq as of October 2008. SIGIR reports that 60 percent of all U.S. aid funds ($25 billion) went to security. A total of 28 percent ($11.4 billion) went to infrastructure, 3 percent ($1.3 billion) went to

Figure 1.9  U.S. and Iraqi Security Force Casualties, January 2006–February 2009

Figure 1.10 ISFF Force Development Costs by Sub-Activity Group as of March 31, 2009 (in US$ millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUB-ACTIVITY</th>
<th>ALLOCATIONS</th>
<th>OBLIGATIONS</th>
<th>EXPENDITURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment and Transportation</td>
<td>$4,410</td>
<td>$3,933</td>
<td>$3,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>3,257</td>
<td>2,923</td>
<td>2,512</td>
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<td>Sustainment</td>
<td>1,860</td>
<td>1,752</td>
<td>1,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Operations</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOD Total</td>
<td>$9,871</td>
<td>$8,943</td>
<td>$7,467</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment and Transportation</td>
<td>1,739</td>
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<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>1,442</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainment</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Operations</td>
<td>2,355</td>
<td>1,913</td>
<td>1,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI Total</td>
<td>$6,166</td>
<td>$5,155</td>
<td>$4,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Total</td>
<td>$1,007</td>
<td>$775</td>
<td>$643</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$17,044</td>
<td>$14,872</td>
<td>$12,521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


the economy, and 9 percent ($3.7 billion) went to improving governance.5 If the United States had gone to war with effective plans for stability operations and nation building, spending on security almost certainly could have been much lower, more spending could have been spent on govern-

nance and the economy, and the end result would have done far more to speed political accommoda-

ation.

The government of Iraq has been able to increase its own spending in many areas, complementing the huge expenditures of the ISFF. The Iraqi government and U.S. government spending on the ISF are shown in Figure 1.11.

Lessons for the Future

No serious work on strategy, much less grand strategy, has ever ignored the need to terminate wars on politically favorable terms. No competent military officer or civilian policymaker can ignore the fact that wars are not battles, and that conflict termination—and the transition from stability operations to peace—determine the extent to which military action is a success or failure. The failure of the Bush administration to apply a lesson as old as Sun Tzu or Thucydides in Afghanistan and Iraq has cost an unforgivable amount of lives; wasted billions upon billions of dollars; undercut the United States’ reputation and credibility; and threatens the outcome of the Afghan conflict, the Iraqi conflict, and the struggle against terrorism.

The United States should have learned years ago—in fact, from the Vietnam War alone—that creating effective partners requires effective force goals for that partner and effective resources, and that host-country forces only cost a small fraction of the cost of deploying U.S. forces.

Americans must therefore remember their own mistakes in dealing with Iraqi leaders in the critical years ahead. The United States must examine how the lessons of its experience in Iraq should help shape its future relations with Iraq, the way it fights the war in Afghanistan, and the way it fights future wars. These lessons should be a key factor in shaping the debate over the proper role of hard military power and soft ideological, political, and economic power.
On one hand, Americans should not blame Iraqis for many of the problems that now divide the United States and Iraq or that still weaken the development of Iraqi security forces. The following chapters describe many areas in which Iraqi leaders have failed or have so far proven inadequate. However, a frank look at Iraqi force development—which is only one aspect of what has become armed nation building or “conflict reconstruction”—shows how many mistakes that the United States has made. Moreover, much of the cost of past development has been shaped by U.S. mistakes. Figure 1.11 illustrates that Iraq is taking over the funding of the ISF. Iraq has the resources to act if the United States and Iraq can agree on workable terms to strengthen Iraqi forces and handle the transition from U.S. forces to Iraqi forces.

On the other hand, the analysis of current Iraqi force capabilities that follows should be read in the context of learning broader lessons about creating effective host-country forces and making them true partners. Some of these lessons have already been reflected in U.S. policy and strategy, DOD directives, and field manuals. Other still need to be formally incorporated in U.S. strategy, doctrine, and practice.

- Go to war with a clear strategy for stability operations and nation building when this is required. Provide the necessary resources immediately and do not plan for post-conflict reconstruction if there is a high probability of insurgency and conflict reconstruction.
- Do not plan to act as if peace is coming until peace is certain.
- Make creating host-country forces a key goal from day one, and set clear goals to create adequate forces to independently secure the country and replace U.S. and other allied forces. Make creating host-country forces that can defeat insurgency and terrorism and secure the country’s borders the first priority.
- Recognize, however, that this includes developing host-country forces that can deter and defend against threats from nations on the host country’s borders, not just provide counterinsurgency or light forces that can be seen as serving U.S. interests rather than creating forces that make the host country fully independent.
- State clearly and at the presidential level that the United States has no intention of maintaining permanent bases, will turn over all facilities to the host country when host-country forces are ready, and will only consider maintaining any form of longer-term presence at the direct request of the host government. Make U.S. intentions, actions, and the level of progress in developing host-country forces unclassified and transparent from the period of preparing for war through the final stages of withdrawal. Demonstrate to the world that the United States means what it says, is building forces that give the host country full sovereignty free of U.S. control and influence, and is providing detailed reporting to show that it is acting on its words. Minimize the credibility of hostile propaganda and conspiracy theories through such transparency.
- Deploy advisers and major resources immediately. It is far better to flood in resources at the start and seize the initiative than to wait and cede the initiative to terrorists and insurgents.
- Do not attempt to push responsibility for key warfighting activities to allies. Allies can be vital, but the United States must take responsibility for fighting all parts of its wars, not simply the kinetic phase.
- Do not underestimate the problems created by a lack of governance; inexperience with democracy; and the local mix of ethnic, sectarian, racial, and tribal tensions.
Maintain the level of forces and flow of resources necessary to seize and maintain the initiative from day one. Seek to prevent the emergence of a strong insurgency where possible, and never fall into the trap of reacting to enemy gains.

Take real-world, on-the-ground resources into account and prioritize force development accordingly. Give the Iraqi Army and paramilitary forces priority until security exists. Do not try to rush forward in creating civil police, effective governance, and a rule of law when the local resources, outside advisers, and resources are not available to attempt every task at once.

Beware of trying to create civil police forces before the conditions and resources necessary to make them effective are present. Local security forces may be the only practical option. In any case, civil police lack paramilitary capabilities and may be useless unless the rule of law and governance are present.

Accept the fact that local values, religious, and cultural goals should determine the nation’s future. Do not attempt impractical or impossible transformations of the host country.

Understand that the ideological, political, and information battle can be supported by the United States, but it must be led and won by the host country government as soon as possible. This again means accepting local goals and values.

The number of qualified trainers, embedded advisers, and partner units will be critical. The development of host-country forces requires adequate support from initial training to the development of mature units in the field. Simply creating training facilities will always fail unless trained manpower can be turned into effective combat capability with embedded advisers and the support of U.S. or allied partner units.

Morale and leadership are important, but in the real world, adequate facilities and equipment, actual flow of pay and allowances, merit-based promotion, adequate healthcare, and provisions for families and disabling wounds will be far more critical in creating an effective force.

Elections and central government statements and legislation do not create meaning legitimacy or effective government. Where these are lacking, the United States and its allies must create civilian and military teams at the local and regional level that can help develop effective government and progress toward economic security.

Do not wait for civilian aid workers or rely on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in a combat environment. If U.S. and allied militaries are the only source of rapid help in improving governance and development in a high-threat environment, use them.

If NGOs cannot or will not operate in a high-threat or combat environment, do not fund or support them. The idea that they somehow can rise above the conflict bears no relationship to the recent nature of terrorism and insurgency. In fact, they have become an early and high-priority target of insurgents for disrupting critical aid activities and achieving propaganda gains.

Carry out all of these activities as part of an integrated strategy involving the political, governance, and developmental aspects of stability operations and nation building. Military force alone cannot succeed either in counterinsurgency or in creating a stable post-conflict nation. The development of host-country forces alone will not succeed. It will never be possible to do everything at once, but “securing, holding, and building” requires forces to defeat the enemy, real progress toward local security, and enough employment and economic progress to advance on the military and civil fronts.
Whatever happens in Iraq, the United States should never again fight a war without considering how many Afghan, Iraqi, U.S., and allied lives might have been saved if the United States had acted on these lessons from 2001 onward, how much weaker insurgents would have been, how much shorter the wars might have been, and how much more quickly Afghanistan and Iraq might have moved forward toward development. U.S. tactical, strategic, and grand strategic mistakes in failing to apply these lessons from the start have had immense costs and done much to enable the enemy.
The near-term test of Iraqi forces during the period of U.S. withdrawal will be how soon and how well they can replace U.S. and allied forces in defeating Al Qa’ida, in bringing stability and security in ways that put an end to ethnic and sectarian conflicts and infighting, and in giving ordinary Iraqis day-to-day security. At least through 2011, the ISF must focus on internal security and stability. The development of a capability to defend Iraq against any foreign threat will take much longer and is now a secondary priority.

At the same time, the key measure of Iraq’s readiness is actual warfighting capability. No combination of metrics, value judgments, and statistics can ever be as meaningful as proven performance in combat. In fact, some of the units with the best combat capabilities are units that do have the personnel, training, or equipment levels that are set as peacetime goals. They are units with real-world experience, proven leaders and other ranks, and the capability to overcome deficiencies in metrics with actual competence in war.

The Battle for Basra: Setting the Stage in Southern Iraq

The “battle for Basra,” which began in March 2008, marked the first major stage toward successful efforts by the central government to take over the direction of the fighting. It has been followed by several major operations across the country, and it has been a key factor shaping Iraqi attitudes towards the debate over the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and the effort to set deadlines for U.S. withdrawals. The battle was seen by many in Iraq as a great victory, proving the strength of the Iraqi Security Forces. However, the facts behind the battle say as much about how far the Iraq’s security forces have to go as they say about the progress it has made to date.

The central government had three major reasons to act in Basra. One reflected its domestic political interests. If Dawa and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) were to control the south, they would control Basra, which was the most critical economic prize in the country, the source of most of its oil exports and overall imports, the location of Um Qasr (Iraq’s biggest port), and a key to dominating Shi’ite politics. The second was the need to deal with crime, violence, and intra-Shi’ite power struggles that affected the life of ordinary citizens. The third was to better Maliki’s political position, which was reinforced by its impact on the outcome of the January 2009 provincial elections.

British forces had formally turned Basra over to Iraqi Security Force control in 2007, but this transfer was little more than a hollow façade, disguising British failures in southern Iraq. Local and
highly corrupt factions of ISCI/Dawa, the Sadrist parties and the Mahdi Army (Jaysh al Mahdi or JAM), Fadhila, and smaller Shi’ite factions all vied for control of Basra. The city, and much of southern Iraq, had fallen under the de facto control of local and feuding rival elements of the major Shi’ite parties, their militias or local elements in the police and security forces, and various criminal gangs that often could not be separated from political parties and militias. Conflicts over oil facilities, port operations, and smuggling routes often turned violent.

According to Rob Tinline, a spokesperson for a British Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), “They [had] these overlapping spheres of gangsterism and politics, militias and legitimate businesses, and legitimate politics.” Each faction’s area of control was well defined: “Fadhila control[led] the electricity sector and share[d] power with the JAM at the ports; Dawa and Fadhila ha[d] a strong grip in the lucrative southern oil operations, and a different branch of Dawa—the one to which Mr. Maliki belongs—[held] sway at the Basra airport.” The Fadhila party also controlled the dockworker’s union. The rampant corruption of Fadhila, combined with the decrepit state of Um Qasr’s infrastructure, made the port extremely inefficient.

By late 2007, the British position in Basra had eroded to the point where British forces were doing little more than staying in the airport. There was a fair amount of bluster about joint planning, training, and patrols, but little evidence of substance. Basra was divided up among Shi'ite party mafias, each of which had its own form of extortion and corruption. They sometimes fought and feuded, but had a crude modus vivendi at the expense of the rest of the nation. Basra also had far more Iranian penetration in both the civil and security sectors than the other Shi'ite governorates. Clearly, however, Iran and the al Quds force continued to be equal opportunity supporters of all the Shi’ite militias, and Iran effectively was ensuring that it would support the winner, regardless of who the winner was.

Additional problems affected all of the other Shi’ite-dominated provinces in the south. As of February 2008, ISCI had de facto control over the Shi’ite governorates in the south and extensive influence over the Iraqi Army (IA), and was steadily expanding its influence and sometimes control over the Iraqi police. It was clearly positioning itself for a power struggle with Muqtada al-Sadr and for any elections to come. It also was positioning itself to support the call of its leader, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, for a nine-governorate Shi’ite federation—a call that had clear Iranian support. Sadr’s supporters complained of increasing harassment from the ISF, including the detention of hundreds of JAM members, and even torture and abuse.

U.S. experts working in the southern governorates made it clear that the ISCI and Dawa appointments by the central government had no real popular base. Members of the U.S. team differed over how much the Sadrist had a popular base and broad support among the poor Shi’ite Iraqis in the south. Perceived mismanagement of the provincial governments in the south as well as continued corruption and violence likely contributed to poor results for both ISCI and Sadr in the 2009 provincial elections.

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The Ministry of Interior and the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) in particular were largely unable to overcome local influences and loyalties. Some blame the Iraqi Police Service for much of the violence in Basra. Sheik Khadem al-Ribat, a Basra tribal leader who claims to have no party memberships, stated, “Most of the killings are done by gunmen in police cars. These cars were given to the political parties. There are supposed to be 16,000 policemen, but we see very few of them on the street, and most of the ones we do see are militiamen dressed as police.”

The ongoing influence of Shi'ite parties and militias have hampered efforts to clean up the IPS in the south, especially in Basra. Iraqi arrest warrants for members of the notorious Basra Serious Crimes Unit (which was accused of a host of sectarian crimes including kidnapping and torture, and whose headquarters was destroyed by British forces in late 2006) were never executed. Indeed, the leader of the Serious Crimes Unit, Abdullah Najim, appeared to still be working as a police officer in Basra in early 2008, despite an MoI warrant accusing him of orchestrating kidnappings, torture, and assassinations. According to Jonathan Ratel, a contractor working as a justice adviser for the British Foreign Office, “either he’s still operating as a police officer or has gotten tacit approval to pose as a police officer.” Ratel added that he suspects Najim to be protected by the JAM.

The strength of the Shi'ite militias in the south left the British with little choice but to work with them. According to Ratel, “The only way to put together a police force was to talk to the militias and say, ‘You get 100 guys, and you get 200, and you get 300.’” Ratel also described the police as “hired mercenaries for the militias,” with little or no training.

Jaleel Khalaf, a police general in Basra, described some of the problems in dealing with sectarianism: “I have fired many of them. Hundreds. But we still have militias here. We push them out of the door and they come back through the window.” He discovered that 250 police cars and 5,000 pistols had been stolen by various militias. He has, according to his count, survived 10 assassination attempts since he started his job in July 2007. A 5,000-person protest held on March 8, 2008 to demand the resignation of the Khalaf and of the commander of joint military-police operation, Lt. Gen. Mohan al-Fraiij, underscored the problems that the IPS was having in Basra, as well as its unpopularity.

In response to the mounting violence and entrenched corruption in Basra, a number of senior Iraqi officials announced a campaign in mid-March 2008 to reassert control of the city and of Iraq’s main port, Um Qasr. Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih stated that the move to retake the port would “definitely” involve an Iraqi troop buildup, and could also involve Coalition troops. According to National Security Advisor Mowaffak al Rubaie, “Whoever gets in the way [of the ISF’s retaking of Um Qasr] will be dealt with swiftly, decisively, and with no mercy.” It appears, however, that this operation to reassert control in Basra, originally scheduled for July 2008, was launched far sooner than originally planned, leading to a bloody battle with the JAM and an embarrassment for the Iraqi security forces.

5. Moore, “Ominous Signs Remain in City Run by Iraqis.”
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
11. Glanz, “Iraqi Troops May Move to Reclaim Basra’s Port.”
12. Ibid.
The Government Offensive in March 2008

In practice, the Iraqi government acted quickly, with minimal planning and with little consultation with the United States and other members of the Coalition. Largely at Prime Minister Maliki’s initiative, the ISF suddenly launched a major offensive against JAM forces in Basra in late March 2008.

About 6,600 troops were brought in to reinforce the 30,000 ISF personnel already stationed in Basra. Six IA brigades were amassed in and around Basra, and 16,000 police officers were stationed in the city. The resulting offensive was later described by President Bush as a “defining moment” in Iraq’s history, but it occurred with little preparation by the ISF or coordination with Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) forces.

The offensive was rushed into being without proper planning within the Iraqi Army command, and without suitable retraining and preparation to support it. It was also conducted with minimal coordination with U.S. and British forces, which only had a few days warning that it was to take place. As a result, Iraqi forces were not properly prepared and organized for the new offensive, and Iraqi units with little or no combat experience were committed to the operations.

The Iraqi security forces began their offensive against militia forces and JAM strongholds in Basra on March 25. The operation, dubbed “Operation Knights Assault,” initially involved as many as 15,000 IA soldiers and was personally overseen by Maliki. Several other Iraqi officials accompanied Maliki down to Basra, including high-ranking Ministry of Defense officials, Minister of Interior Jawad al Boulany, and Shirwan al Waely, head of the Ministry of State for National Security (MSNSA).

By March 26, 30,000 Iraqi soldiers and police were reported to be involved in the operation in Basra. Fighting in Basra was concentrated on the districts of Garma, Gazaiza, Hayania, Khmasamene, and Maqal. Yet, the security forces made little progress into JAM strongholds. In Sadr City, some police and army checkpoints were simply abandoned and JAM militia men took over. Fighting between the IA and JAM also intensified in Hilla, Kut, and other areas outside of Sadr City.

Maliki issued a 72-hour ultimatum on March 26 that called for militants to lay down their arms and sign a pledge renouncing violence, or “they [would] face the most severe penalties.”

Maliki stated, “Those who were deceived into carrying weapons must deliver themselves and make

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a written pledge to promise that they will not repeat such action within 72 hours. Otherwise, they will face the most severe penalties.\textsuperscript{21} In practice, however, the Iraqi security forces had not been given the time to properly prepare and deploy and many of its units were in serious trouble.

The fighting spread to Kut and neighborhoods in southern Baghdad when JAM fighters captured, stripped, and then released a number of IPS officers. The fighting eventually spread to Amarah, Diwaniyah, Hillah, Karbala, Najaf, and Nasiriyah as well. Police vehicles were burned and weapons were taken in the attack. In Baghdad, rocket and mortar attacks originating in Sadr City landed in the Green Zone.

This forced MNF-I forces to intervene. U.S. and British aircraft and units, including special forces, began to provide air support as the Iraqi security forces stalled. Only limited numbers of Coalition ground forces were involved in the operation in Basra, aside from an unreported number of special forces and embedded trainers.\textsuperscript{22} Nevertheless, U.S. airpower and special forces played a critical role. The Iraqi offensive might well have collapsed or ended in a prolonged urban siege, if U.S. forces had not come to the ISF's rescue.

Major General Kevin Bergner, an MNF-I spokesman, stated that the only Coalition forces in Basra were the typical contingent of transition teams working with the Iraqi security forces, adding that “we do not have any conventional forces there.”\textsuperscript{23} However, two senior U.S. military officers—a member of the Navy Seals and a Marine major general—were sent to Basra to help coordinate the Iraqi planning. Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division were pressed into service as combat advisers, and air controllers were positioned to call in air strikes on behalf of beleaguered Iraqi units. U.S. transport planes joined the Iraqis in ferrying supplies to Iraqi troops.

In spite of a lack of prior planning and consultation, the United States was better prepared to provide the ISF with this kind of support than was made public at the time. The United States greatly improved its intelligence and targeting coverage of the Mahdi Army, and particularly of the more extreme elements within it, during the course of 2007. The United States had also used special forces and other elements of U.S. forces in a quiet campaign that had sharply reduced Iranian support of the Mahdi Army and “special groups,” and targeted the most radical and dangerous elements of the Sadr movement. In spite of the lack of warning from Maliki about his ultimatum, the United States was much better prepared to assist in dealing with Sadr, and Sadr saw how effective the United States could be in targeting and attacking elements of the Mahdi Army.

This aid gave Iraqi Army units time to reinforce key points and organize themselves for the fighting, and the ISF became more effective.\textsuperscript{24} These improvements included some mixed Shi'ite-

\textsuperscript{24} One U.S. officer involved stated: “The Basra operation, together with the move into Sadr City, Operation Lion’s Roar in Rightful Assault (gotta love the Iraqis—they pick some great names for their ops) in Mosul, and other operations looked to me like a watershed in the development of the Iraqi forces. I would have found such accomplishments by the Iraqis unimaginable as recently as November or December 2006 when my Kurdish IA brigade received its warning order to deploy to Baghdad. Moving that one brigade was a major effort. The level of resistance at all levels of command from Battalion through the 4th Division commander was astounding. It took significant cajoling and pressure to keep the planning on track and to ensure that the deployment was executed—and that for one brigade (it should be noted that once they actually
Sunni units such as the 1st and 7th Divisions, which initially performed poorly and need time to regroup.25

Iraqi Army forces gained the initiative during the next few days. Maliki offered money to Mahdi fighters willing to turn in their weapons on March 28, when the security forces proved unable to take many JAM strongholds.26 Few JAM fighters accepted the offer, but JAM was now losing most tactical engagements, and the fighting increasingly threatened Sadr’s ability to act as a political force in Iraq. This may explain the pressures that led Sadr to agree to the cease-fire that went into effect on March 31, although he evidently did so after some Iranian encouragement.27

This ended much of the violence in Basra, although some violence continued on a much smaller scale. The Iraqi security forces were able to effectively control Basra after this new cease-fire, and Sadr never revoked his previous general cease-fire despite all of the fighting. He only called for nationwide civil disobedience once the fighting began, although some of the JAM involved in the fighting cited an earlier statement by Sadr that appeared to grant Sadrist fighters the right to self-defense.28

It is not clear what would have happened if Sadr had tried to make a decisive stand in Basra, but the improved performance of the Iraqi security forces, U.S. and British aid, and the cease-fire allowed the ISF to gradually take control of Basra from the JAM in the weeks following the cease-fire. Although there was sporadic resistance, which led to continued air strikes and other support from Coalition forces, most JAM fighters abided by the terms of the cease-fire.

The Hayaniya district, the last portion of the city to fall under ISF control, was taken by ISF forces after light resistance on April 20, 2008.29 The ISF also occupied many former JAM headquarters buildings. They were able to confiscate militia weapons caches, and have brought the once largely lawless city under control. They did, however, need to keep a large deployment of personnel in the city, manning checkpoints on almost every major intersection and highway. As of early May 2008, 33,000 ISF personnel were still in the city.30

The political motives behind the fighting were mixed. Much of the media coverage of the fighting in the south assumed that Sadr and the Sadr militia were the “spoilers,” or bad guys, and got to Baghdad, the brigade did well—nobody’s fears were realized). Furthermore, during my year in Iraq the IA was capable of little more than checkpoint operations. Anything more assertive was invariably done in the company of US troops, with the Americans on the objective and the Iraqis on a security cordon outside (except when the target was a mosque). My Kurds displayed better ability on the Baiji-Kirkuk pipeline and at Tuz, but still it was a problem. An operation on the scale of Basra; an operation on such short notice as Basra; and an operation like that with as little US support as was given at Basra, was simply unthinkable a year ago. The US assistance given at Basra was microscopic compared to what would have been required in 2006. When I was in Baghdad with my Kurds, Sadr City was a JAM sanctuary. Again, a column of IA troops rolling in would have been unthinkable when we were there. So, problems notwithstanding, I am inclined to see the recent operations at Basra and elsewhere as a decidedly glass half-full situation.”

that the government forces were legitimate and bringing order. There was considerable truth in this assumption, but it was also an oversimplification. Many elements of the JAM have been guilty of sectarian cleansing, and the Sadr movement in general is hostile to the United States and is seeking to enhance Sadr’s political power. Rogue elements in the JAM are violent extortionists who continue acts of violence despite the cease-fire, and some have had ties to Iran as well as Iranian training and support. No one can romanticize the Sadr movement, understate the risks that it presents, or ignore the actions of the JAM’s extreme elements.

Yet no one should romanticize the key Shi’ite parties in the government either: Dawa and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC). The fighting in Basra was as much a power struggle for control of the south, the Shi’ite parts of Baghdad and the rest of the country, as it was an effort to establish central government authority and legitimate rule. Although it was stated to be a law and order operation to root out the influence of militias in Basra, the ISF operation targeted only the JAM.

Reports emerged of neighborhoods controlled by rivals of the JAM giving ISF forces safe passage.31 As a result, Maliki’s offensive in Basra was as much a power struggle with Sadr as an effort to deal with security, “militias,” and “criminals.” Though Iraqi officials indicated that the militias of the Fadhila party would also be targeted in the weeks before the operation, in practice, they were largely ignored by the ISF, as political goals were balanced against national security concerns.

**ISF Performance in the Battle for Basra**

Despite their successes and the final results of the battle, many aspects of the Iraqi security forces’ performance were a disappointment to the central government and a warning about the limits of Iraqi military progress. The failures in the battle of Basra can be broken down into three general categories:

- **Loyalty:** Hundreds, if not thousands, of personnel, both IA and IPS, deserted their posts. Some turned their weapons over to the JAM, or even actively fought against the ISF. Most were in inexperienced and/or newly formed units, but the problem of loyalty was still serious.32

- **Planning:** The operation in Basra was poorly planned, and hastily executed, although this seems to be more the fault of the prime minister’s office than of the Iraqi command staff. Sufficient personnel and materials were not in place prior to the offensive, and IA and IPS personnel had not trained specifically for the operation. Many of the units involved were extremely inexperienced. The United States was given very little warning before the operation, and was unable to provide much assistance on the ground, although coalition airpower was employed.

- **Logistics:** The ISF was poorly provisioned in Basra, and there were reports of ammunition and even food shortages, although once again some of these problems occurred because the prime

31. Glanz, "Iraqi Army’s Assault on Militias in Basra Stalls."

32. It is worth noting that not only did Maliki order the deserters fired, but he defied a request from Moqtada al Sadr to reinstate them. One U.S. observer observing the situation noted: “This represents significant stiffening since I was there in 2006–2007. Furthermore, one senior Iraqi officer states that the government had made a decision to court-martial some of the deserters. He was able to state whether that decision had been implemented or not, but as with the rebuff to Sadr above, such a decision, if executed, would represent a significant strengthening of the central government since my own departure from Iraq last year.”
minister rushed Iraqi forces into battle. There were also problems with using equipment effectively in the urban combat environment. For example, IA armored vehicles were too wide to fit in the narrow alleys of Basra. The Iraqi Air Force did, however, perform well in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R) and supply missions.

These problems in the performance of some elements in Basra should come as no surprise. Even the most capable force needs adequate preparation and planning. The security forces are divided into very different army and police elements and are anything but homogenous. Every element has been built virtually from scratch and constantly rushed into combat, has been rapidly expanding for years, and has had continually shifting leadership. The IA is the only element of the Iraqi security forces that has had adequate resources, embedded advisers, and partner units. Yet, many of the IA’s units lack a substantial percentage of their officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs), are ill equipped and under-armored, and have units dominated by Shi’ite or Kurdish elements in a country rife with ethnosectarian conflict.

The positive side of the issues encountered in Basra was that senior elements of the central government and the security forces became aware of these problems and began to make far more serious efforts to correct them. According to Brig. Gen. Steven L. Salazar of Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I), the problems revealed during the battle for Basra prompted an Iraqi-led lessons-learned process that went all the way up the chain of command to the prime minister himself.33

Loyalty and Desertions

Loyalty and motivation were key issues—although it is impossible to separate “loyalty” from the reaction to inadequate planning, training, and leadership. Some poorly performing units were clearly not loyal to the central government, and there were outright desertions by some soldiers and police officers. The exact numbers of desertions, defections, and personnel refusing to fight remains unclear. Reports emerged in the week following the cease-fire that more than 1,000 soldiers and police either refused to fight or abandoned their posts. Other reports put the number of deserters as high as 3,000.34 Desertion rates were reported to be as high as 75 percent of enlisted personnel and 80 percent of officers in some units of the inexperienced 14th Division.35 Some personnel even shed their uniforms, kept their weapons, and joined the JAM.36 While most of the deserters were low-level soldiers or police, officers also deserted, including at least two senior officers. Iraqi estimates of the number of officers who deserted varied from several dozen to more than 100.37

Some sources claim that there were worse problems with desertions. One Iraqi official, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated that as many as 30 percent of the security personnel involved had abandoned the fight by the time the cease-fire was reached. Some IPS personnel even

33. Author conference call with Steven L. Salazar, August 1, 2008.
37. Farrell and Glanz, “More Than 1,000 in Iraq’s Forces Quit Basra Fight.”
went over to fight for JAM. The official added that the Iraqi security forces were hindered by food and ammunition shortages, which is not surprising considering the logistics problems mentioned elsewhere in this report.\(^{38}\) The forces continued to lack fire discipline, wasting huge quantities of ammunition by firing indiscriminately.\(^{39}\)

British officers stationed at the Basra air station, speaking anonymously, gave a negative assessment of security forces performance. According to these sources, the Iraqi Army's 14th Division had only 26 percent of the equipment necessary to take part in combat operations. Furthermore:

There were literally thousands of troops arriving in Basra from all over Iraq. But they had no idea why they were there or what they were supposed to do. It was madness and to cap it all they had insufficient supplies of food, water and ammunition. . . . One of the newly formed brigades was ordered into battle and suffered around 1,200 desertions within the first couple of hours - it was painful to watch . . . They had to be pulled out because they were a busted flush. The Iraqi police were next to useless. There were supposed to be 1,300 ready to deploy into the city, but they refused to do so. The situation deteriorated to the extent where we [the British Army] were forced to stage a major resupply operation in order to stave off disaster. . . . The net effect of all of this is that the British Army will be forced to remain here for many months longer.\(^{40}\)

Although the exact details remain unclear, it appears that an entire IA brigade (most likely the brigade mentioned by the British officer above) disintegrated during the fighting. The *Long War Journal* reported that the 52nd brigade of the 14th IA division deserted almost in its entirety, and its equipment may have been turned over to the JAM.\(^{41}\) The 52nd brigade was one of the newest in the IA, having graduated from the Besmaya Unit Set Fielding Program on February 18, 2008.\(^{42}\) The 14th Division overall was a freshly formed and inexperienced unit, and much of the poor performance and desertions of the initial stage of the battle can be attributed to it.

It is not clear whether the deserting personnel were motivated by fear or by loyalty to the JAM. During fighting in Sadr City in April, IA soldiers received threatening calls on their cell phones from the JAM. Some IA personnel in Basra deserted after their families were threatened.\(^{43}\)

Although Sadr's influence and the threat posed by the JAM remain worrying, the influence that Maliki and Dawa, and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council and elements of the Badr organization, have over elements of the ISF also presents problems. Senior police commanders have mixed loyalties, but many have shown a growing alignment with the ISCI governors in the south. Elements of the National Police (NP) and many officers in the regular police have ties to the ISCI. The level of police loyalty to Maliki is more uncertain, and it is more influenced by his control over resources than anything else.

\(^{38}\) Raghavan and Londono, “Basra Assault Exposed U.S., Iraqi Limits.”
\(^{42}\) Roggio, “A Look at Operation Knight's Assault.”
\(^{43}\) Gordon, “Fight for Sadr City a Proving Ground for Iraq Military.”
Planning

The full historical details remain unclear, but there is broad agreement that Iraqi planning for the assault was rushed and deeply flawed, as was initial coordination with the United States and MNF-I. The Iraqi government had been planning an operation in Basra for months and set up an operational command center there for that purpose. Yet the operation was scheduled to take place over the summer, and sufficient assets were not in place by late March. Yet Maliki apparently decided to launch the offensive on March 25 in response to the escalating violence in Basra.44

Iraqi forces attacked before all of their reinforcements had arrived and all of their forces were ready, and without a fully developed plan. Although it should have been clear beforehand what the battlefield terrain would look like in Basra, Iraqi security forces found themselves fighting in armored vehicles too wide to fit in the narrow alleys of Basra.45 They were forced to fight on foot.

Ambassador Ryan Crocker had been led to expect a gradual operation, building up security forces and squeezing out militia groups in Basra.46 While he stated that he knew the security forces were planning a Basra operation, he stated on April 3 that he “was not expecting frankly a major battle from day one. But then again it’s not clear to me that they’d decided that’s what they were going to do. The enemy has a vote in combat.” The United States was unaware of the size and pace of the operation beforehand, and its military and political efforts to aid the Iraqi government were largely improvised.47

The poor planning of the assault was compounded by the confusing chain of command in the security forces. DOD noted in early March 2008 (before the Basra operation commenced):

The ability of the Joint Headquarters (JHQ) to deliver and execute operational plans and advise at the strategic level remains nascent. The lines of command remain opaque and serve to encourage control at the highest level. Between operational and strategic boundaries, multiple conflicting lines exist—the Baghdad Operations Center reports to the prime minister, the Basra Operations Center reports to the MoD and the IGFC reports to the JHQ. While currently manageable, transfers of additional provinces to [Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC)] will increase the operational requirement on the defense minister and the prime minister, whose focus should be on strategic, not operational, issues. The need exists for a national security architecture with clear chains of command and formal delegation of authority.48

DOD revised this assessment in its December 2008 quarterly report, stating “the Joint Headquarters (JHQ) is developing greater capability to provide operational-level advice to the MoD and is developing its capacity to plan and logistically resource operations. In Diyala, the JHQ systematically planned and coordinated for essential supplies in advance of combat operations.” However, the report added that “despite the JHQ’s progress, the Iraqi national security command-and-control

44. Raghavan and Londono, “Basra Assault Exposed U.S., Iraqi Limits.”
45. Glanz, “Alley Fighters.”
47. Ibid.
architecture continues to be poorly defined, which inhibits planning, decision making, and the ability to execute coordinated operations at all levels.  

Many U.S. officials have since portrayed the ISF’s performance in a positive light despite these problems, and not without some justification. National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley stated that he believed that the Iraqi government’s efforts against the militias were “an indication of the continued maturation of this government in its willingness and capacity to take increasing responsibility for security.” Yet, anonymous Pentagon sources have been less positive, stating that reports from the Basra area indicated that militiamen had overrun a number of police stations and that it was unclear how well the Iraqi security forces were performing overall.

The JAM did stand its ground until Sadr accepted a cease-fire, which some sources indicate was at least partially Iranian-brokered. The JAM even gained control of five districts in Kut and fought police in two neighborhoods in the center of Hilla. One senior MoD official believed that “if the British and American forces were not there, the Mahdi Army would have gained a victory.” Bergner, in an understatement typical of official U.S. reporting on the security forces, stated only that the forces have “had some tough encounters in their initial day or so of operations.”

The other elements of the Iraqi security forces did not perform as well as the IA. One Western official estimated that IPS desertions were as high as 50 percent in JAM strongholds such as Sadr city and parts of Basra. The MoI announced that 407 police officers had been fired in Basra for involvement with militias. Another 60-man unit was fired in al Fajr for collusion with Shi’ite extremists.

Some 1,300 soldiers and police officers were fired from the ISF in the aftermath of the fighting in Basra. A spokesperson for the MoI stated that the fired personnel would be facing court martial. The fired personnel included some who were “high-ranking,” according to an anonymous Iraqi official. Gen Abdul-Karim Khalaf, of the MoI, added that 37 senior police officers were among those fired. Of the 1,300 men fired, 921 were from Basra, the rest being from Kut.

Maliki also announced the hiring of some 10,000 Shi’ite tribesmen into the IA and IPS following the forces’ failures in Basra. This move was portrayed as a way to stabiize the area. Yet, it was not clear who these 10,000 new recruits were, or if they were actually from local tribes or were simply Badr Brigade members recruited to replace the force members sympathetic to the JAM who had quit or been fired in the wake of the Basra fighting.

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49. Ibid., December 2008, 43–44.
58. Susman, “Iraq Security Forces Fire 1,300 Deserters.”
59. Farrell and Glanz, “More Than 1,000 In Iraq's Forces Quit Basra Fight.”
Fraiji, the IA commander in Basra, and Khalaf, the IPS commander in Basra, were removed from their posts and sent to MoD jobs in Baghdad in mid-April. Although MoD officials characterized the move as routine, many saw it as a response to the widespread criticism of the planning of the operation.61

**Logistics and Support**

Both Iraqi and U.S. officers had agreed that logistics remained a critical deficiency long before the Iraqi forces moved into Basra. Events made this all too clear. Some IA logistical units performed well, and the ISF was able to transport a large number of troops and supplies down to Basra in a relatively short time. The Iraqi Air Force (IqAF) flew more than 100 missions in support of the ISF, fulfilling “100 percent of all requests from Basra.”62 Two C-130 transport planes and Iraqi Huey and Mi-17 Hip multi-mission helicopters were involved in the operation. More than 500 IA soldiers were sent to Basra by air.63 The IA also conducted more than 50 IS&R missions.64 However, the IA has little armed combat support capability, and all of those missions were carried out by the Coalition.

Many units fighting in Basra faced shortages of equipment. Even DOD, which has consistently tried to place a positive spin on Iraqi operational capabilities, stated that the forces in Basra faced “serious logistical shortages. During the operation, police units experienced shortages in ammunition, rations, water, and repair parts.”65 DOD also added that “the need for coalition assistance during Basra operations highlighted Iraqi security force limitations in planning and conducting expeditionary life support.”

Although these accomplishments may seem modest by Western standards, they represent a major improvement for the Iraqi security forces. The forces had failed to deploy a far smaller force to support the Baghdad Security Plan in a timely basis in 2007. In the battle of Basra, they not only moved most forces on their own to Basra, but also carried out a near-simultaneous buildup for another offensive in the area near Mosul, as well as major operations in Baghdad.

**Aftermath**

Despite the problems the ISF faced during the battle of Basra, they have been able to control the city since April 2008, albeit with the assistance of a U.S. division. Violence levels in Basra have plummeted, and militia control, although hard to quantify, has been severely weakened. This has occurred in spite of British withdrawals as well as U.S. withdrawals. British forces had largely left Basra when the fighting began in the spring of 2008. Britain announced plans in late 2008 to make further withdrawals. By summer 2009, only 400 British personnel are expected to remain in Iraq. The British ended their mentoring of the Iraqi 14th Division in March 2009 and effectively ended their role in Iraq later that spring. U.S. forces then assumed responsibility for aiding the ISF in the south in the wake of the British withdrawal, but U.S. forces withdrew from urban and populated areas in June 2009, and the size of the U.S. presence was planned to drop steadily thereafter.

64. Carter, “Iraqi Air Force Lifted By Support Missions.”
The Battle for Sadr City

Partly in response to the offensive in Basra, JAM forces began launching rocket attacks on the Green Zone in Baghdad from Sadr City. This prompted a Coalition-led offensive to secure Sadr City. Coalition forces were much more heavily involved in these operations than they were in Basra. Only two Iraqi brigades, roughly 2,000–3,000 soldiers, were deployed for operations in Sadr City. Although the Iraqi security forces involved did not experience massive desertions as they did in Basra, their performance was still uncertain, even in the role of supporting U.S. troops. By mid-April, most of Sadr City remained under JAM control despite heavy fighting, although a walled-off section was taken by Iraqi and Coalition forces. This walled-off section covered the southernmost third of Sadr City, and was the area from which many rocket and mortar attacks on the Green Zone had been launched.

The fighting in Baghdad continued during the rest of April and into May, resulting in at least 1,000 deaths and more than 2,000 injuries. Once again, it was an Iranian-brokered cease-fire, signed on May 11, that seemed to end the most serious major violence, although smaller-scale operations continued particularly around the walled-off southern section of Sadr City.

Iraqi security forces were able to deploy throughout much of Sadr City on May 20, 2008. However, this operation, dubbed “Operation Salam,” was not an advance under hostile fire, as it occurred after the Sadrists realized that the alternative might be an advance by U.S. forces and as most JAM forces obeyed the cease-fire. Nevertheless, Iraqi security forces did take up a number of positions in Sadr City and established checkpoints and strongpoints. They also did so without Coalition troops (evidently including their embedded advisers). The political headquarters of the Sadrist movement was surrounded by IA armored vehicles. Six battalions, including a number of armored vehicles, entered and took up positions in Sadr City. Between 4,000 and 5,000 IA soldiers were operating within Sadr City as of May 20, 2008, without any major incidents.

Since May 2008, Iraqi security forces have occupied Sadr City without any major resistance from the JAM. The government of Iraq and the Coalition were also able to begin a large program of reconstruction and aid in Sadr City that was ongoing when U.S. military forces left Baghdad in June 2009.

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73. Roggio, “Iraqi Army Presses into Sadr City.”
The Battle for Mosul

The intra-Shi’ite fighting in Basra and Sadr City also did not halt the fight against Al Qa’ida. The battle against Al Qa’ida had already made dramatic gains in the fall of 2007. During the rest of 2007, the surge of U.S. troops, increasing ISF activity, the Awakening movement, and the Sons of Iraq (SoI) combined to put Al Qa’ida on the defensive and drove it from much of Anbar and Baghdad. By early 2008, the largest remaining urban Al Qa’ida stronghold was in Mosul. After a series of bombings there in mid January 2008, Prime Minister Maliki promised a “decisive” offensive to destroy Al Qa’ida in Iraq (AQI) in Mosul.74

Unlike most previous major operations against AQI, the battle to drive Al Qa’ida from the Mosul area and its remaining positions in the northwest has been largely led by IA forces. The U.S. troop presence in Mosul remained relatively small, at 1,900 troops, through March 2008.75 It has remained small since then, and it has been affected by the U.S. need to withdraw from cities by June 30, 2009. Previous major operations against Al Qa’ida involved more than 10,000 U.S. troops.

The IA had around 7,000 troops in or around Mosul when it began operations in the area—most in the Iraqi 2nd and 3rd divisions, which were some of the best in the IA. An additional battalion from the Iraqi 2nd division was added before the offensive, and the addition of another (700-person) battalion was planned. Additionally, two more IA battalions were planned to deploy to western Nineveh, and the MoI announced that 3,000 additional police officers would be dispatched to reinforce Mosul.76 In all, roughly 18,200 Iraqi security force personnel, both IA and IPS were involved in operations in Mosul by February 2008. Additionally, an Iraqi operations command to coordinate the offensive was set up in February and completed in April.77

The ISF forces deployed to the battle for Mosul (or more properly the broader area of Al Qa’ida operations around Mosul and Ninewa Province) continued to have problems in spite of the experience gained earlier in the year. Iraqi officers complained of a lack of trucks, weapons, and ammunition.78 Brig. Gen. Nourdeen Hussein Tartar stated that for a brigade of 3,000 men he had only 53 combat vehicles, 11 of which were damaged.79 According to Sgt. James Luce “Al Qa’ida is better equipped and better trained than they [the IA] are. Without us [the U.S. military] out here, they don’t stand a chance.”80

The police force, which played a key role in efforts to hold ground taken from Al Qa’ida, remained badly underequipped. According to Hassan Abdallah, a Mosul police captain, he and his men had to buy their own uniforms, and lack winter gear. “We have no government support,” he stated.81 These problems were aggravated by sectarian tensions. Mosul is a largely Sunni city, but

76. Gordon and Farrell, “Mosul Bombings Prompt Promise of New Offensive.”  
78. Haynes, “Ill-Equipped and Outgunned, The Iraqi Battle to Save Mosul.”  
79. Ibid.  
the ISF in the area are seen as being led by Kurds. The unpopularity of the ISF partially explains why very few SoI groups have been created in the area.

By March 2008, the drive to eliminate Al Qa’ida from Mosul was still in the development phase. U.S. and Iraqi forces were still setting up a series of bases and checkpoints throughout the city, as well as building an earthen wall around the city.82 The large operation in Basra may have forced the ISF to slow the pace of operations in Mosul.

On May 10, 2008, however, U.S. and Iraqi forces launched a major offensive, dubbed ‘Lions Roar,’ in Mosul.83 Maliki, repeating his actions in Basra, took personal charge of the offensive on May 14.84 Al Qa’ida was apparently unable to organize a coherent defense after months of successful Iraqi/Coalition offensives throughout central, western, and northern Iraq, and did not put up a fierce resistance. According to Maj. Gen. Mark Hertling, 1,200 militants were captured in the crackdown, about 200 of whom were believed to be members of “terrorist organizations.”85 Hertling also added that the number of daily attacks in Mosul had dropped 85 percent since the beginning of the operation.86

This offensive did not defeat AQI and its supporters, however, as much as suppress and displace them. AQI still had significant cadres in the greater Mosul/Ninewa area at the beginning of 2009 and was able to carry out occasional low-level attacks and bombings. The ISF still was slow to react in conducting operations, and its operational security was often poor. As a result, AQI forces either dispersed before the ISF closed on their location, or put up a short fight and then dispersed.

This situation continued through the spring of 2009 and has been complicated by rising Arab-Kurdish tensions and problems in Iraqi politics. The provincial elections brought an Arab Sunni governor to power in Ninewa and gave the Sunnis a majority in the provincial council. In the political struggles that followed, the former Kurdish leaders of the local government were excluded from power, as were other Kurds. The commander of the key Iraqi Army division in Ninewa was an Arab whom Kurds believed was associated with Saddam’s operations against the Kurds, and Kurds began to be pushed out of command positions in the Iraqi Army.

The end result was that the ISF still carried out operations against AQI and other insurgent forces but did little that had a decisive and lasting effect. Mosul experienced little of the reconstruction and development taking place in other Iraqi cities, and at least some charged that the government was deliberately limiting offensive action and allowing Sunni-Kurdish tension to grow as a divide-and-conquer tactic. Although such charges may well be unfair, it was clear that Mosul and Ninewa remained one of the few areas where AQI and its affiliates could retain a lasting presence and was a key area in terms of moving funds and volunteers into Iraq.

The Battle for Diyala

Some of the same problems occurred in Diyala. The Iraqi security forces launched a major offensive in late July 2008 that was only briefed to U.S. commanders on July 29. This time, however, the battle plan was considerably better developed. Lt. Gen. Ali Gaidan Majidran, the commander

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82. Haynes, “Ill-Equipped and Outgunned, The Iraqi Battle to Save Mosul.”
86. Ibid.
of the offensive, was able to give a sophisticated presentation using three-dimensional maps and clearly defined troop positions. The Iraqi 1st Division, one of the first formed in the new IA, demonstrated that experience did give Iraqi forces the ability to operate largely on their own, although they had substantial U.S. aid and air support and fought with the aid of the U.S. Army 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.87

As was the case in Mosul, however, the resulting offensive did not decisively defeat AQI as much as suppress and displace it. AQI still had significant cadres at the beginning of September 2008, and was able to carry out low-level attacks and bombings. There also was sometimes significant tension between the IA units and Iraqi police and local Sunni leaders and the Sons of Iraq. By mid-2009, according to DOD, AQI had been forced “into the sparsely populated areas within the Hamrin Mountains, where AQI still maintains freedom of movement.”88

This raises broader issues about the capabilities of the ISF and whether the ISF has the war-fighting strength and political leadership necessary to defeat the various insurgent movements once U.S. and other Coalition forces are gone. Iraqi operations have often displaced or dispersed elements of Al Qa’ida in Iraq and the Mahdi Army rather than actively defeating them. They also have often been heavily dependent on U.S. “enablers” and IS&R support. There is an important difference between having a growing level of capability and success and the ability to stand alone. The ISF’s successes are real, but they have to be kept in proportion. Any image of ISF independence is not yet the reality.


The victories that Iraqi and Coalition forces have won to date have largely been in counterinsurgency. They have been victories by Iraqi Army and paramilitary units that have dealt with the “win” aspects of a “win, hold, and build” strategy. This progress is real and needs to be considered in working out a proper transition in Iraqi force development and U.S. withdrawals from Iraq, but it is only part of the story.

The future of Iraq’s security forces, and of Iraq’s security and stability, will depend on how well its force development effort allows Iraq’s forces to replace U.S. forces by the end of 2011 and to go on to develop the capability to defend Iraq against its neighbors. Such progress is necessary not only to consolidate the gains made against Al Qa’ida in Iraq and the JAM, but also to avoid new forms of sectarian and ethnic conflict and give the security forces the mix of civilian partners that will allow Iraq to build and hold as well as win. Conditions-based U.S. withdrawals need to be tied to these developments as well as to the progress in developing the Iraqi security forces.

Iraq’s security will also depend on how well Iraqi security efforts are supported by political accommodation, effective governance, and development at the national, provincial, and local level. Security forces dominate only the “win” side of the mission. The “hold” side depends as much on the rule of law and the quality of governance. The ISF can only help create the conditions that make a “build” effort possible. This effort is shaped by both the civil side of government and the private sector.

The Iraqi National Command Authority and the Prime Minister’s Office

Figure 3.1 shows the formal structure of the Iraqi government. The United States does not report officially on the problems created by the personalities at the top of the Iraqi security structure, or on the way in which they organize and function. Yet, the top levels of government are divided along ethnic and sectarian lines; and there are deep internal rivalries for power within each ethnic and sectarian group, between given parties within a given ethnic and sectarian group, and within each major party.

The office of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki plays a special role in this structure. Prime Minister Maliki and his office play a critical informal role in allocating resources, authorizing the transfer of key supplies, dealing with major procurements, deciding on senior promotions, and appointing top commanders—often bypassing the regular chain of command, avoiding review by the
President Council and the Council of Representatives, and using supposedly temporary “staff” positions. As one senior expert put it during interviews in Iraq in June 2009,

The first level of military professional decisionmaking is several rings below Prime Minister Maliki’s influence. This means that the military advice that constrains the PM’s ability to evaluate his forces is episodic. Moreover, there are a number of extra-constitutional organizations such as the OSINC and the counterterrorism bureau. There are also manifestations of executive power in the military that I believe may be problematic in the future. Finally, that has made it problematic for our command to know who we should be partnering with.

State Department reporting that is not circulated in public shows very different levels of capability within individual ministries. This reporting indicated that no ministry had reached a high level of capability by the spring of 2009, and that only the Planning Ministry had reached a moderate level of capability. The other ministries still had significant problems in leadership and capacity, and the Education, Employment, Finance, Water Resources, Displacement and Migration, and Transportation ministries had serious problems in leadership, capacity, or both. Governance at the local, district, and provincial level was generally even weaker.
The competition for the coming national election, and the struggle to form a government that will follow, has made this fragmentation even worse. It has also led the prime minister’s office to intervene more directly in the development and control of the ISF and to limit Sunni and Kurdish influence at the top levels of the ISF. If these political struggles have any benefit, it is that the coalition building involved may eventually cut across sectarian and ethnic lines. Even this benefit is uncertain, however. There is little chance that Iraq’s political future will become clear until after the election and the months of jockeying over government positions that follow it.

In the interim, the Iraqi government is still in the process of developing an overall structure that can ability to effectively administer the ISF and plan and manage the budget—although these capabilities are slowly improving. These problems are compounded by the inability of the central government to respond effectively to the needs of the provinces and key cities, as well as respond quickly and effectively to the needs of local Iraqi Army and police commands. Any visitor to Iraq who travels outside the Green Zone learns how often Iraqi commanders and officials criticize the central government for taking forever to decide and coordinate and for making sectarian and ethnic choices in recruiting, promotion, the supply of equipment and ammunition, and similar issues.

Many analysts blame the prime minister’s office for these problems. There is no way to assess how much of this blame is valid and how much stems from Iraq’s political tensions, factional disputes, the problems within its ministries and overall structure of government, and the lack of efficient systems of governance at many different levels. Such complaints are so common, however, that they illustrate one of the key problems that will affect the speed with which the United States can safely withdraw from Iraq without creating problems in Iraqi stability. Iraq’s power struggles inevitably act out in shaping the Iraqi Security Forces, as they do in every other aspect of Iraqi government activity.

Progress and Non-Progress toward Political Accommodation

The key civil challenge that Iraq faces in shaping the ISF is not the role of the prime minister’s office or that of the Iraqi central government. It is the need for the kind of political accommodation that will allow the Iraqi security forces to function as a nonsectarian, nonethnic, truly national force and will allow the Iraqi central government and national command authority to act in the nation’s interest, rather than that of competing sects and ethnic groups.

Many of the major issues that now shape Iraq’s future security are primarily political in character and are still affected by Iraq’s sectarian and ethnic divisions and tensions:

- The local, provincial, and central government power struggles coming out of the provincial elections and that will culminate in the national elections at the end of 2009 or in early 2010 and the resulting power struggles to build governing coalitions.
- Arab-Kurdish tensions and the possibility of conflict and dividing the Iraqi security forces.
- The continuing threat posed by the insurgency, led by Al Qa’ida in Iraq, which plays a key role in Mosul, Ninewa, Diyala, and Baghdad and in various suicide and vehicle bombings.
- Continuing Sunni-Shi’ite tensions.
- The impact of the budget crisis, weak economy, and massive unemployment.
- Intra-Shi’ite power struggles, including the future of the Sadrist movement and Shi’ite militias.
and the role played by Iran.

- Intra-Sunni power struggles, including the future role of the awakening and the Sons of Iraq.
- The referendum on the Strategic Framework and Status of Forces Agreements.

**The Legacy of Legislative Issues and “Benchmarks”**

Iraq also still has not passed much of the legislation that is critical to providing the kind of civil structure and political accommodation necessary to create a truly national ISF. As Figure 3.2 shows, Iraq has not completed much of the legislation and actions necessary for political accommodation. The list in this figure is focused on U.S. benchmarks that often do not reflect real-world Iraqi priorities and needs, and does not include key issues such as a referendum on the Kurdish area (Article 140), the future of the Sons of Iraq, repatriation/resettlement of more than four million displaced persons (at least 15 percent of the population), other areas of the constitution, or the role of Islam in the state and the rule of law.

The U.S. Department of State provides a different list in its weekly status reports on Iraq, and one that highlights additional tasks and challenges. As of the spring of 2009, this list included the following:

- Security Agreement/ SFA: Passed: Council of Representatives (CoR) passed the Security Agreement and the Strategic Framework Agreement on November 27; they were approved by the Presidency Council December 4.

- Provincial Elections: Passed: Passed by the CoR on September 24; signed by the Presidency Council on October 7. The law includes an article entering it into force immediately upon signing, not waiting for publication in the Official Gazette. On November 3, the CoR passed an amendment guaranteeing minority representation on certain provincial councils. The Presidency Council approved the amendment on November 8.


- Amnesty Law: Passed: The CoR approved the law on February 13; the law was signed by the Presidency Council February 26 and came into effect March 2.

- Provincial Powers: Passed: The CoR approved the law on February 13; the law was vetoed by the Presidency Council February 26. The veto was rescinded on March 19. The provisions within the law will enter into force once Provincial Elections are held.


- Hydrocarbons Package: The Framework Law was resubmitted to the Oil and Gas Committee on October 26 and then returned to the Council of Ministers. There has been no progress on the other three laws [in the Hydrocarbons Package].

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1. Forming Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) and completing review
   CRC continues debating 50 amendments regarding federal vs. regional powers and presidential powers. Kurds want the Kirkuk issue settled before finalizing amendments. Sunnis want the presidential council to have enhanced powers relative to the prime minister. There has been some progress on technical and judicial issues. Deadlines for final recommendations have been repeatedly extended, now beyond the latest May 2008 deadline.

2. Enacting and implementing laws on de-Ba’athification
   The Justice and Accountability Law was passed on January 12, 2008. It allows about 30,000 fourth-ranking Ba’athists to regain their jobs, and 3,500 Ba’athists in the top three party ranks would receive pensions. But it could allow for judicial prosecution of all ex-Ba’athists and for the firing of about 7,000 ex-Ba’athists in post-Saddam security services, and it bars ex-Saddam security personnel from regaining jobs. Some reports suggest that some de-Ba’athification officials are using the new law to purge political enemies or settle old scores.

3. Enacting and implementing oil laws that ensure equitable distribution of resources
   Framework and three implementing laws stalled over Kurd-Arab disputes; only the framework law has reached the Council of Representatives (CoR) to date. Revenue is being distributed equitably, and the 2008 budget adopted on February 13, 2008, maintains 17 percent revenue for the KRG. Kurds and the central government set up a commission to resolve remaining disputes. The U.S. embassy says that it expects near-term progress on revenue sharing law (an implementing law).

4. Enacting and implementing laws to form semiautonomous regions
   The regions law passed in October 2006, with a relatively low threshold (petition by 33 percent of provincial council members) to start process to form new regions, but main blocs agreed that law would take effect in April 2008. In August 2008, a petition was circulated among some Basra residents (another way to start forming a region) to begin the process of converting Basra Province into a single province “region.”

5. Enacting and implementing (a) a law to establish a higher electoral commission, (b) a provincial elections law, (c) a law to specify authorities of provincial bodies, and (d) a set date for provincial elections
   A draft law stipulating powers of provincial governments was adopted on February 13, 2008, and took effect in April 2008. An election law required to implement elections was adopted on September 24, 2008. The issue of Kirkuk and disputed territories was put aside to a parliamentary committee, which will issue a report by March 31, 2009. The law provides for provincial elections by January 31, 2009; closed-list voting; 25 percent quota for women on the councils; no elections in Kirkuk or the three KRG provinces; no religious symbols on ballots; and no set-aside seats for Christian and other minorities. About four months of preparation (registration, candidate vetting, ballot distribution) are needed to implement the election; registration updating has begun.

6. Enacting and implementing legislation addressing amnesty for former insurgents
   A law to grant amnesty to “non-terrorists” among 25,000 Iraq-held detainees was passed on February 13, 2008. Of 17,000 approved for release (mostly Sunnis and Sadrist Shi’a), about 1,600 were released to date by a slow judicial process; 19,000 detainees held by the United States are not affected.

7. Enacting and implementing laws on militia disarmament
   The Basra operation was viewed by the Bush administration as a move against militias. On April 9, 2008, Maliki demanded that all militias disband as a condition for their parties to participate in provincial elections. The law on militia demobilization has stalled.

8. Establishing political, media, economic, and services committee to support U.S. “surge”
   No change. “Executive Steering Committee” works with U.S.-led forces.
9. Providing three trained and ready brigades to support U.S. surge
   No change. Eight brigades assigned to assist the surge. Surge now ended.

10. Providing Iraqi commanders with authorities to make decisions, without political intervention,
    to pursue all extremists, including Sunni insurgents and Shi’ite militias
    No significant change. There is still some U.S. concern about the control by the Office of the Commander
    in Chief (part of Maliki’s office) over appointments to the Iraqi security forces favoring Shi’ites. Still, some
    politically motivated leaders remain in the security forces. In the past year, the commander of the National
    Police (NP) has fired more than 5,000 officers for sectarian or politically motivated behavior, and the MoI is
    said to have been purged of sectarian administrators and their bodyguards. An increasing number of Sunnis
    are now in command jobs.

11. Ensuring that Iraqi security forces provide even-handed enforcement of law
    The Bush administration interpreted the Basra operation as Maliki’s effort to enforce law evenhandedly, but
    it acknowledges continued militia influence and infiltration in some units.

12. Ensuring that the surge plan in Baghdad will not provide a safe haven for any outlaw, regard-
    less of sectarian affiliation
    No change. The Bush administration sees the security forces acting against JAM in Sadr City, and ethno-
    sectarian violence has fallen sharply in Baghdad.

13. (a) Reducing sectarian violence and (b) eliminating militia control of local security
    Sectarian violence continues to drop, but Shi’ite militias still hold arms. 103,000 Sunni Sons of Iraq are still
    distrusted as potential Sunni militiamen. The Iraqi government assumes payment of 54,000 Sons as of Oc-
    tober 1, but opposes integrating more than about 20 percent into the security forces.

14. Establishing Baghdad joint security stations
    No change. More than 50 joint security stations operating, more than the 33 planned.

15. Increasing Iraqi security force units capable of operating independently
    There has been continuing but slow progress in training the security forces. U.S. officials say that the forces
    are likely unable to secure Iraq internally until 2009–2012 and against external threats not for several years
    thereafter. The Basra operation initially exposed continued factionalism and poor leadership in Iraqi security
    forces, but also their ability to rapidly deploy.

16. Ensuring protection of minority parties in the Council of Representatives
    No change. Rights of minority parties protected by Article 37 of constitution.

17. Allocating and spending $10 billion in 2007 capital budget for reconstruction projects.
    About 63 percent of the $10 billion 2007 allocation for capital projects was spent. There is another $22 bil-
    lion in the 2008 Iraqi budget, including the August 2008 supplemental portion.

18. Ensuring that Iraqi authorities are not making false accusations against Iraqi security force
    members
    Some governmental recriminations against some officers are still observed.

Source: Adapted from Kenneth Katzman, *Iraq: Reconciliation and Benchmarks*, Congressional Research Report for Congress,
The Impact of Political Tensions

This list did not include other key legislation like investment and land ownership laws. It also focused only on whether the law was passed. Passing laws does not mean implementing them—either fairly or at all—and only sustained government action will produce real political accommodation. Iraq needs time and aid to properly function as a central government and to reach the necessary level of political accommodation to support national stability and security.

It is easy to blame the prime minister’s office or the Council of the Representatives for the delays in such efforts, but much of the problem is caused by the widespread tension between Arab Shi‘ite, Arab Sunni, and Kurd; by internal political rivalries at every level of government and within the Council of the Representatives; and by the fact that key political compromises have not yet been reached among them. The unity and effectiveness of Iraqi security forces cannot be separated from progress in political accommodation at the national, governorate, and local level. Military forces can “win,” but “build” and “hold” require unified and effective governance, and this is still very much a work in progress.

There are still grave questions about what will happen if Iraq does not hold fair and open national elections at the end of 2009 or early in 2010. The local and provincial elections that Iraq held in January have already shown that the national elections may create a new mix of often inexperienced leaders and new factions, and may lead to turnover at every level of the Iraqi government. Local/provincial elections also did not take place in the four provinces where there are deep divisions between Arab, Kurd, and smaller minorities. Other power struggles may develop over proposed referendums on the Iraqi-U.S. status of forces agreement and strategic agreement, the creation of a federal area in Basra, and the division of Arab and Kurdish areas in the north.

Other questions arise as to what will happen if Iraq continues to face a budget crisis because of low oil export revenues, does not resolve the issues affecting the development of the oil sector and of oil revenues, or does not show it can spend its national budget in ways that share the money properly between sectarian and ethnic factions. The success and national character of the ISF will be critically dependent on how well the top levels of Iraq’s government and political leadership deal with these and the other crucial aspects of political accommodation.

Other security issues jeopardize Iraqi force development. It is all very well, for example, to talk about disarming militias, but Iraq is now a country whose citizens are heavily armed, where many factions still have hidden significant numbers of weapons, and where Article 117 of the constitution allows each “region” to organize internal security forces, a provision that already legalizes the Kurds’ Peshmerga militia.2

The Arab-Kurd-Turcoman minority issue goes far beyond Kirkuk. It affects every part of the ethnic fault line and the disputed territories on either side, from the area around Mosul to the Iranian border. U.S. negotiators and the U.S. presence in Iraq do provide a considerable stabilizing influence on this issue. Iraqi dialogue and the UN negotiating effort may well resolve this issue without Iraqi violence, but there already have been some clashes between Arab and Kurdish forces, and the problems intensified in late 2008 and early 2009 rather than diminished. Ninewa and Mosul, as well as Kirkuk, are particularly dangerous flashpoints, and these tensions have sharply

reduced the role of the Kurds in the Iraqi Army and left the funding and future of the Pesh Merga and other Kurdish security forces uncertain.

As DOD reported in March 2009, this threat

is underscored by significant distrust between partisan national leaders. Arab-Kurd tensions continue to grow, surrounding the debate over the centralization versus decentralization of power, the resolution of disputed internal boundaries, property rights and restitution, the status of the Kurdistan Regional Government’s (KRG) Peshmerga, the status of Kirkuk, and the resolution of hydrocarbon policy. Tensions between the Iraqi Army (IA) and the Peshmerga in and around disputed territories continue to be a flashpoint for potential violence.³

…Kurdish pressure on the GoI to implement Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution continues to drive tensions between Kurds and Sunni Arabs in north and central Iraq, as well as bring about tensions with minorities, including Turkomen, Christians, and Yezidis. AQI and Sunni insurgent groups seek to exploit this tension and look for opportunities to increase ethno-sectarian violence. The presence of Kurdish Peshmerga and Kurd-dominated IA units beyond the KRG boundaries exacerbates tensions and fuels the belief that the GoI and the Coalition are allowing the Kurds to act unchecked.⁴

There are still serious Arab Shi’ite-Arab Sunni tensions concerning every aspect of security operations at both the top of the government and throughout mixed areas in Iraq. They also affect day-to-day military, National Police, and police operations. Shi’ite-Sunni tensions still are high in mixed areas like Baghdad, Mosul, and Diyala, and the U.S. presence has had a major stabilizing impact that is now being sharply reduced. Once again, Iraqi progress may well remove the need for such U.S. efforts, but the timing of such progress is far from clear.

The local and provincial elections in January 2009 made it clear that a major Shi’ite political struggle was under way between Prime Minister Maliki’s party, ISCI, Fadhila, and the Sadrists—a power struggle that initially strengthened Maliki and weakened ISCI. Events since have been more uncertain and could lead to significantly more intra-Shi’ite tension and rivalry as Iraq moves toward national elections. A similar result occurred in Sunni areas, where newly empowered tribal leaders became locked in a power struggle with the Islamic Party, the main Sunni party in the national assembly.

Finally, all of these issues will interact with the implementation of the complex provisions of the Status of Forces Agreement, or SOFA, between the United States and Iraq—the “Agreement between the United States of America and Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities During Their Temporary Presence in Iraq” — and the “Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Iraq.” The broad and deliberately general content of both agreements gives the Iraqi and U.S. governments considerably flexibility as Iraq steadily takes the lead. This also means, however, that any faction can challenge the actions of any Iraqi or U.S. official or officer who implements them, or try to turn any incident involving U.S. forces or an Iraq-U.S. difference into a political crisis. Iraqi security politics are not going to be

⁴. Ibid., 26.
domestic. They are going to have an impact on every aspect of U.S.-Iraqi security cooperation, and this inevitably means that U.S. politics will react in turn.

Unemployment, Underemployment, and the ISF

These political and security challenges are compounded by deep structural problems in the economy that have grown steadily since Iraq effectively went bankrupt during 1982-1984 as a result of the cost and strains caused by the Iran-Iraq War. Decades of war and sanctions followed, and the situation was made worse by very high rates of population growth. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that Iraq’s population was only 5.2 million in 1950. It rose to 6.8 million in 1960, 9.4 million in 1970, 13.2 million in 1980, 18.1 million in 1990, and 22.7 million in 2000. It was 24.7 million in 2003, and rose to 28.2 million in 2008. The Census Bureau estimates that it will rise to 40.4 million by 2025.5

Iraq’s economy has received only limited benefits from the flow of aid and reconstruction efforts since 2003 and the fall of Saddam Hussein. This is reflected in the work done by the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction and in a wide range of reports available at the SIGIR Web site (www.sigir.mil/reports/Default.aspx). Iraq has not been able to make significant progress in modernizing its petroleum sector, which accounts for more than 86 percent of government revenues and 75 percent of its GDP.6 It is only beginning to modernize its state-owned enterprises and create major firms supported by private investment. Its agricultural sector has been crippled by mismanagement at the state level, growing water problems, and demographic pressures. Its service sector has been crippled by the pressures of war, and limited improvements in infrastructure has not compensated for decades of underfunding, civil conflict since 2003, and population growth and rising demand.

These problems have had a direct impact on the development of the ISF. At present, the ISF is not simply the employer of the last resort; far too often, it is the employer of only resort. Iraq has a very young population (40 percent are 14 years of age or younger), and the CIA estimates that direct unemployment is 18–30 percent. If one counts underemployment in jobs and wages that do not offer a real living, unemployment/underemployment for Iraqis between 16 and 30 years of age likely approaches 40–60 percent in the more troubled areas of the country.

To put this number in perspective, the U.S. census bureau estimates that there about 2.4 million Iraqi males in this 16–30-year-old age group when the Iran-Iraq War ended in 1988; there were 4.3 million in 2009.7 The CIA estimates that 313,500 males and 305,000 females reach the age where they should enter the labor force each year, and this number will increase by well over 50 percent by 2025.8

These figures would be much higher, and much more destabilizing, if it had not been for the steady expansion of Iraq’s security forces, the creation of the SoI, and U.S. and other economic aid programs. It is doubtful that anything like Iraq’s present progress towards stability would have

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7. U.S. Census Bureau, *International Data Base*.
occurred without U.S. efforts to both create the ISF and ensure that it would absorb Sunnis as well as Shi’ites, or if the United States had failed to support the Sons of Iraq as they emerged in Anbar, and fund a steady expansion of the program.

Even if one does not include the less capable elements of the Facilities Protection Service (FPS) and the strength of the SoI in the total manning levels for the ISF, the total is still roughly 650,000 men, with a goal of at least 710,000. For many younger Iraqi males, the ISF is currently the only source of employment and lasting job creation. Iraq did maintain much larger forces during the Iran-Iraq War and the time of Saddam Hussein. Nevertheless, much of the force created under Saddam consisted of draftees who received only token pay. Funding better-paid, volunteer security forces at these levels will be difficult to sustain. The planned total number also represents roughly 10 percent of the country’s entire labor force (around 7 million according to CIA estimates) and scarcely represents an ideal use of manpower in a stable democracy.

As is discussed later in this report, the Sons of Iraq remain a problem in terms of central government action. They are also a symbol of the fact that Iraqi security force development has to be linked to Sunni confidence that their ethnicity will have a fair share of ISF positions at every level, and that they can be confident of their own security. Decisions by the central government will be equally critical, however, in determining whether—and how soon—Iraq can move toward a development path that creates real and lasting jobs that have some status and respect.

Even more serious, current levels of unemployment and underemployment, ranging from 20 to 40 percent depending on the definition used and age groups being looked at, are a warning that real-world political accommodation will be dependent on the ability of the central government to spend Iraq’s oil wealth in ways that share the money reasonably fairly and find the proper balance between meeting urgent human needs and moving the country back on the path towards development. Iraq is making slow progress in improving its budgets and in spending them.

The government of Iraq, however, has not yet shown that it can spend its revenues wisely and fairly, and the global economic crisis that began in the summer of 2008 means that oil export revenues may be 30–50 percent lower than they were that year and will remain far below the levels Iraq had planned to receive until international economic recovery takes place on a broad scale. Iraq already had to cut its projected budget from $80 billion to $67 billion in December 2008, and it cut it again in March 2009 to $58.6 billion — when the backlog of foreign aid provided in past years was virtually spent. State Department sources report, for example, that the U.S. foreign assistance budget dropped from $16.3 billion in FY2004 to zero in FY2005, $1.7 billion in FY2006, $2.2 billion in FY2007, and $0.96 billion in FY2008.

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9. The total size of the ISF reached 615,000 as of March 2009. DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2009, 32. MNSTC-I briefings in June 2009 indicate that the military forces had reached 234,400 and were planned to rise to 335,000, and that Ministry of Interior forces had reached 415,500 and were planned to rise to 523,500. Adding other elements of the Facility Protection Service (FPS) would have added 18,000 men to the current total.

These massive budget cuts have led to numerous GoI cutbacks, including placing a hiring freeze on the ISF, significant drops in the active strength of Iraqi Army divisions, and major cutbacks in Iraqi procurement and force expansion plans. The hiring freeze has already adversely affected many areas of ISF development, in addition to worsening the already dire employment situation for Iraq’s young men. More broadly, interviews with senior Iraqi officers in June 2009 indicated that the Iraqi forces now have little prospect of being able to finance the three-phase force expansion plan that the Iraqi Ministry of defense had developed for 2009–2012, 2012–2016, and 2016–2020. They made it clear that if low oil revenues continued through 2010, the ISF would face a serious crisis.

“Follow the money” is a key axiom in practical politics, and Iraqi progress in this area is at least as critical to Iraqi stability, and the speed at which U.S. forces can safely leave Iraq, as any issue that is listed in Figure 3.2.

**Critical Elections and the Real Meaning of Political Legitimacy**

Iraq faces a year of elections, referendums, and campaigning. The resulting votes will at best be only a prelude to the tasks of creating a stable political outcome from two critical elections and making a wide range of follow-on improvements in governance. Real political legitimacy is not determined by holding elections, but by the quality of government that follows and by how Iraqis of all factions perceive their new local, provincial, and central government. The relatively peaceful conduct of the January 2009 provincial elections, while an important milestone for both the country and the ISF, does not mean that Iraq is now a stable democracy.

Iraq has yet to demonstrate that it has a political process that can produce a stable process of political accommodation to deal with the Sunni-on-Sunni and Shi’ite-on-Shi’ite political struggles that have their own potential for violence. The fact the United States is still present in strength does have a stabilizing impact and surely contributed to the relatively peaceful 2009 provincial elections.

The present national government is heavily weighted toward Dawa and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), largely because most Shi’ite Iraqis voted along sectarian lines for a coalition that these two “exile” parties dominated in the last national election. It is far from clear how much popular following these parties have. At least some of Prime Minister Maliki’s actions in using the ISF, and making decisions about its development, seem increasingly concerned with maintaining Dawa power in Shi’ite areas (such as Basra), preparing for the next elections, and finding ways to weaken the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI). Dawa’s relative success in the 2009 provincial elections no doubt was caused in part by the “law and order” image Maliki promoted partially through using the ISF offensively in Basra and elsewhere.

The very name of the Shi’ite United Iraqi Alliance that won the December 2005 elections has become something of an oxymoron. Its almost complete lack of unity continued through the 2009 provincial elections. The mixed results of those elections seemed certain to only increase the intra-Shi’ite power struggles as the national elections approach.

The Sunni political parties now in the legislature remain divided between those representing the Awakening movement and the Sunni Islamic party. Whether the Awakening parties can effectively govern Anbar or even stay together in a coalition remains to be seen. The Kurdish provinces did not vote in the January 2009 provincial elections. The Kurdish parties may put up a common
front against the Arabs and Turcomans, but they are divided into Barzani and Talibani factions, as are the Peshmerga, in spite of claims to unity. The Kurdistan Alliance is split into three groups—the Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP (24); the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK (22); and the independents (7). There is a Kurdistan Islamic Group with 5 seats that normally votes with the government. There also are small Turcoman (Iraqi Turcoman Front) (1) and Assyrian Christian (Rafidain National List) (1) parties that represent minorities in or around the Kurdish-dominated regions.

These tensions need to be kept in historical context. They do not mean that Iraq will divide or that the Iraqi political process will fail. However, there are few examples of nations that have faced as many challenges as Iraq has and that have actually held free and fair elections and then peacefully accepted the results over time without the stabilizing presence of some outside force.

Moreover, Iraqis have already shown that they have little patience with the learning curve of officials who have to learn how to govern on the job, who prove to be corrupt or favor a given faction, and who do not bring government services and effective security forces down to the local level. No matter how successful the ISF becomes, its progress must be matched by improvements in the quality of both governance and on-the-scene political accommodation.

The Sadrist Movement and the JAM

It is unclear how the Sadrist movement and the Mahdi Army will evolve. Since the Madhi Army’s defeats in Baghdad and the south, Sadr has preferred political options to decisive battle. Sadr originally ordered a six-month cease-fire in Mahdi Army activities in August 2007, after Mahdi Army forces clashed with security forces in the shrine city of Karbala on August 27. Despite the fighting described earlier, he extended the cease-fire for another six months in February 2008 and ordered an indefinite suspension of Mahdi Army military activity on August 28, 2008.

The Mahdi Army has since avoided lasting conflict with the ISF, and it seems to have grown steadily weaker. Sadr’s office in Najaf issued a statement in August 2008 that all of his followers had to obey the cease-fire, that he was disbanding most of the JAM, and that “the Mahdi Army suspension will be valid indefinitely and anyone who does not follow this order will not be considered a member of this group.”

Sadr also said, however, that he would create a special force within the Mahdi Army to fight coalition forces and the occupation and that the Mahdi Army would resume fighting unless the United States entirely withdrew from Iraq. This explains why senior U.S. commanders have continued to worry about the prospect of the Sadr movement turning violent and about the creation of a Hezbollah-like Shi’ite force with Iranian support.

In fact, some observers feel that such developments may already be under way. The Mahdi Army is not unified, has extreme elements like the Special Groups as well as elements that no longer are loyal to Sadr, and effectively has two different faces. One U.S. officer in Baghdad in early 2007 characterized these faces as “Black JAM” and “White JAM.” “White JAM” consists of that portion of the movement involved in the provision of social and other services to Shia residents. Unfortunately, the power on the streets has often been the “Black JAM” wing—the armed portion.

The more extreme elements of the “Black JAM” – which include elements that no longer have ties to Sadr—have sometimes engaged in a wide spectrum of crime and intimidation, directed not just against Sunnis but against anyone who has something they want or who gets in their way.

Other reports seem too extreme. For example, reports began at the end of August 2008 that large numbers of the more radical elements of the Mahdi Army and the Sadrist movement had taken blood oaths to continue the fight against U.S. forces in Iraq, despite an order from their leader Moqtada al-Sadr to put down their arms. According to another report by Agence France-Presse, “Children as young as 10 were among those seen cutting their thumbs with scalpels and putting a bloodied fingerprint to a document circulated by members of the Sadr movement in the cleric’s eastern Baghdad bastion of Sadr City.” Whole families signed the oath, and a Sadr official reportedly have said that the Sadrists had begun signing the blood oath 16 days earlier and would continue doing so until the end of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan in September.13

There have been few attacks that seem to be based on this level of extremism, however, and the ISF has continued to expand into other JAM-controlled areas in the south and Baghdad. The movement’s perceived military defeats may also have weakened support for the Sadrists in the provincial elections in January 2009, although the Sadrists still attracted significant votes and are clearly going to be a significant political party in the coming national elements.

Military defeats, and continued cease-fires, have also exacerbated the fissures in the Sadrist movement and the JAM. According to the Institute for the Study of War, the Sadrist movement has now split into two main factions: “… clerics and politicians (including al-Sadr) who emphasize a return to social, religious, and educational programs; and armed movements which include the Special Groups and groups which have split with Sadr like the Asaib Ahl al-Haq (the League of the Righteous), which seek to continue resistance against Coalition Forces. Both groups seek to operate in the political process. Existing frictions between Muqtada al-Sadr and the leaders of the military wing make it unlikely that the groups will combine assets in the near future.”14

Other analysts see a more fragmented set of divisions within the Sadr movement and outside groups. They see a range of more moderate elements still loyal to Sadr, including elements of the JAM. They also see also a range of hard-line elements of Special Groups that act on their own, rather than as any formal network, plus groups that have largely split from Sadr like the Asaib Ahl al-Haq. These analysts estimate that the leaders of these groups—like Qais Khazali and Akram al’Kabi—are emerging as separate forces any may break with Sadr or support him, depending on Sadr’s future positions and the course of Iraqi politics.

U.S. experts in Iraq still see the various elements of the Sadr militia as a serious potential threat. They feel that the Mahdi Army has divided into splintered sets of paramilitary forces and militias, but that Sadr still has significant support, and they have proof that some Sadrist elements still get arms and training from Iran—as well as key components for building IEDs that have efficient shaped charges and for triggering IEDs. They also feel that the most hostile elements of the militias in the Sadrist movement have been displaced and driven undercover rather than defeated. They do not feel such militias, like the other extremist threats in Iraq, are a major current threat.

to the Iraqi government or the ISF. But they warn that they could become one if the Iraqi political process should break down or lead to new rounds of fighting.

The Department of Defense was almost certainly correct in warning in its March 2009 quarterly report on Iraq that Shi’ite extremists remained as much a threat as Sunni extremism:

Despite... positive developments, national reconciliation and accommodation continue to be hindered by the pursuit of ethno-sectarian agendas and disagreements over the distribution of power and resources at all levels.

...longstanding Sunni-Shi’a discord remains, with some Sunnis suspicious of the extent of the Shi’a political parties’ ties to Iran and doubtful of the GoI’s long-term commitment to the Sons of Iraq (SoI) transition program and the implementation of the Amnesty and Accountability and Justice Laws. Intra-sectarian political tensions also continue, as evidenced by the defection of some members of Tawafuq to other same-sect parties competing for voter support during the provincial elections.

...The overall security situation continues to slowly improve, with security incidents remaining at the same low levels as experienced in early 2004. In much of the country, a sense of normalcy is returning to everyday life, and citizens are increasingly focused on economic issues and the delivery of essential services. With more Iraqis now describing their neighborhoods as calm, the environment is slowly growing more conducive to economic and infrastructure development. Numerous factors have contributed to improved security, including effective Coalition and Iraqi counter-terror operations, increasing capabilities of the ISF, and the rejection of violence and extremism by the Iraqi people. Insurgent-initiated attacks have decreased from an average of 22 per day during the previous reporting period to 12 per day during this reporting period, but insurgents still have the capacity to conduct high-profile attacks. Although these security achievements are increasingly positive, they remain fragile in some places, most notably in Ninewa and Diyala Provinces, as well as in some parts of Baghdad.

Several threat groups remain dangerous and require continued focus to prevent their resurgence. The long-term threat remains Iranian-sponsored Shi’a militant groups, Asa’ib Al-Haq (AAH), Kataib Hezbollah (KH), and unaligned Shi’a extremists, including the newly formed Promised Day Brigade [PDB]. In addition, violent Sunni insurgent groups and Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) are still a major security concern.

... Ongoing ISF operations targeting AAH, KH, and Shi’a splinter extremist groups have impeded their operations, despite the return to Iraq of some of leaders in the fall of 2008. One of Muqtada al-Sadr’s primary concerns has been ensuring his control over the Sadrist movement. In his November 14, 2008, statement, Sadr called for members of AAH to return to the Sadrist movement and implied that AAH was abandoning its resistance to the Coalition.

Sadr’s statement was intended to draw members of AAH back into his movement and undermine AAH as an independent entity. Sadr is continuing to assert his personal control over the direction of the Sadrist movement by attempting to call on AAH members to join his new armed wing, the Promised Day Brigade, which would continue to violently resist the Coalition.

Progress on forming the PDB has been slow; however, the group has conducted some intermittent attacks. Sadrist movements, AAH, and KH continue to experience internal problems,

including personal rivalries, disagreements over plans and policy, confusion over orders and operations, and an absence of leadership in Iraq to respond to increased ISF and Coalition operations. Despite these internal problems, Sadr will maintain a focus on the establishment and expansion of al JAM into a social and cultural movement—and PDB as his top priority. 16

The Continuing Threat from AQI and Sunni Extremists

As is clear throughout this analysis, Iraq and the ISF also face continuing threats from Sunni extremist groups. DOD summarizes these threats as follows in its March 2009 quarterly report:

Sunni insurgent organizations draw much of their motivation for attacks from a few key factors. The largest motivators for Sunni-derived violence in Iraq are economic concerns and the lack of assistance from the GoI for the Sunni community. Due to high unemployment and underemployment rates and an overall suffering economy, many of the low-level Sunni insurgents choose to join or support local insurgent groups in order to earn an income. Regardless of ideologies and overarching objectives, inter-group cooperation at lower levels to achieve mutual goals is common.

Frustration over the poor economic situation is directed at the current government and the Coalition for causing these problems. In a society that holds honor and pride in high regard, unemployed Sunni are disenfranchised and have few options to provide for their family. It is these individuals who make up the core fighting ranks of the Sunni insurgency. In Sunni insurgents continue to draw motivation from a desire to return to power in Iraq. These individuals will continue to destabilize Iraq with the intent of discrediting the GoI.

Secular motivated violence, a driver of instability in Iraq, lingers and is often dependent on local motivations. Personal grudges, ethnically charged incidents, or neighborhood pressure from other sects continue to spur violence. Secular attacks are often youthful reactions to events in their neighborhoods or cities. Religion and nationalism also play a part for a small number of Sunnis who conduct attacks either to expel the “occupiers,” remove perceived Iranian influences, or highlight instances where Sharia law may have been violated. There is also an unknown level of Sunni violence that is attributed to common criminal activities. These acts of violence often have no specific motivation other than greed, interpersonal relationships, and general discontent with the current situation.

…Combined security efforts of Coalition forces degraded AQI and reduced its ability to operate in population centers. Significant leadership losses, lack of public support, and the difficult operating environment have forced AQI from most population centers and limited its freedom of movement. However, AQI retains limited capability to conduct HPAs [high-profile attacks] designed to demonstrate its viability and diminish GoI security advances. Subsequently, AQI has demonstrated its use of female suicide bombers to thwart improved security measures and conduct high-casualty producing attacks, especially against civilians. Further, AQI is targeting ISF to create an environment of instability and increase its freedom of movement.

16. Ibid., 22–23.
Although northern Iraq remains AQI’s main area of activity, ongoing security operations in and around Mosul continue to pressure the group. These operations have also impeded AQI’s ability to receive external support, and the influx of foreign fighters into Iraq continues to decline. Concurrently, further reducing exposure for the group, AQI’s production of official media, primarily distributed through jihadist websites, has reduced dramatically.17

The Transfer of Power and Security to Iraqi Control

It may be much easier to transfer power formally than to transfer it in reality. In the past, premature efforts to transfer provinces to Iraqi control created significant security problems. All Iraqi provinces were originally scheduled to transfer to Provincial Iraqi Control by the end of 2006. However, this plan proved impractical. Many provinces were not transferred, and many of the provinces that were transferred to Iraqi control clearly were not ready and were the scene of major U.S. military operations and/or civil violence. Many of the southern provinces under Iraqi PIC had become de facto protectorates of various Shi’ite militias, or criminal gangs. In practice, the ISF still had very uncertain or inadequate capability in several of the transferred provinces, and any effective security action depended heavily on continued U.S. or other Coalition support. In many areas in such provinces, there was no ISF or central government presence.

These problems in transferring power continued into early 2008. Shortly before the large-scale fighting began in Basra, DOD held up Basra as an example of a successful transition to Provincial Iraqi Control in its March 2008 quarterly report. The report noted “the decrease in violence in Basra Province that continues to be maintained effectively by the Iraqi Army and Police. Iraqi forces in Basra have demonstrated their capability to provide an Iraqi solution to provincial security challenges.”18 The fact that Basra was plunged into major violence less than one month after the release of that report shows just how serious the problems were in the PIC system.

Since that time, however, other transfers have had more apparent success. For example, the transfer of Anbar formally occurred on September 1, 2008. The event marked the eleventh transfer out of a total 18 provinces and the pullback of U.S. troops from the cities in 13 provinces. Anbar had made great progress toward stability since the beginning of 2007, as the result of a spontaneous tribal uprising against AQI and its supporting organization as well as of U.S. support of the uprising that capitalized on the Awakening Movement to create the SoI. Violence in Anbar had been reduced from the highest level outside of Baghdad Province to close to the lowest. The number of insurgent attacks had been reduced more than 90 percent since its peak in 2007, and former insurgent groups such as the Islamic Movement of Holy Warriors had first turned against AQI and then became part of the SoI.19

The Iraqi security forces in Anbar had experienced a major buildup and steadily improved their local capabilities. The IA built up from 8,300 men at the start of 2007 to 24,000, and the Iraqi Police increased from 11,000 to 24,000. U.S. funding and encouragement also strengthened the

17. Ibid., 24–25.
stribes, local authorities, and provincial government. As a result, the United States had been able to reduce its presence from a peak of 37,500 troops to below 26,000 at the time of the transfer.\(^{20}\)

Still, the transfer occurred before the central government had shown that it could successfully replace U.S. aid, spend the money the Iraqi budget allocated to Anbar, or absorb the Sons of Iraq that were active in the province. Although it occurred when U.S. authorities stated that only 4,000 men were still on the U.S.-paid rolls of the SoI in Anbar, some reports put the number of Iraqi young men in Anbar still funded by the United States at closer to seven times that number. It was also far from clear what would happen when the former members of the SoI were no longer receiving $300 per month from the United States.\(^{21}\) (This was a serious issue outside Anbar. Although the Sons of Iraq totaled more than 99,000 nationwide, the central government had agreed to fund only 54,000 of them when it assumed responsibility for paying them on October 1, 2008.\(^{22}\))

Many Sunnis remained deeply suspicious of the Maliki government's failure to support the SoI, and at most only about 20 percent of the SoI seemed likely to be absorbed into the ISF—most in low-grade police positions. At least some of the fighters were threatening to return to the insurgency, and other elements of the SoI were in hiding near a U.S. base because the Iraqi military sought to arrest them.\(^\text{23}\) Moreover, intra-Sunni tensions existed between tribal leaders, local authorities, the provincial government, and the Sunni parties in the central government. There were reports in late August 2008 that the Anbar Provincial Council had asked U.S. forces to delay the transfer of Anbar Province to the Iraqi central government by one year because Iraqi forces were not ready to keep order, and because of friction between the Awakening Councils, which the Sons helped create, and Sunni parties in the central government such as the Iraqi Islamic Party.\(^\text{24}\)

Despite these problems, transfers of security responsibility continued throughout Iraq, culminating with the withdrawal of major U.S. forces from Iraqi cities in July 2009. Many Iraqis and Americans saw this withdrawal as a major turning point, and it was marked by celebrations in many cities in Iraq. The effects of the withdrawal were unclear as of summer 2009, although despite a few high-profile bombings, no major uptick in violence occurred. Indeed, according to Gen. Raymond Odierno, most U.S. troops had withdrawn from most Iraqi cities except Baghdad and Mosul months before July 2009.\(^\text{25}\) Concerns remain, however, that this withdrawal could give various insurgent forces room to recover, particularly in Mosul.

### The Uncertain Rate of Past and Future Transfers of Provinces to the Iraqi Government

The overall history of transferring responsibility for provinces to the Iraqi government is summarized in a June 2008 report by the GAO titled Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq:


\(^{22}\) Ibid.

\(^{23}\) The ”Hunters of the Foreign Fighters” was one such group. See Paley, ”Uncertainty after Anbar Handover.”


The ability of a province to transfer from MNF-I to provincial Iraqi control is dependent on security and governance in each province. Due to increased levels of violence and the lack of capable Iraqi security forces, the projected transition dates for the completion of the provincial Iraqi control process have shifted over time.

In June 2005, Iraq's Prime Minister announced a joint decision between the government of Iraq and MNF-I to systematically hand over security responsibility in Iraq's 18 provinces under the control of the province's governor. The Joint Committee to Transfer Security Responsibility was commissioned in July 2005 to develop a set of conditions assessing the readiness of each province for Iraqi control. Four conditions are used to determine whether a province should be transferred to provincial Iraqi control. These conditions include (1) the threat level of the province, (2) Iraqi security forces' capabilities, (3) the governor's ability to oversee security operations, and (4) MNF-I's ability to provide reinforcement if necessary. According to MNF-I, as these conditions are met, MNF-I forces will then leave all urban areas and assume a supporting role to Iraq's security forces.

In January 2007, the New Way Forward stated that the Iraqi government would take responsibility for security in all 18 provinces by November 2007. However, this date was not met, as only 8 of 18 provinces had transitioned to Iraqi control at that time. According to DOD, in September 2007, the principal cause for the delay in transitioning provinces to Iraqi control was the inability of the Iraqi police to maintain security in the provinces. For example, as a result of the February 2007 Baghdad Security Plan, an increased number of terrorists, insurgents, and members of illegal militia fled Baghdad for other provinces, and the Iraqi police were unable to handle these threats.

As of May 2008, nine provincial governments have lead responsibility for security in their province. Six of the nine provinces that have assumed security responsibilities are located in southern Iraq, where the British forces had the lead and have continued to draw down their forces. The remaining three provinces are located in northern Iraq, in the area controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government [KRG].

More recent reports describe both significant progress and ongoing problems. Reporting by the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction in October 2008 noted:

The Coalition returned security responsibility of Anbar to the Iraqis on September 1, 2008. Transitioning Anbar, formerly one of the most violent provinces in Iraq, is a significant milestone in the country's security progress. On October 23, 2008, Babylon became the 12th province to PIC.

The United States was prepared to transfer control of Anbar in July 2008, but a number of challenges caused delays. Most notably, tensions between Baghdad and Anbar's leadership over security policies contributed to postponing transfer of Anbar to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC).

Of the six remaining provinces under coalition control, MNF-I reported that Wassit was also expected to transition by the end of October 2008.106 Tameem and Salah Al-Din are expected to follow by the end of January 2009. The planned PIC date for Diyala is February 2009 and Ninewa should transfer by March 2009. Baghdad will be the last to transition, scheduled for May 2009.

After a province achieves PIC status, the ISF provides virtually all security services. Some reliance on Coalition support capabilities, however, will continue.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division (GRD) informed SIGIR this quarter that operating in a post-PIC province does not dramatically affect its reconstruction efforts. GRD personnel report that they rely on either their own resources or the ISF for assistance after security incidents rather than Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I). However, the ISF can restrict U.S. personnel movements and require ISF escorts for private security contractors—and they have done so, particularly in Thi-Qar and Muthanna. 27

Despite these problems, the United States transferred responsibility for 13 of 18 provinces to the Iraqi government by December 2008 and had withdrawn U.S. troops from 13 of 18 provinces. 28 All formal provincial transfers were completed in 2009. A SIGIR estimate of the timeline for progress in transferring security responsibility to the GoI is shown in Figure 3.3. This SIGIR estimate is dated as of April 2009, however; Figure 3.4, shows that all provinces were originally to have been transferred to GoI control years ago.

This transfer of provincial control has been accompanied by transfers of numerous bases and other installations to Iraqi control. The pullout of U.S. forces from Iraqi cities agreed to in late 2008 has also led to the relatively rapid handover of a number of key sites throughout the country. These included the highly symbolic handover in January 2009 of formal control of security for the Green Zone area in Baghdad to the ISF, and then the withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces from Iraqi cities on June 30, 2009.

Figure 3.4 SIGIR Estimate of Future Transfer of Provinces to Iraqi Government Control

Note: This figure depicts a postponement of Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC) for Dahuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah. According to an officer familiar with the PIC negotiations between the Iraqi government, the KRG, and MNF-I, this delay has no basis in the substantive quality of security in the KRG governorates or in the assessments provided by local governors and MNF-I commanders. Instead, this delay was entirely the result of political objections raised by the Iraqi government concerning such matters as the name of the Peshmerga and their progress toward conversion to Regional Guards. Gen. George Casey wanted PIC to occur for these governorates no later than the end of 2006, and all conditions for executing PIC were in place well prior to that. In the end, PIC was executed without the government of Iraq and the KRG having resolved all the political points of contention between them.
These withdrawals have affected both U.S. and other Coalition forces, as well as led to further progress in transferring provinces and bases to Iraqi control. DOD reported in March 2009 that

The Coalition footprint in Iraq continues to be steadily reduced and reshaped. Since January 1, 2009, five U.S. military units have redeployed from Iraq without replacement to include military police, engineers, logistics, and explosive ordnance disposal units, varying in size from detachment to battalion headquarters.

Similarly, Coalition forces from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Tonga, and Ukraine successfully completed their missions and departed Iraq since the last report. The GoI and NATO have negotiated an arrangement to enable the NATO Training Mission–Iraq (NTM-I) to continue specified missions until July 2009; follow-on negotiations to extend this training program beyond July 2009 are ongoing.29

As of December 31, 2008, 13 of Iraq’s 18 provinces had successfully transitioned to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). On January 1, 2009, the SA between the U.S. and Iraq went into effect, transferring security responsibility to the GoI, even though not all of the provinces had completed the PIC transition process. At the request of the GoI, however, a new Joint Sub-Committee for Provincial Security was formed under the auspices of the SA to assess conditions in the remaining five Iraqi provinces that did not transition to PIC before January 1, 2009. This sub-committee met for the first time in January 2009.

MNF-I has delivered a list of all facilities and areas to the GoI that are currently occupied by Coalition forces, and will deliver a second list no later than June 30, 2009, to identify those remaining MNF-I bases after U.S. combat forces are removed from cities, villages, and localities in accordance with the SA.

MNF-I will continue to return and close bases as security improves throughout Iraq but will support ongoing COIN efforts to ensure security gains are maintained or improved. The methodology for these closures and returns is to seek partial base turnovers with the ISF to maintain the partnership between the Coalition and the ISF. When agreeable, MNF-I will maintain forces as tenants at these locations and will continue transitioning from partnering to enabling and advising.

As of February 21, 2009, MNF-I had a total of 50 large bases, including Contingency Operation Bases (COBs) and Contingency Operation Sites (COSs) and approximately 202 Contingency Operation Locations (COLs) and 134 other training facilities and sites. Since July 2008, MNF-I has returned or closed 36 bases in the IZ and across Iraq and is scheduled to return or close 11 COSs, 49 COLs, and four facilities over the next six months. The remaining bases will be returned on a “conditions-based” basis until all bases are returned in accordance with the SA (no later than December 31, 2011).30

29. Ibid., v.
30. Ibid., 31.
Additional progress was made in the months that have followed, including the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq’s cities by June 30, 2009. Under current plans, the United States will reduce a peak of some 326 smaller facilities and “nodes” to 154 nodes during 2010–2011 and will be down to 26 major bases and six shared facilities by some point in 2010. It will close more than half of its remaining smaller facilities between the Iraq election in January 2010 and August 2010. In the process, it will have redployed so that its combat forces are gone and six Advisory Assistance Brigades replace them by September 1, 2010. Although plans are still in flux, the United States also currently plans to cut its Provincial Reconstruction Teams from 26 to 16 in 2010. This will put a PRT in each province outside the KRG and leave one Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) in the KRG.  

Province-by-Province Stability and Security in Late 2008

The scale of the challenge the ISF and the United States still face becomes clearer from declassified U.S. reporting on a province-by-province level. The situation is getting better, but key challenges remain. A survey that SIGIR conducted in October 2008 reflected major progress in virtually every area since the beginning of 2008, and far more progress relative to the civil conflict and active insurgency during 2006–2007. At the same time, it showed the ISF and U.S. forces still faced serious challenges in making a stable transition at the provincial and local level:

- **Dahuk**: (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.0; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 0.0) As one of the three provinces under the authority of the KRG, Dahuk remains one of the more stable areas in the country, with no reported attacks on ISF, Coalition personnel, or Iraqi civilians from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008. Even before 2003, the KRG was relatively autonomous, but Dahuk achieved official Regional Iraqi Control in May 2007. There has been no significant militia or external terrorist infiltration of the province. This quarter, however, Turkey continued to strike camps and bases of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). The PKK, which aims at establishing a Kurdish state, is known to attack locations in Turkey and Iran.

- **Erbil**: (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.02; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 0.01) As part of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Erbil has not experienced the violence that affected other regions in Iraq. From February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008, only one attack was reported against ISF, Coalition forces, or civilians. In May 2007, all KRG provinces achieved Regional Iraqi Control, and violence remains low. Erbil has not experienced an increase in attacks or terrorism resulting from recent ISF and Coalition operations that have pushed al-Qa’ida in Iraq northward.

- **Sulaymaniya**: (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.02; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 0.02) Generally, this province experiences minimal violence and low incidence of attack. DOD reported that there were only two attacks from the end of February 2008 to the end of May 2008. However, Iran continues to launch air strikes against Kurdistan Workers’ Party strongholds located along the border. Like the other KRG provinces, Sulaymaniya achieved Regional Iraqi Control in May 2007.

- **Ninewa (Mosul)**: (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 16.30; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 13.55) DOD reports that Ninewa is only partially ready to transfer to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC).

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31. MNF-I briefings in Iraq, June 2009.
It is expected to achieve PIC in early 2009. The Provincial Development Strategy (PDS) noted these challenges to Ninewa’s security environment:

- lack of a central operation command post
- lack of an intelligence system to provide security information
- lack of the role of the media in uncovering criminals and terrorists
- lack of modern technology for security agencies in uncovering and foiling explosives

Ninewa had the second-highest rate of insurgent attacks in all of Iraq, averaging nearly 13.6 each day from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008. In May 2008, following the deployment of aviation, engineering intelligence, and intelligence assets, Iraq’s Prime Minister launched a coordinated campaign targeting terrorists and militias. DOD reported that the operation interrupted terrorist and militia activities and stirred additional support from the local population. Operations in Mosul were largely conducted by Iraqi forces. Police training will be expanded, and a 440-man commando battalion will be based in Mosul.

Despite the security gains, U.S., Iraqi, and Coalition troops continue to fight al-Qa’ida and other groups in the province (including the Islamic State of Iraq, Jaish Mujahideen, Jaish al-Islami, and Ansar al-Sunna). Mosul is still the site of considerable violence, including religious retaliation, assassinations, and large car bombings.

This quarter, gunmen at a fake checkpoint in Mosul stopped a bus carrying Yezidi and Christian textile workers. The Christians were ordered to leave the bus, and gunmen drove the Yezidi hostages to eastern Mosul, where they were executed. In retaliation, hundreds of Yezidis attacked Kurdistan Democratic Party offices in Mosul and burned Kurdish flags. Kurdish Peshmerga troops responded, shooting and wounding three protesters. During the unrest, shops were shuttered, and many Muslims stayed in their homes, fearing reprisal attacks.

**Ninewa Total Security Incidents, by Month:**

- **Tameem (Kirkuk)** (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 2.63; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 1.80 )
  DOD reported that there were just under two attacks daily in Tameem from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008, making the province the sixth most violent in Iraq. Despite the relatively low level of attacks, the security situation is deteriorating, and Coalition and Iraqi troops are still fighting insurgent groups. Car bombs and assassinations have been increasing as different ethnic groups vie for power ahead of provincial elections. Tameem is expected to achieve PIC by December 2008.
- **Salah Al-Din**: (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 8.73; 2/23/08–5/31/08= 6.28 ) 11-kV (kilovolt) overhead electrical distribution lines to benefit approximately 35,000 local residents in the province. This quarter, the Economic Support Fund (ESF) Quick Response Fund supported the distribution of more than $147,000 in medical textbooks for physicians across the province. The local Provincial Reconstruction Team also helped to establish a local medical NGO to coordinate activities to improve medical conditions in the province. In June 2008, DOD reported that Salah Al-Din was the third most violent province in Iraq, averaging more than six daily attacks. However, attacks have fallen by 28 percent since last quarter. The situation remains challenging, and military operations in neighboring Ninewa have created an uneasy security situation in northwestern parts of the province. Iraq’s Prime Minister has ordered an additional National Police Brigade to be established in the province to help meet these security challenges. The Sons of Iraq also continue to provide protection at the neighborhood level. In Tikrit, the United States funds an Iraqi-led reeducation and reintegration pilot program to help SoI members transition from their current security teams to long-term employment when their service ends. Salah Al-Din is expected to transition to Provincial Iraqi Control in early 2009.

- **Anbar**: (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 2.37; 2/23/08–5/31/08= 1.95) Once the most violent province in Iraq, Anbar has evolved since 2007 to become one of the more secure in the country. Daily attacks peaked in 2006, averaging more than 40 per day from August 12 to November 10. During the most recent reporting period—February 23–May 31, 2008—Anbar averaged slightly less than 2 attacks per day. Several factors contributed to improvement of the security environment:
  - The military surge in mid-2007 provided an influx of U.S. and Iraqi troops to fight al-Qa’ida and other insurgent elements in Baghdad and Anbar.
- The Anbar Awakening, begun in 2007, saw tribal leaders banding together to counter al-Qa’ida’s influence across the province.

- The Sons of Iraq, a product of the Awakening movement, introduced local groups of men, operating under the supervision of local police commanders, to act as a counterinsurgency force by patrolling their neighborhoods.

Anbar was expected to transition to Provincial Iraqi Control in July 2008. Preparatory events for PIC included an MNF-West hosted the “Anbar Leadership Conference” at Camp Fallujah, which was attended by senior provincial officials, mayors, Provincial Council members, and tribal sheiks. At the conference, Anbari leaders were briefed on the security situation and discussed a range of economic and reconstruction issues. Additionally, officials from the Ministries of Defense and Interior flew to Ramadi to discuss PIC issues. However, the planned transition did not occur. According to the U.S. military, a sandstorm delayed the ceremony.

**Anbar Total Security Incidents, by Month:**

- **Diyala:** (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 5.256; 2/23/08–5/31/08= 3.58 ) In June 2008, Diyala was the fourth most violent province in Iraq, averaging more than 3.5 attacks each day. Since 2007, violence has been declining, but there were a series of attacks this quarter by female suicide bombers. Diyala is now expected to achieve PIC status by January 2009.

**Diyala Total Security Incidents, by Month:**

- **Baghdad:** (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 15.60; 2/23/08–5/31/08= 24.02) Baghdad is expected to achieve Provincial Iraqi Control in May 2009, but it continues to sustain more attacks than any other province in Iraq, averaging 24 each day. In early May 2008, the Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. troops battled militants in Sadr City until the Sadrists called a cease-fire on May 11, 2008. ISF and Coalition efforts served to diminish the capabilities of the indirect fire and rocket-propelled grenade launchers from Sadr City that were hitting the International
Zone and other parts of Baghdad. Despite the cease-fire, violence continues. In late June 2008, a Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team staff member, two DOD civilian employees, and two military soldiers were killed in an explosion in Sadr City.

**Baghdad Total Security Incidents, by Month:**

- **Wassit:** (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.23; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 0.57) Wassit is Iraq’s ninth most violent province, averaging between two or three attacks each week. It is expected to achieve Provincial Iraqi Control in November 2008. However, militant elements remained entrenched in the province, and improvised explosives have been used in some recent attacks, and a curfew remains in effect in the province’s center to safeguard the local population.

**Wassit Total Security Incidents, by Month:**

- **Babylon:** (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.57; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 0.73) Babylon ranks eighth highest among the provinces for frequency of attacks, averaging nearly one attack every day during this quarter. The province is expected to be transferred to Provincial Iraqi Control by November 2008. This quarter, joint patrols by Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition troops have provided sufficient protection to allow delivery of aid and crop fumigation by the government of Iraq.

**Babylon Total Security Incidents, by Month:**
- **Qadissiya:** (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.08; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 0.18) The PDS noted that one of the threats to growth is the impact of Iraq’s overall security situation on Qadissiya. MNF-I reported that there were nearly 18 attacks between February 23, 2008, and May 31, 2008. In mid-July 2008, Qadissiya became the tenth province to be handed over to Provincial Iraqi Control.

**Qadissiya Total Security Incidents, by Month:**

![Graph showing security incidents in Qadissiya]

- **Karbala:** (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.02; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 0.06) Karbala achieved Provincial Iraqi Control in October 2007. The province has consistently registered one of the lowest rates of violence among the provinces, averaging less than one reported attack every two weeks. However, surveys of local attitudes about personal safety appear to contrast with the relative state of security. A recent DOD nationwide poll indicated that less than 50 percent of those surveyed in Karbala felt safe in their neighborhoods, and less than 30 percent felt safe traveling outside of their neighborhoods. According to PRT representatives, security has improved, and the Iraqi Security Forces have been waging a “steady campaign against armed militias.” U.S. military advisory teams and ministerial assistance have also contributed to improved ISF coordination. The PRT has been able to travel safely, and members feel welcome at the locations they visit.

**Karbala Total Security Incidents, by Month:**

![Graph showing security incidents in Karbala]

- **Najaf:** (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.0; 2/23/08–5/31/08 = 0.03) Najaf was the third province to attain PIC status (December 2006). Najaf has consistently recorded one of the lowest levels of reported daily attacks among the provinces, averaging one per month this quarter. However, the United States is re-opening a Forward Operating Base (FOB) to provide protection for a PRT because of limited ISF liaison capacity.
Najaf Total Security Incidents, by Month:

- **Muthanna**: (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.04; 2/23/08–5/31/08= 0.02) The PDS established these goals in security:
  - Provide essential equipment to control incidents and provide quick services.
  - Redevelop the construction of precincts.
  - Build a modern communication system that guarantees quick communication and response.

Muthanna was the first province to be transferred to Iraqi control (July 2006). Several factors contribute to the province's reputation as one of the least violent areas in Iraq:
- religious and ethnic homogeneity
- improved cooperation with the ISF
- capable and well-commanded Iraqi Security Forces.

A recent Embassy survey found that the Iraqi Army and police are well commanded and that provincial leadership is strong. As a result, attacks are low—two were reported from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008. Muthanna is the fourth least violent province in Iraq.

Muthanna Total Security Incidents, by Month:

- **Thi-Qar**: (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 0.24; 2/23/08–5/31/08= 0.23) The PDS established these goals for security:
  - Develop and strengthen the relationship among the local government, the police department, and the courts.
- Educate security forces about constitutional provisions and increase their understanding of human rights.
- Provide suitable buildings for security forces.

Thi-Qar was the second province to achieve PIC (September 2006), and the province has averaged one to two attacks per week from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008. PRTs operate in the province without the assistance of Coalition forces, and Iraqi Security Forces escorts assist activities. More than 60 PRT missions have been completed in the past nine months without a single security incident.

**Thi-Qar Total Security Incidents, by Month:**

Missan was the fourth province to achieve PIC (April 2007), and no attacks were reported against the ISF, Iraqi civilians, or Coalition personnel from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008. Coalition forces and PRTs have had few operations in the province since PIC, even though Coalition forces assisted the ISF with clearing operations against militias and special groups. Approximately 10,000 members of the ISF were in the province conducting operations, and Coalition forces accounted for about 500 troops, serving in various assistance roles. It remains unclear whether the Coalition's operational support for the ISF this quarter will result in an enhanced relationship between PRT representatives and provincial contacts who must travel outside the province to meet with PRT representatives.

**Missan Total Security Incidents, by Month:**
Basra (Average daily attacks: 12/1/07–2/22/08 = 1.21; 2/23/08–5/31/08= 1.28) Basra achieved PIC in December 2007. Before and following the attainment of PIC, Basra was the focal point of an intra-Shi’a power struggle between three groups over control of oil in southern Iraq as well as challenges to government control in the province and in the national government. DOD reported that Basra is the seventh most violent province, averaging more than one attack each day. In the first quarter of 2008, the national government launched Operation Saulat Al-Fursan to assert control of Basra. Early stages of the operation reflected what appeared to be a lack of coordination, particularly in the face of militia between March and May 2008. Following a cease-fire ordered by militia leader Muqtada al-Sadr, government forces continued discrete operations to arrest the flow of arms and the return of fighters into Basra city. DOD reports that U.S. and British troops played a critical role in support of the ISF in continuing security operations. Notwithstanding DOD reports that security operations in Basra have been successful, PRT efforts appear to continue to be stymied. A PRT member reported to the U.S. Embassy that “PIC seems to have no effect whatsoever on security as far as the PRT is concerned.”

Basra Total Security Incidents, by Month:

Regional and Provincial Security in the Spring of 2009

There has been significant further progress in most provinces since October 2008, even in troubled provinces like Ninewa and Diyala. This is reflected in a regional assessment of the security situation in Iraq published by the Department of Defense in March 2009:

Assessment of the Security Environment—Baghdad

It is currently assessed that most violent activity within the Baghdad Security Districts is conducted by either AQI or Shi’a militia elements. AAH and KH, among other insurgent and militant groups, continue to maintain cells in Baghdad but have had a difficult time conducting operations. The difficult operating environment has caused many operatives to stay in Iran or discontinue activities in Baghdad. However, neither of these groups has given up on Baghdad, and both continue attempts to reestablish networks despite recent arrests. These and other insurgent and militant groups continue low level operations, and caches continue to be discovered. Overall, attacks by AAH and KH in Baghdad occur intermittently and mostly target Coalition forces. AAH and KH maintain the capacity for uncoordinated small scale insurgent and terrorist operations in Baghdad.

AQI also maintains cells in and around Baghdad with the intent to re-ignite sectarian violence and undermine the government of Iraq. Baghdad remains AQI’s strategic center of gravity, although its ability to operate there has been significantly constrained by GoI security initiatives. Although AQI’s presence continues to decline inside the capital, the group seeks to re-establish itself in the surrounding areas and maintains the ability and desire to carry out HPAs designed to cause high levels of casualties through the use of PBIEDs and VBIEDs. Sunni resistance activity in Baghdad has steadily declined since early 2008, with more activity in the greater Baghdad area than in Baghdad proper.

Assessment of the Security Environment—Western Iraq

Since the last quarter, attacks in Anbar Province decreased from an average of 1.5 incidents per day to fewer than one per day. Over the same period, the number of HPAs decreased to about two per month, as did the number of attacks targeting ISF within the city of Fallujah. This may be due to increased focus on the area by AQI or renewed attempts by remaining Sunni insurgents to pressure tribes and groups who have politically reconciled. Many elements of the Sunni insurgency seem to have made a general transition into either the political realm or the SoI, or have ceased attacks on the ISF. Coalition, Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, and tribal initiatives continue to make significant progress in the western region of Iraq against the capabilities and operations of AQI. Significant discoveries of caches, combined with key member arrests, have resulted in difficulties for AQI to carry out large-scale operations, as well as regain a foothold in the area. AQI in the West continues infrequent attacks in an effort to discredit ISF and the political process. AQI’s attacks in the region focus on destabilizing security gains to intimidate and influence the local populace.

Assessment of the Security Environment—Northern Iraq/Central Iraq

Although trending down in the last few months, violence in northern and central Iraq remains an issue, particularly in Ninewa, where AQI remains focused on retaining an urban foothold and is actively targeting the ISF, local government leaders, and Coalition forces. Consistent with past tactics, techniques, and procedures, AQI continues to employ VBIEDs and suicide attacks to degrade security gains and improve its freedom of movement.

Despite continued activities, AQI has been heavily targeted by the GoI and the Coalition and continues to lose operational capability. AQI members occasionally cooperate with Sunni insurgent groups to maximize resources. The extent of the cooperation is mostly local, as Sunni insurgents make alliances with AQI and other groups often without input from strategic leadership. Both Sunni insurgents and AQI continue their campaign of intimidation of ISF, local government leadership, and local nationals throughout the region. All Sunni armed groups have propaganda campaigns designed to give the impression of strength to their members and future recruits.

Kurdish pressure on the GoI to implement Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution continues to drive tensions between Kurds and Sunni Arabs in north and central Iraq, as well as bring about tensions with minorities, including Turkmen, Christians, and Yezidis. AQI and Sunni insurgent groups seek to exploit this tension and look for opportunities to increase ethno-sectarian violence. The presence of Kurdish Peshmerga and Kurd-dominated IA units beyond
the KRG boundaries exacerbates tensions and fuels the belief that the GoI and the Coalition are allowing the Kurds to act unchecked.

With GoI assumption of responsibility for security across the country under the SA, ISF have moved to bases in areas from which they were long absent. These include areas adjacent to the KRG, such as northern Diyala, northern Tamim, and eastern Ninewa Provinces. This has created tensions between the newly-arrived ISF brigades and Peshmerga forces that have been providing security since 2003. Coalition forces present in the disputed areas continues to play a key moderating role between Peshmerga and GoI forces.

Attack levels in Ninewa have trended downward in the last few months, which are a good indicator that AQI is suffering losses in a key historical stronghold. As AQI has experienced a loss in operational capacity, Sunni insurgents throughout north and central Iraq have been less active due to Sunni involvement in provincial elections and positive effects from local SoI programs, although the group will likely continue to stage periodic HPAs, particularly against GoI targets.

Assessment of the Security Environment—Eastern Iraq (Diyala)

GoI-led operations from July 2008 through the end of 2008 forced AQI into the sparsely populated areas within the Hamrin Mountains, where AQI still maintains freedom of movement. AQI continues to exploit the province's diverse ethno-sectarian tensions, uneducated populace, and rural areas.

As it has throughout Iraq, Sadr’s cease-fire is a contributing factor to the decrease in violence in the province, allowing ISF and Coalition forces to focus on targeting AQI, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), Sunni rejectionists, and other predominantly Sunni criminal elements. Although the ISF continues to make progress toward the GoI objective of improving security in the province by eliminating insurgent support and setting the conditions for economic recovery and the return of displaced citizens, the perception of disproportionate targeting of Sunnis has strained sectarian relations.

Despite the intention to remove extremists and militants and facilitate the return of displaced persons, GoI-led operations from late July through October 2008 strained the sectarian tension between Sunni and Shi’a and ethnic tension between Arabs and Kurds. Sunni leaders in Diyala perceived operations as an attempt to stunt their political development before provincial elections. Despite this perception, Sunnis, in general, remain engaged with the GoI and appear to have claimed a representative voice on several provincial councils following elections. Kurds reacted negatively to GoI operations into and north of the Hamrin Mountains, viewing this as a means for the GoI to exert Arab presence in one of the Article 140 disputed territories. The Kurds had maintained relative stability in Khanaqin district prior to GoI operations.

Assessment of the Security Environment—Southern Iraq

Although AAH and KH have experienced some difficulties in maintaining their networks and conducting operations in southern Iraq, Shi’a militant groups remain a primary threat to southern Iraq. Although members of both AAH and KH are able to return to Iraq from
Iran, they face extremely difficult operating conditions. Reporting indicates that the population is supportive of the GoI’s security initiatives and does not desire a return to the lawlessness and violence of the recent past. The ISF are in control over the vast majority of the Shi'a South, helping ensure violence maintains a downward trend. There is still low level residual violence, and Shi'a militant groups are seeking to rebuild their damaged networks. Leading up to the provincial elections, tensions among competing parties increased and sporadic violence against rival political candidates occurred. These rivalries and the low-level violence will likely continue as the various Shi’a parties prepare for the SA referendum and national elections.

ISF assumed security responsibility for Basrah International Airport from UK forces on January 1, 2009. Following the transition of responsibility, commercial service at the airport, which is presently provided by Iraqi Airways, is expected to increase. Iraq’s Ministry of Transportation intends to attract regional airlines and charter flights serving the pilgrim market.

**Assessment of the Security Environment—Kurdistan Regional Government Area**

The KRG remains the safest and most stable region of Iraq, although isolated acts of terrorism occasionally occur. The relatively homogenous Kurdish population and the presence of the Kurdish security forces mitigate the threat of AQI or other terrorist attacks in the North and reduce ethnic tensions that plague other cities in Iraq. Turkey and Iran continue to attack Kurdish terrorist groups along their borders with the KRG. These attacks have been conducted against sparsely populated areas in the mountains and have not led to significant numbers of refugees or collateral damage.

In disputed areas adjacent to the KRG in Ninewa, Diyala, and Tamim Provinces, tensions have increased between Kurdish Peshmerga and the ISF. These areas are ethnically mixed and resource-rich, and both the KRG and GoI assert security primacy but have not worked out a clear political arrangement. As U.S. forces depart and the profile of ISF units such as the 12th IA division rises, opportunities for miscalculation or provocation will be numerous. For now, it appears unlikely that the IA or Peshmerga will intentionally instigate a military confrontation, preferring to see whether negotiations and elections can manage results acceptable to both. However, continued Coalition involvement is critical to help manage the delicate situation.

This does not mean that the threat posed by extremist groups like Al Qa’ida in Iraq or its umbrella organization, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), is over. As has been noted earlier, AQI is still capable of operations in Baghdad Province, Ninewa, and Diyala and has significant support in areas west and south of Mosul. AQI continues to carry out large suicide, VBIED (vehicle born improvised explosive device, or car bomb), and other bombing in Baghdad Province, Ninewa, and Diyala and has shown that it can selectively attack in the south and north as well. Elements of other Sunni insurgent groups like the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade are still active, as are groups that have a more secular character and with ties to former Ba’athists. There are also at least three groups like the Jaysh Rijal Tariq Al Naqshabandi (JRTN or Men of the Army of al-Naqshbandia Way) that have a supposedly Sufi set of roots but are actually closely associated with elements of the former regime. The JRTN has its roots in a religious organization in Salah al-Din Province and has been particularly active in carrying out remotely detonated bomb attacks on U.S. and Iraqi government
targets. As has been described earlier, the Sadr, Special Group, and other Shi’ite extremist groups also continue to pose a threat and carry out some attacks. The July 2009 withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraqi cities, while an important milestone, may hamper Iraqi and Coalition efforts to deal with these remaining threats.

Nevertheless, Iraq is a very different place from the country that was filled with violence in 2007. Briefings in Iraq in June 2009 indicated that civilian casualties had dropped precipitously along with all the other measures of violence. For example, hostile incidents have dropped from 450 a week to an average of 25 and lows of 10 to 15. High-profile bombings dropped from peaks of 130 a month to levels below 20 during the same period. Ethnosectarian deaths dropped from peaks of more than 2,000 a month to levels under 50. At the same time, these briefings also made it clear that Arab-Kurd tensions were growing in the north, that Sunni-Shi’ite tensions remained a problem in mixed areas, and that AQI and other former regime extremist groups posed a significant long-term threat in Ninewa, Diyala, and Baghdad provinces. They also made it clear that Shi’ite extremist groups were a continuing low-level source of violence in the south.

This means U.S. military withdrawals, and the de facto transfer of responsibility for security to the ISF, must occur when both Iraq’s provinces and major cities are not fully secure, and at least some level of major bombings and attacks will continue indefinitely into the future. This also means that the ISF may have to deal with new forms of violence and instability that could grow out of tensions between Kurd and Arab, intra-Shi’ite power struggles, mishandling of the Sons of Iraq, or a host of other issues. Serious questions also emerge over the future of mixed areas—particularly Baghdad, Diyala, and Salah al-Din provinces. The transfer of Baghdad Province to Iraqi control may be particularly difficult: a U.S. presence plays a critical role in limiting sectarian tension, a role that the ISF may not be ready to assume. General Petraeus has indicated that such a transfer, and U.S. troop withdrawals, may be possible by July 2009, but only if “conditions permit.”

As is the case with all of the other issues raised in this analysis, a conditions-based U.S. withdrawal from Iraq will leave Iraq ready to take over from U.S. forces only if progress is real, and if the ISF not only has shown that it is capable of truly taking over the mission, but is backed by the level of political accommodation, rule of law, and other aspects of government services and spending to sustain that progress over time.

## Transfers of Bases

The transfer of U.S. and Coalition bases to Iraqi control and forces will also be a challenge, although this challenger is often exaggerated. There have been many rumors that the United States planned to keep permanent bases and do so regardless of Iraqi intensions. In fact, Figure 3.5 shows that the United States has already transferred a number of bases to Iraqi forces, and the United States has no plans to retain Iraqi bases unless asked to do so by future Iraqi governments.


34. Sevastopulo, “US Says Troops Could Quit Baghdad Soon.”
This figure also does not reflect the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraqi cities in July 2009, in which even more bases were transferred to Iraqi hands. The SOFA did not include provisions for permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq.

**Governance, Services, Investment, and the Rule of Law**

Regional, provincial, and local security is only part of the progress necessary for Iraqi forces and the Iraqi government to achieve lasting security and stability and a conditions-based U.S. withdrawal. A lack of governance, rule of law, essential and government services, and government spending helps create further sectarian and ethnic problems for the ISF and forces it to deal with high levels of crime and corruption. Even where sectarian and ethnic issues are not a major factor, the police still tend to be passive unless paid to act and still tend to force confessions rather than investigate and gather evidence. It is still more dangerous to be a policeman than a soldier, and police facilities are inadequate.

The rule of law also involves far more than police. Progress in creating an effective mix of local courts, legal representation, and jails lags or is dangerously inadequate in much of the country, and the overall quality of governance and government services is poor. SIGIR reported a “snapshot” of the current state of governance in each province in its July 2008 quarterly report to Congress.35

**Figure 3.6** summarizes some key aspects of that data. The ISF was clearly at least several years away from having the level of support it needed to “build” or having the proper support to “hold,” regardless of how well it does in security. It is also clear from GAO reporting that the actual ability of provincial governments to spend their capital budgets may be even lower than the figures shown in SIGIR estimates, as it counts money under contract as actually spent.

**Iraqi Accommodation and U.S. Withdrawal**

All of these pressures combine to limit U.S. military freedom of action and raise the priority of U.S. efforts to develop an effective mix of Iraqi security forces. On the one hand, the United States

### Figure 3.6 Population and Quality of Governance and Security in Each Province in July 2008 (SIGIR estimate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Internally Displaced Persons</th>
<th>% Sunni</th>
<th>% Shi’a</th>
<th>% Other</th>
<th>PRT Rating of Governance (out of 5)</th>
<th>Allocated Capital Budget (current $millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007 % expended</td>
<td>2008 % expended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahuk</td>
<td>616,600</td>
<td>104,948</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erbil</td>
<td>1,845,200</td>
<td>31,783</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(NA / Kurdish Area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulaymaniyah</td>
<td>2,159,800</td>
<td>79,672</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>(NA / Kurdish Area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nineawa</td>
<td>2,473,700</td>
<td>106,750</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tameem</td>
<td>839,100</td>
<td>36,202</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salah Al-Din</td>
<td>1,077,800</td>
<td>45,762</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anbar</td>
<td>1,280,000</td>
<td>64,536</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diyala</td>
<td>1,373,900</td>
<td>103,426</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>6,386,100</td>
<td>563,771</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasit</td>
<td>941,800</td>
<td>75,325</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>1,444,400</td>
<td>77,914</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qadissiya</td>
<td>866,700</td>
<td>26,320</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karbala</td>
<td>756,000</td>
<td>55,962</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Najaf</td>
<td>946,300</td>
<td>58,032</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthanna</td>
<td>536,300</td>
<td>18,351</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thi-Qar</td>
<td>1,427,200</td>
<td>47,825</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missan</td>
<td>743,400</td>
<td>46,948</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basra</td>
<td>1,761,000</td>
<td>35,718</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: SIGIR estimates of sectarian and ethnic population round in ways that ignore significant enclaves of other sectarian and ethnic groups and mixed families. The scoring system for governance sets very low standards, although 5 is supposed to mean self-reliant. Actual performance of essential services, government services, police and rule of law, and control and proper use of capital spending is still very low even in provinces rated as 3.

is increasingly caught up in a practical dilemma. If suitable progress occurs in Iraqi political accommodation, and/or Iraq’s political disputes do not take the form of large-scale violence, the United States will make steadily sharper force reductions during 2010 and then eliminate its active military presence in Iraq. Each stage in this process will further limit U.S. influence and leverage and will make U.S. efforts to develop effective Iraqi forces more important.

On the other hand, even if some form of worst case does emerge in Iraq, it is not clear that U.S. military action or a delay in U.S. withdrawals can solve such problems. The United States runs a serious risk of making things worse if Iraqis perceived it as staying too long, as trying to force its policies on Iraq, or if U.S. forces were caught up in any of the forms of Iraqi violence that it is seeking to prevent.
There is the possibility that the Iraqi government might ask the United States to intervene in ways that could have a positive impact in a given case. Accordingly, a “conditions-based” approach to U.S. withdrawal can still offer better chances of success in some contingencies than a rigid U.S. adherence to timelines agreed to far in advance of the necessary progress in political development and accommodation. The fact is that the situation is too unstable and unpredictable to make a judgment that will ultimately have to be shaped by the particular scenarios that actually take place through the end of 2011.
Four ministries play a key role in Iraqi force development. The broad role played by three of the key ministries—the Ministry of Defense (MoD), the Ministry of Interior (MoI), and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)—is shown in Figure 4.1 (page 73). The Ministry of Finance also plays an important role, as does the Office of the Prime Minister.

Each of these ministries has become more effective over time, but each still has serious problems, such as manpower, equipment, and fiscal management. The Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior in particular still need help in developing their overall leadership, command, planning, programming, budgeting, and management functions. Both of these critical ministries shaping Iraqi force development face immediate and severe problems, and both need further reform if the Iraqi Security Forces are to be effective in replacing U.S. and other Coalition forces.

Ministry of Defense

The Ministry of Defense controls Iraq's regular military forces, including the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Air Force, and Iraqi Navy. Senior U.S. officers believe that the Ministry of Defense is making real progress in planning, budgeting, and command activity. The MoD has had a significant number of Coalition advisers and has benefited from this support. Importantly, the pro-Shi'ite sectarianism and tolerance of pro-Shi'ite violence that once characterized elements in the MoI has not been as serious a problem in the MoD. There also have not been recent reports of arrests or purges within MoD of the kind that affected the MoI in December 2008.1

The minister of defense, Abd al Qadr al Mufriji, has helped to improve the ministry’s operations and has won the respect of Coalition advisers. At the same time, he is a Sunni with limited political influence and is often bypassed by the Office of the Prime Minister in key areas like senior command appointments, allocation of supplies, and procurement decisions.

U.S. reporting also makes it clear that the Ministry of Defense still faces serious challenges particularly in the areas of budget execution, logistics, sustainment, and civilian-military and interagency cooperation. MoD budget execution has been a particular problem:

The most significant difference between the MoD and the MoI budget execution success—and the reason the MoI is realizing greater progress—is that the MoI effectively delegates decisionmaking authority, including areas of budget execution, contracting, and hiring. In contrast, all management decisions within the MoD (e.g., approving all but very minor facility maintenance and all contracting requirements) must be approved by the Minister of Defense, and in some cases, by the Prime Minister. Until this process is replaced with delegated decisionmaking, MoD's acquisition, force management, and logistics processes will continue to be hampered. Despite these challenges, both ministries achieved a near 100% budget execution for 2008.2

The October 2008 report of the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction reached similar conclusions about the progress and problems in the MoD, as well as in the MoI:

Security program managers face multiple challenges in their work to create a self-sufficient Iraqi military under the MoD, including an understaffed officer corps, inadequate logistics capacity, and poor procurement processes.

Within the MoI, continuing corruption, sectarianism, command and control deficiencies, and maintenance limit progress. Although total budgets for the MoD and MoI have increased steadily since 2004, they continue to fall short of ministry requests. In 2008, the MoI requested $10.3 billion, but only 53% of that request was approved. The MoD received less than 63% of its request. These shortfalls, exacerbated by slow budget execution mechanisms, affect U.S. efforts to develop ISF self-sufficiency.

Notwithstanding these shortfalls, the ISF made progress this quarter. The MoD continues to improve interagency coordination, training, Army force generation, and to expand Iraq’s Air Force and Navy. But basic training is limited by deteriorating equipment and facilities. The Coalition Army Advisory Training Team (CAATT) noted that substandard living conditions and damaged tents have reduced basic training capacity by 14%.

The MoI improved as well. It advanced on efforts toward securing 100 of the required 108 land deeds for future structures, opened 4 forensics laboratories, increased National Police (NP) forces and provincial police conferences, and expanded facilities (including the construction or refurbishment of 175 police stations). 1 commissioned officers in the ISF.3

The December 2008 Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq quarterly report by DOD echoed these concerns, adding, “The MoD is unlikely to expend its full budget by December 2008 based on current spending rates and practices. The current spend rate will delay additional force generation for 2009 and beyond. Further, the current amounts budgeted do not allow for both infrastructure sustainment and contingency supplies. The MoD has been overly focused on purchases for its steady-state force (2012 and beyond) rather than fundamental training, equipping, and sustaining shortfalls for its current forces.”4

More recent reporting showed progress in some areas, but it also indicated that many of the ministry's problems remain unsolved. The quarterly status report issued by DOD in March 2009

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summarizes the situation within the ministry as follows and shows both the MoD’s level of progress and how far the ministry still has to go:

The MoD has approximately 203,000 personnel authorized and almost 221,000 assigned as of January 2009. As the ground force nears completion, lack of a sustainment funding plan and a cumbersome centralized decision-making process continue to inhibit MoD forces improvements. The Defense Minister still reviews almost all procurement and maintenance funding decisions and approves most equipment purchases.

The JHQ is developing greater capability to provide operational-level advice to the MoD and is developing its capacity to plan and logistically resource operations. Despite the JHQ’s progress, the Iraqi national security C2 architecture continues to be poorly defined and overly centralized, which inhibits planning, decision making, and the ability to execute coordinated operations at all levels. Coalition advisors continue to provide mentorship and partnership to the IJF [Iraqi Joint Forces], working closely with Iraqi staffs to increase their capacity to conduct rudimentary operational and strategic-level planning and execution.

### Policy and Plans

The MoD General Directorate for Policy and Requirements has limited capability to generate relevant and applicable defense policies and plans. Although capability exists within some of these staffs to produce their respective policies and plans, there is no institutional process for feedback, approval, and implementation of such guiding documents. Senior Iraqi leadership has resisted publishing formal policy documents, which results in sluggish decision-making practices at all levels. The MoD leadership often disregards the requirements generated by its subordinate staffs and is resistant to tying capability requirements to national security documents.

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**Figure 4.1 Overview of the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Justice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MINISTRY</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
<th>MINISTER</th>
<th>CAPITAL BUDGET EXPENDITURES</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL BUDGET EXPENDITURES</th>
<th>INTERNATIONAL COMPACT INDICATIVE ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MINISTRY OF DEFENSE</td>
<td>Responsible for Iraq’s armed forces, including policies and activities related to recruiting, training, and equipping.</td>
<td>Abdul Qadir Muhammad Jasim al-Mufi</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>New ministerial structure approved, military improving to the point where 10 provinces have come under Provincial Iraqi Control, and a security clearance bureau has been established for applicants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget: $241,070</td>
<td>Total Budget: $4,831,250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINISTRY OF INTERIOR</td>
<td>Charged with overseeing Iraq’s police, border, port, and emergency personnel.</td>
<td>Javad al-Bakani</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Five-year plan and new ministerial structure approved. MoD is working on strengthening anticorruption, weapons and equipment tracking, and establishing legislation for a National Intelligence Agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget: $115,930</td>
<td>Total Budget: $3,866,260</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINISTRY OF JUSTICE</td>
<td>Operates prisons and some jails.</td>
<td>Acting Minister: Safa al-Saffi</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Achieved separation of Higher Judicial Council from the Ministry, provided monetary compensation to those working in the judiciary, and provided additional funding for judicial security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget: $7,590</td>
<td>Total Budget: $188,490</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Numbers affected by rounding. The GOI’s capital budget is now known as the Project and Reconstruction Budget. Only Iraqi budget data through March 2008 was available to SIGIR on the date of publication. Not all ministries are represented in the table.

Acquisition

The MoD’s acquisition branches lack the capacity to routinely acquire the goods and services necessary to sustain and modernize the IJF. The MoD faces numerous challenges, including the lack of a multi-year acquisition strategy, weak requirements determination, late release of requirements funding, overly centralized decision making, inadequately trained and inexperienced staff, and insufficient use of technology to optimize processes. There exists limited ability to conduct simple contracts with a single vendor, with major overseas contracts and purchases personally negotiated by senior ministerial staff. Due to these limitations, the MoD continues to rely heavily on FMS to equip and sustain its forces. Several contracts for Organizational Clothing and Individual Equipment have been let internal to Iraq with state-sponsored companies. This was a Prime Minister-directed procurement initiative focused on strengthening Iraqi manufacturing capabilities while providing for the Iraqi Ground Forces.

To address these limitations, the Coalition is providing course instruction and on-the-job training to the MoD’s acquisition staff in contracting, purchasing, and acquisition. Additionally, acquisition-trained subject-matter experts began deploying in December 2008 to support the Iraqi contracting branches.

Infrastructure

The MoD General Directorate of Infrastructure has limited ability to build new, or maintain current, infrastructure due to lack of experienced and qualified engineers, currently manned at 22% of authorization, and lack of authority to execute requirements. The Minister of Defense-mandated hiring freeze further compounds this situation. Obligation of funds to maintain infrastructure is problematic as well. In the latter part of 2008, the MoD received a supplemental to its infrastructure account, increasing the total budget authorization to $374 million; however, a total of only $31 million was actually obligated and executed.

Finance and Budget

Manual processes continue to dominate budgetary management in the absence of networked computer solutions. However, an automated stand-alone software package that will enhance the MoD Directorate General of Programs and Budget (P&B) capacity to execute its key financial management missions in support of the MoD and significantly reduce the need for external assistance is being considered. The principal weakness of the P&B Directorate remains a limited capacity to provide forecasts of ministerial budget execution. This branch is capable of iterative planning with the MoF to finalize and subsequently reconcile the MoD’s annual budget, accurately track expenditures, and collate monthly reports to the MoF, while ensuring compliance with GoI accounting guidelines, policies, and regulations.

Personnel

The MoD General Directorate for Personnel continues progress toward implementing a computer-supported, comprehensive personnel management system. Lack of decentralized decision-making authority affects this and other initiatives, including hiring. Approximately 40% of civilian positions across the MoD remain unfilled. However, a positive trend is emerging whereby more civilian positions are being recognized and validated for fill. The areas

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5. The March 2008 report noted that many of these cumbersome bureaucratic controls were put in place by officials to prevent both corruption and the appearance of corruption. See ibid., March 7, 2008, 48.
needing skilled people are contracts, communications, infrastructure, and acquisition. The Coalition has trained MoD staff to operate and maintain the Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS), which began operating in December 2008. Continued testing, system validation, and expanded user training will occur over the next several months. HRIMS provides MoD the capability to pull personnel status reports, such as present for duty soldiers, number of soldiers trained, number of soldiers by Military Occupational Skill Qualification (MOSQ), and pay and other human lifecycle management reports. However, HRIMS will not be capable of full lifecycle management for approximately three years. Therefore, the MoD must use current paper-based systems until HRIMS matures sufficiently as a system of record to take over human resource lifecycle management. HRIMS will serve as the database for personnel identification and weapons accountability and interface with the network where biometric information is stored. The Minister of Defense recently committed nearly $5 million to pay all costs associated with the HRIMS fielding and operation.

The National Reconciliation Program, which allows qualified former soldiers the option to re-join the Iraqi forces, is not encumbered by the hiring freeze and is progressing. Once complete, the program should yield a moderate increase in the number of mid-grade officers and NCOs within the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC). The Prime Minister's initiative to form a National Reconciliation Committee (NRC) led to a process to reduce the backlog of 160,000 retirement applications from veterans of the previous regime. MNSTC-I continues work with the NRC to improve the retirement process, develop plans to revise and fill the modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) with capable employees to work veteran programs, and establish automation processes to include ultimately utilizing HRIMS.

Operations

JHQ is slowly improving operational C2 capabilities; however, the Iraqi Forces JOC [Joint Operations Command] remains heavily reliant on Coalition sources for both friendly and insurgent unit disposition, situational awareness, and general intelligence gathering. Coalition forces are working to enhance training and advisory support of Iraqi organic capabilities in the JOC. Staff planning is improved but underutilized outside of the JHQ. MoD planning is hampered by a lack of delegation through the JHQ chain of command to appropriate directorates, and when accomplished, is ad hoc and based on personal and ethnic affiliation. Although some progress is being made, logistics, sustainment of ISF personnel, equipment distribution, infrastructure maintenance, and force generation continue to pose obstacles to long-term operational capability as more Iraqi forces operate without support from Coalition forces.

The Minister of Defense has recently directed that the IA assume sole responsibility for humanitarian demining operations within Iraq. This undertaking will severely degrade the IA’s ability to conduct route clearance and counter the improvised explosive devise (IED) threat that is still prevalent in Iraq. To be successful, the MoD will have to enlist the help of the UN, as well as non-governmental organizations that are subject-matter experts in demining operations.

Logistics

Coalition and Iraqi forces have created a strategic logistics task force under the direction of a MNSTC-I senior logistician to hasten the implementation and integration of a comprehensive strategy. Critical components of this strategy include a strategic logistics doctrine supported by a requirements-based acquisition strategy, capable procurement specialists, and logistics
managers. Without these elements, the MoD will not be able to sustain or modernize the IJF. The IJF is now able to sustain itself with refined petroleum products used to fuel its ground combat vehicles, support vehicles, and generators. 6 This capacity is a key to successful transition to full self-sufficiency.

Construction has begun on a facility for the Combined Logistics Operation Center, providing a structure to facilitate tracking, coordination, and reporting of IJF logistics operations, and will include a materiel management control element. Essential equipment for 13 field workshops ($90 million) and 13 Locations Commands ($134 million) procured by the Coalition recently began arriving and will continue through November 2009. The incremental delivery will prevent these units from reaching full strength for at least nine months. To improve repair parts flow and stimulate overall maintenance operations, repair parts packages were distributed to assist in establishing stock objectives and replenishment procedures. The difficulty in maintaining IA vehicles is exacerbated by the large variety of vehicle manufacturers and types. An effort is underway to alleviate this problem by identifying suitable vehicle types to retain and develop spare parts stock levels to aid their sustainment.

A collaborative effort between Coalition partners and the Iraqi Deputy Chief of Staff (DCoS) for Logistics 7 to re-establish Iraqi logistics doctrine using a systematic approach, established fundamental principles of logistics concepts, organization, methods, and procedures is continuing. The Coalition finalized a review of previous Iraqi Logistics doctrine and manuals and is working with the Iraqis to develop an updated architecture of logistics doctrine. Procedures are being validated through training exercises prior to approval and distribution. The DCoS-Logistics is now addressing doctrine and systems development at the strategic level. The combined Iraqi Logistics Development Committee of Coalition and Iraqi logistics leaders is

6. A senior Iraqi officer confirmed that this problem continued to exist in September 2008. He noted that this was an important weakness and an area of reform focus in the Iraqi military. He identified three enablers, which he deemed vital to the effectiveness of any army, all of which had been inadequate in the Iraqi Army: Personnel systems, fire support and logistics. He then went on to describe progress made in these areas or reforms under way. As to logistics in particular, he decried the U.S.-implemented system of relying on contractors for life support functions such as mess support. He said that he considered this model a step backward for the Iraqi Army and that they were moving ahead with efforts to replace it. One effort that he pointed too was the establishment of five general support bases throughout Iraq, at Tallil, Taji, Kassik, Habaniyah, and in Diyala. He said that these bases incorporate the ability to provide medical, maintenance, supply, and training support.

7. The ISF faces serious challenges in dealing with maintenance, weapons accountability, and logistics in general. A U.S. officer involved in dealing with accountability problems comments, “This was true at the tactical level (brigade and below) in the unit I advised in 2006–2007, particularly as pertaining to organizational clothing and [individual] equipment (OCIE), as well as some other items like tents. I had few records available through Coalition channels against which to crosscheck on-hand inventories in the unit I advised, so rumors that some items (like tents and even vehicles) had been misappropriated prior to my team’s arrival were impossible to confirm or deny. Additionally, prior to the brigade’s deployment to Baghdad, individual soldiers and junior leaders demonstrated little interest in accountability and maintenance of individual equipment such as flak vests and helmets, both of which could regularly be found laying about at the unit’s various locations. Prior to Baghdad the unit had never implemented any practices of hand-receipting equipment to soldiers or regularly inventorying and inspecting their equipment to prevent loss. It should be noted, however, that soldier care of their equipment—particularly helmets and IBA [individual body armor]—improved dramatically upon arrival in Baghdad, as the soldiers and their leaders perceived these items as being more valuable than in what the saw as the lower-risk northern regions.”
continuing to recommend procedures and policies to reestablish doctrinal solutions that will address current gaps in the Iraqi Logistics Concept.

The Logistics Military Advisor Team and Logistics Training Advisor Team programs are successful, and their efforts are improving the logistical readiness posture of the MoD units with whom they partner. This process has identified that the key inhibitors to Iraqi logistical self-reliance reside at the Ministerial or JHQ level, not the tactical level. Iraqi logisticians are generally capable operators. Unfortunately, current Iraqi acquisition and distribution policies and procedures continue to prevent effective stock replenishment, subsequent maintenance, and repair operations. The DG Acquisition-Sustainment, DG Infrastructure, and DCoS-Logistics all lack contracting and purchasing expertise and authority necessary to replenish stocks, repair equipment, or renovate infrastructure facilities. These authorities reside solely at the MoD level.

A MNSTC-I briefing in June 2009 went into far less written detail, but its summary showed that recent accomplishments and initiatives had scarcely overcome the MoD’s continuing challenges:

**Accomplishments**
- Iraqi-led Quarterly Readiness Strategic Review
- Combined Logistics Operation Center
- IA Div Commanders’ Conferences Joint Operations Center
- HRIMS and ID technology projects
- Ministerial Training and Development Center
- Focus on education, training, and promotion by merit

**Initiatives**
- Partner and Women Conferences
- NATO material codification system
- Iraqi-funded National Maintenance program
- Logistic and maintenance IT system
- Improving standards of care and treatment for detainees

**Challenges**
- Limited staff capacity
- Dysfunctional organization; analog

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8. Opinions differ. One U.S. officer notes that, “Maintenance turn-around time for vehicles was a serious problem for my brigade during 2006–2007. The Iraqi maintenance depot at K1 (Kirkuk) was notorious among my Iraqi counterparts for its inability to return vehicles evacuated there to service. The situation was so bad that the brigade and battalion leadership had practically given up on K1, having so little faith in the ability of that facility to bring their deadlined vehicles back on line that the brigade leadership tended to resist sending vehicles there for repair.”


10. MNSTC-I briefing, June 2009.
• Centralized, deferential, and ground-centric culture
• Lack of effective budgetary programming
• Increasing Iraqi autonomy and confidence

That same briefing provided a list of broader developments in Iraqi military forces that the MoD must deal with, and one that repeats the key challenges raised in most reporting since the end of the surge and decline in the insurgent threat: 11

**Initiatives**

• Integrate and reinforce Logistic capability
• Field Enablers (Comms, Eng, ISR, Bomb Disposal)
• Force Generation 2009 – as step to 2020
• Force Mod – M1A1, C130J, ARH, T-6; F16 P&A
• English Language Training
• Develop Ministerial capacity (acquisition, budgeting)
• Medical and Healthcare Initiatives

**Challenges**

• Enabler capability
• Shortage of trained officers and NCOs
• Limited MoD institutional capacity
  • Cumbersome analog processes
  • Limited procurement capability
• Centralized decisionmaking
• Budget

These latter challenges emerge in more detail in the chapters that follow, but the budget challenge has become a particularly important problem. Lower oil revenues and the resulting shortfall in Iraq’s national budget for 2009 have created serious new problems for the MoD. The March 2009 DOD quarterly report stated the following:

From January through November 2008, the MoD executed approximately 97% of its $5.295 billion budget; the major challenge facing the MoD in 2009 is a limited “proposed” budget, currently projected to be below $5 billion. The projected 2009 MoD budget is barely sufficient to sustain the current ground force. Exacerbating these difficulties are expanding expenditures from growing employee lists, rising wages, the need to purchase logistics support and enabling unit equipment, and ballooning sustainment costs that squeeze capital growth programs beyond 2009. In short, the economic downturn and concurrent drop in oil prices will drastically curtail the rate at which the Iraqi military forces can achieve full COIN capabilities and begin to focus on modernization. 12

11. Ibid.
At one point, the MoD planned for a 2009 budget nearly twice its current level, and it developed a three phased force development plan based on making such expenditures for the next decade. This plan called for Iraqi forces to grow to develop the counterinsurgency capabilities necessary to replace U.S. and other Coalition forces between 2009 and 2012, and then to develop modern forces capable of defending Iraq from foreign enemies in two phases—between 2012 and 2016 and between 2016 and 2020. Plans include major purchases of high-cost weapons systems like the M1A2 tank and F-16C/D fighter.

These budget problems are compounded by the amount of funds lost to fraud and corruption each year. Some Iraqi Army majors reportedly make $70,000 a month through embezzlement. Despite years of effort by MNSTC-I, thousands of “ghost” soldiers likely still remain on the MoD’s payroll. According to the Washington Post, some U.S. officials still believed that as much as 25 percent of the MoD’s annual payroll budget was stolen as of May 2009.13

The MoD will need continuing outside help in virtually every aspect of its activities as the United States withdraws from Iraq. This includes improving not only its operations, but also the Iraqi effort to develop viable, sustainable force development plans that Iraq can actually afford. As the following chapter make clear, the MoD will also need a contingency capability to draw on U.S. “enablers” like artillery, air support, and intelligence through at least the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces in the summer of 2010, and quite possibly for several years more. The national budget crisis also ensures that Iraq may have to call for U.S. aid under the terms of the Strategic Agreement if Iran or any outside power should present an outside threat. Barring massive increases in oil revenues or outside aid, these conditions are likely to continue to at least 2016, and possibly well beyond.

**Ministry of Interior**

The Ministry of the Interior controls a substantially larger portion of the Iraqi Security Forces than the Ministry of Defense. It had a total of 415,566 personnel in June 2009, or 433,214 including the added elements of the Facilities Protection Service that the MoI funded and controlled. This compares with a total of 238,796 personnel under the MoD, including elements of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces the prime minister had put under the MoD for funding purposes. The main forces under the MoI included the regular Iraqi Police, the National Police, the Border Enforcement Forces, the Port of Entry Forces, and the Oil Police.14

The MoI is emerging as a much more effective ministry under the leadership of Minister Jawad Khadhum Eidan al-Bulani. In the past, the ministry has been associated with abuses by the National Police and other elements of the Iraqi police. These abuses included mistreatment, and sometimes killing, of prisoners and tolerance of Shi’ite militia attacks on Sunnis as well as abuses by forces under the control of the ministry.

The U.S. State Department summarized the situation in the MoI and the forces under its control in 2007 as follows:

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The MoI exercised its responsibilities throughout the country, except in the KRG area. These responsibilities included providing internal security through police and domestic intelligence capabilities, facilities protection, and regulating all domestic and foreign private security companies. It also had responsibility for emergency response, border enforcement, dignitary protection, firefighting, and internal monitoring of the conduct of MoI personnel. The Army, under direction of the MoD, also played a part in providing domestic security. During the year the ISF operated with the support of MNF-I [Multi-National Force–Iraq] to provide internal security against insurgent[s], terrorist attacks, and extralegal militia crimes. During the year the ISF often did not prevent or respond effectively to societal violence.

The MoI security forces included several components: the 142,000-member Iraqi Police Service deployed in police stations; the 33,000-member National Police, overwhelmingly Shi'a and organized into commandos, public order, and mechanized police; the 31,000-member Border Enforcement Police, as well as the 140,000 to 150,000 Facilities Protection Service security guards employed at individual ministries. The MoI was responsible for approximately 500,000 employees, nearly 10 percent of the country’s male labor force.

There were manifold problems with all security services: sectarian divisions, difficulties in militia integration and infiltration, corruption, lack of a strong chain of command and control, personnel and equipment shortages, and unwillingness to serve outside the areas in which they were recruited.

The inability of the overwhelmingly Shi’a ISF to retain Sunni personnel and convince Sunni communities that they were not biased in their enforcement were problems, although the recruitment into “Concerned Local Citizen” paramilitaries of approximately 70,000 largely Sunni tribesmen and former insurgents in Anbar improved anti-extremist capabilities.

The KRG maintained its own regional security forces as set forth in the constitution. Pending further progress on implementing the Unification Plan for the KRG, the two main parties of the Kurdish region maintained outside the control of the KRG MoI Peshmerga units as regional guards, internal security units (Asayish), and intelligence units. KRG security forces and intelligence services were involved in the detention of suspects in KRG-controlled areas. The variety of borders and areas of authority remained a cause of confusion, and therefore concern, with regard to the jurisdiction of security and courts.

The KRG functioned with two party-based Ministries of Interior. The PUK Party controlled the ministry with oversight of the province of Sulaymaniyah, and the KDP controlled the ministry with oversight of the provinces of Erbil and Dohuk. KRG officials stated that unification of the party-based Ministries of Interior was their goal but missed two self-announced deadlines for doing so during the year.

Authorities frequently did not maintain effective control over security forces and did not have effective mechanisms to investigate and punish abuse and corruption. MoI security force effectiveness, particularly the National Police, was seriously compromised by militias, sectarianism, and political party influences. Rampant corruption, organized criminality, and serious human rights abuses were embedded in a culture of impunity.

By year's end the MoI had reportedly opened 6,000 internal affairs investigations, of which 1,200 resulted in firings and about 500 in other disciplinary actions. Of about 500 cases opened by the MoI inspector general, 61 were referred to the court system, resulting in 31
convictions. Over the past several years, assassination attempts killed 14 members of the MoI Internal Affairs staff and wounded 14. During the year the personal aide of the interior minister was also killed.

Allegations of MoD abuses continued during the year, but there were no arrests in connection with any of these allegations. There were continuing reports of torture and abuse and an alleged extrajudicial killing on May 30 of a detainee in MoD custody in Baghdad. In 2006 there were allegations against MoD battalion-level units that carried out arrests in Baghdad, as well as against the Fifth Division, Second Brigade operating in Diyala Province. There were no arrests in connection with these allegations and no information on any investigations. In 2006 after some investigatory efforts, the MoI announced it fired hundreds of employees accused of corruption. Employees accused of serious human rights abuses were generally transferred rather than fired or arrested.

During the year no members of the security forces were tried or convicted in court in connection with alleged violations of human rights. Following the May 2006 discovery by a joint inspection team of the abuse at the “Site 4” facility in Baghdad, arrest warrants were issued in June 2006 for over 50 suspected abusers. However, the MoI executed only three of the arrest warrants by year’s end, and there were no trials or convictions (see section 1.c.).

Investigative judges rarely referred security force officials to the Central Criminal Court because of Section 136 (b) of the Criminal Procedure Code, which requires that such referrals must be approved by the ministry for whom the suspect works.

Reform efforts to increase the capacity and effectiveness of the police continued. During the year the MoI National Police relieved both of its division commanders, 10 brigade commanders that had led its nine brigades, and 18 of 28 battalion commanders in the process of vetting for criminal and sectarian associations with militias. However, as noted in section 1.c, sectarian politics between the Badr Organization and the JAM appeared to play a strong role in MoI disciplinary actions, as well as in general MoI internal actions. Reform efforts also included human rights training and other forms of assistance. Basic recruits received approximately 32 hours of human rights training in their eight to 10 week course.

…During the year there were numerous reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings in connection with the ongoing conflict. Security forces under government control killed armed fighters or persons planning on carrying out violence against civilian or military targets. According to personal accounts and numerous press reports, these forces caused civilian deaths during these operations.

Unauthorized government agent involvement in extrajudicial killings throughout the country was widely reported. Some police units acted as “death squads” and, while there were resulting transfers and trainings, there were no criminal prosecutions by year’s end. There were allegations that in May MoI First Division National Police officers committed extrajudicial killings of civilians in Baghdad while operating outside their duty area. There were no reports of active investigations of this incident at year’s end. Particularly in the central and southern parts of the country, Shi’a militias—the JAM and the Badr Organization of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI)—used their positions in the ISF to pursue sectarian agendas. During the year authorities in Basrah, including the police chief, expressed concern about the continued prevalence of killings and kidnappings by militia members wearing police uniforms or driving police cars.
The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) received reports alleging involvement of ISF and military personnel in extrajudicial killings in Baghdad. For example, on May 4, ISF members reportedly arrested and shot 14 civilians in the Jihad neighborhood. According to local residents, on May 3, personnel wearing MoI police uniforms reportedly arrested and killed 16 individuals in the Hay al-Amel neighborhood. Subsequently, the government announced the formation of a committee to investigate this incident. No further information was available at year’s end. On April 28, individuals wearing Iraqi Army uniforms reportedly arrested 31 men in the Adhamiya neighborhood; five were found dead the next day in the Kesra District.

MoI-affiliated death squads targeted Sunnis and conducted kidnapping raids and killings in Baghdad and its environs. In May 2006 then-Minister of Interior Bayan Jabr announced to the press the arrest of a major general and 17 other ministry employees implicated in kidnapping and “death squad activities.” Jabr also noted that that the MoD found a terror group in its 16th Brigade that carried out “killings of citizens.” The results of these investigations were unknown at year’s end.

In October 2006 the MoI announced its decision to reform the Eighth Brigade of the Second National Police Division due to its support of death squads and sent hundreds of personnel from that brigade to training. Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani charged the unit with the October 2006 kidnapping and killing of 26 Sunni food factory workers in Baghdad. MoI vehicles were used in the kidnapping, and most men involved wore police uniforms. No results of the investigation of the brigade, or of the other arrests, were available by year’s end.

… Incidents of political kidnappings occurred during the year, with frequent accusations directed at the police. On May 29, for example, kidnappers wearing police uniforms kidnapped five British men, a computer expert and four bodyguards, from a Ministry of Finance building in Baghdad. There was no information on the men’s status at year’s end. On August 14, as many as 100 gunmen, reportedly wearing police uniforms, broke into the state oil marketing building in east Baghdad and kidnapped Deputy Minister of Oil Abdul Jabbar Al Wagga and four other ministry employees. By August 28, all were freed in good condition. On August 20, gunmen kidnapped acting undersecretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology Samir Salim al-Attar in Baghdad as he returned home. His status was unknown at the end of the year. On October 28, gunmen kidnapped 10 tribal sheikhs in Baghdad as they returned from meetings on the nation’s reconciliation process. The group consisted of seven Shi’a and three Sunni sheikhs. The body of one of the Sunni sheikhs, Mishaan Hilan, was found near the scene of the ambush. The remaining nine sheikhs were released on October 30.

…In 2006 Kurdish security forces, including the armed forces (Peshmerga), internal security forces (Asayish), and political party intelligence services (Parastin/Zanyari), reportedly conducted police operations in disputed areas in the provinces of Nineva, whose capital is Mosul, and of Tameen, whose capital is Kirkuk. These operations abducted individuals and continued to detain them in unofficial and undisclosed detention facilities in the KRG as of year’s end.

… Numerous and serious reports of torture, abuses, and killings were leveled at MoI’s regional intelligence office in Basrah and the Khadimiyah National Police detention facility in Baghdad. Former detainees in both facilities reported that they suffered severe beatings, electric shocks, sexual assault, suspension by the limbs for long periods, threats of ill-treatment of relatives, and, in some cases, gunshot wounds. Reports of abuse at the point of arrest, particularly
by MoI’s National Police forces and MoD’s battalion-level forces, continued to be common. Accusations included extreme beatings, sexual assault, and threats of death. During 2006 there were also similar accusations against MoI and MoD facilities, particularly against the Fifth Division, Second Brigade’s detention facility in Baqubah.

There was little indication that disciplinary action was taken against security forces accused of human rights abuses; sectarian politics between the Badr Organization and the JAM appeared to play a strong role in MoI disciplinary actions, as well as in general MoI internal actions.

On March 4, joint British and Iraqi Special Forces raided the MoI National Iraqi Intelligence Agency headquarters building in the southern city of Basrah and arrested an alleged death squad leader. The special forces found 30 detainees with signs of torture. According to press reports, the prime minister’s office stressed the need to punish the special forces that carried out the raid. There were no known disciplinary actions against those involved in the alleged torture.

Abusive interrogation practices reportedly occurred in some detention facilities run by the KRG internal security (Asayish) forces and the KRG intelligence services. UNAMI reported finding evidence that investigators disregarded instructions not to employ coercive methods with Asayish detainees in Erbil. Between April and June, 48 out of 66 detainees and prisoners UNAMI interviewed reported being tortured by officials. Allegations of abuse included application of electric shocks, suspension in stress positions, and severe beatings. In some cases, police threatened and sexually abused detainees, including juveniles.

…[M]ost detention facilities under MoI and MoD control did not meet international standards. There was continued overcrowding. Many lacked adequate food, exercise facilities, medical care, and family visitation. Detainee populations under government control, estimated to number at least 23,000, were high due to mass arrests carried out in security and military operations. Limited infrastructure or aging physical plants in some facilities resulted in marginal sanitation, limited access to water and electricity, and poor quality food. Medical care in MoI and MoD detention facilities was not consistently provided, and rape, torture, and abuse, sometimes leading to death, reportedly occurred in some facilities.

During the year the National Police detention center in Khadimiyah, a neighborhood of northern Baghdad, which was built to hold approximately 350 persons, was overcrowded, at various times holding over twice its allotted capacity with juveniles mixed into the population. By year’s end the detention facility, while still overcrowded, held a population of approximately 450. Partially treated wounds, skin diseases, and unsanitary conditions were common, as was extortion by guards. Former detainees at Kadhimiyah alleged that they were tortured.

This situation has since improved markedly under Minister al-Bulani, who is a Shi’ite but who has done much to try to make the MoI a truly national ministry. Senior U.S. officers feel that the minister has made systematic efforts to reform the ministry to eliminate the abuses of sectarian forces like the National Police and make the forces in the ministry more effective. Coalition advisers believe that the MoI has made significant progress since 2007 and continues to improve.

The DOD quarterly report for March 2009 noted:

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The Minister of Interior is personally taking an active role in training; he directed that more training be focused on ethics and human rights, leadership, management, and administration, as well as core policing skills such as community policing and responsiveness to local citizen concerns. Training in the areas of investigative and forensic skills; intelligence data collection, analysis, and reporting; English language proficiency; and specific investigative training to counter corruption, organized crime, and drug trafficking is a priority. The MoI is actively developing a program designed to expand training and education opportunities abroad for IPS [Iraqi Police Service] officers to expose them to best practices and techniques in other countries.

At the same time, the Ministry of Interior still faces serious problems with planning, basic management tasks, sectarian divisions, and corruption. The MoI, like the police forces that it manages, has been severely strained by the rapid pace of force expansions and concurrently has a “limited logistical infrastructure, weak provincial reporting and recordkeeping, and inefficient distribution abilities that hamper progress.”17

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, the MoI continues to face major challenges in its budget execution, finance, contracting, and the acquisitions process:

The MoI received $3.9 billion for its 2008 budget, with approximately $3.1 billion (80%) allocated for salaries and $148.3 million (4%) allocated for capital expenditures. MoI budget execution struggles are due to a late budget allocation process (MoF released the budget to the MoI in late April 2008), slow design and contracting procedures, slow starts on construction projects, and a lack of progress on invoice and payment procedures at the provincial and national unit levels. Increased emphasis and active assistance from the Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance has resulted in improved timeliness of monthly financial reporting. According to MoF data, the MoI executed approximately 68% of its combined 2008 base and supplemental budget through November 2008, with increased wage payments approved in the supplemental budget, driving the MoI’s higher expenditures. One immediate success has been the end-of-year transfer of $674 million into the FMS account, with 271 million allocated for operational purchases and $403 million allocated for investments. This action will ensure these funds will continue to be available for MoI use in 2009.18

Some of these budgetary issues are caused by the general shortfall in spending that has come out of the crisis in the 2009 national budget. Others are caused by structural problems within the MoI. According to the DOD September 2008 quarterly report, “The MoI continues to be burdened by antiquated Iraqi financial laws that make direct contracting procedures a time-consuming process that simply cannot handle the amount of contracts required to obligate the funds for needed equipment and services. Also hampering execution was the late allocation of the 2008 budget supplemental and the refusal of the MoF to accept electronically-generated tracking and reporting data.”19

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17. Ibid., September 2008, 35.
18. Ibid., March 2009, 37.
19. Ibid.
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Command and control capabilities are improving, and should improve more quickly in the future as U.S. withdrawals lead to steadily more Iraqi responsibility for operations, supported by joint commands that put the United States in a support role but help train Iraqis. Planning, however, still presents serious problems. The DOD quarterly report for March 2009 notes:

The MoI’s National Command Center (NCC) is improving coordination with other national level command centers, other ministries, and Provincial Joint Coordination Centers (PJCC). A major renovation of the NCC, completed in November 2008, enhanced effectiveness through improved connectivity and coordination capabilities. The present C2 reporting system at the Director General of Police (DGoP)-level begins at the PJCC and flows through the NCC and on to the Prime Minister’s National Operations Center (PMNOC). In addition, the reporting system facilitates information sharing with the MoD Joint Operations Center (JOC) and the Baghdad Operations Command.

MoI capacity to plan, coordinate, conduct, and sustain operations continues to improve, though planning efforts remain highly centralized and not thoroughly integrated with MoD plans. However, joint planning capabilities continue to improve between the MoD, MoI, and other GoI entities and will produce positive dividends in upcoming operations. A recent example of this improvement in planning capability was the successful coordination and movement of more than 31,000 Hajj pilgrims at the beginning of the reporting period. Additionally, the recent provincial election security operations were successfully coordinated and controlled through the Operation Centers network with no significant violence in any of the provinces.21

The MoI has improved its personnel management and training efforts and has largely transformed the National Police from a Shi’ite sectarian force that often did more to cause sectarian conflict than eliminate it to one of the most effective paramilitary forces in Iraq. It has also improved the management of personnel to reduce the number of “ghost” forces that are reported but are not actually present. Nevertheless, it has not yet developed effective selection and training procedures; accounting for the number of personnel actually on the job remains a problem; real-world training standards are often low outside of the National Police; and many regular police still in service lack the literacy and other qualifications for the job.

21. Ibid., 38.
DOD quarterly reporting in March 2009 seems optimistic in reporting that the hiring process continues to appear to follow fair vetting procedures and special care is taken to ensure comparable demographic representation in the MoI security forces. As the MoI continues to make progress toward increasing training capacity to eliminate the backlog of shurta s (non-commissioned entry level police men and women) requiring completion of Basic Recruit Training (BRT), the focus is moving more toward specialized training.

The MoI Training Qualification Institute (TQI) has launched several initiatives to improve professionalization and quality of training, as well as address specific skill sets needed by its operational forces. Specifically, programs are being developed in English language training, criminal investigation techniques, ethics and human rights, forensics and crime scene management, community policing, police information and intelligence, and technology applications.

The MoI training base is currently capable of training more than 88,000 Shurta per year. In addition, 5,600 resident and 9,720 non-resident officers can be trained annually, with a total student capacity of nearly 25,000 students at any given time. In early 2009, resident capacity will increase to 8,900 as Phase II of the Baghdad Police College (BPC) expansion is completed on the main campus and branches are opened in Mosul and Basrah.

Positions and promotions are still being sold and affected by political and sectarian favoritism, and corruption and political interference in police activities are common, along with payoffs that sharply reduce the effectiveness of both the Border Enforcement and Port of Entry Forces and allow weapons smuggling and infiltration. The personnel freeze enforced by the national budget crisis has reduced actual manning as well as prevented effective force expansion—although it has freed up training facilities to help train police already in service. Most of the regular police are locally recruited—often with limited vetting and training—and are heavily sectarian in character, while the three Kurdish provinces recruit, manage, and fund their own police forces with little regard for the “national” programs run by the MoI.

MoI logistics capabilities continue to lag. DOD reported in September 2008 that “the MoI is developing limited internal logistic capability. Generally, the MoI uses a civilian model for logistics (and therefore does not have organic logistics units) and does not designate personnel with occupational specialties (and therefore builds logistics expertise only through follow-on training for some police recruits).”

Key maintenance and sustainability systems remain weak, and progress is slow except for the National Police. DOD reported in March 2009 that the MoI’s National Vehicle Maintenance Plan is still under revision. The overall end state of this plan is to provide policy guidance and assistance in maintaining vehicle readiness to support police operations across Iraq. To that end, the MoI is executing a $48 million FMS case to create a computer-based supply-chain management system. The first step is the $160,000 FMS vehicle maintenance training case to provide maintenance training on non-tactical vehicles assigned to the MoI. As part of this FMS case, the MoI began delivery of spare parts to subordinate units in January 2009. The National Police, scheduled to be operational by September 2009, will be capable of accomplishing a wide range of missions, including line-haul

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22. Ibid., 39.
23. Ibid., September 2008, 35.
transportation, deployable maintenance, supply receipt, storage, and issue for NP divisions, combat health treatment, and mobile fuel storage and distribution. The brigade currently consists of a headquarters.24

Virtually all experts agree that the MoI desperately needs an effective internal affairs investigative capability to fight corruption. DOD stated in September 2008 that “the MoI continues to train Internal Affairs and Inspector General (IG) personnel. In 2007, the MoI trained 344 Internal Affairs and 140 IG personnel through five training courses: basic internal affairs, interview and interrogations, anti-corruption, first-line supervisor, and advanced internal affairs. In the spring of 2008, 250 additional IG recruits in IPS training subsequently received IG training and graduated in early June 2008.”25

These activities can pose significant risk in Iraq. As the March 2008 version of DOD’s quarterly report to Congress noted, “Internal Affairs work is inherently dangerous. In November and December 2007, the MoI suffered four Internal Affairs officers killed and another three wounded. Throughout 2007, 14 Internal Affairs officers were killed with another 14 wounded. This remains a key focus area for both the Coalition and the MoI.”26 Despite these dangers, oversight of the MoI has increased, both from internal affairs investigations and from Coalition overwatch:

Through August 31, 2008, the Directorate of Internal Affairs had opened 4,318 cases against ministerial employees. The MoI closed 4,198 cases, the adjudication of which resulted in firing more than 377 employees and disciplining another 297. Recent operations revealed cases of possible corruption, and the MoI has taken action to address these concerns. Operations in Basrah resulted in the firing of 27 officers and 283 policemen, as well as the arrest of 57 individuals for terrorism and the detention of 76 individuals. Operations in Mosul resulted in 80 individuals arrested for terrorism. Operations in Amarah resulted in 87 arrests, of which 75 were Iraqi Police—including the Amarah Police Chief.

As of August 8, 2008, 223 of 266 required Police Transition Teams (PTTs) were in place, covering 70% (497) non-PIC police stations. The 27 border transition teams in theater are enough to cover about 33% of the DBE units at the battalion level and higher. The 41 NP TTs in place are covering over 85% of the NP units at the battalion-and-above levels. As of July 31, 2008, the MoI-TT had 95 of 120 required advisors, including Coalition military personnel…. The Military Police Transition Team mission is supported by International Police Advisors (IPAs) hired under a DOD-funded, DOS-managed contract. There are 752 IPAs who, along with the PTTs, provide civilian law enforcement expertise in criminal investigation and police station management, as well as at the training academies and the MoI. IPAs help to develop and mature the IPS. They are now concentrating on “top-down” mentorship of the seven critical Police Performance Tasks: leadership, administration, operations, logistics, investigations, facilities, and training. As the provinces transition to PIC, IPAs may remain with the police to provide critical assistance as the province operates independent of robust Coalition support.27

The MoI’s anti-corruption efforts continued in 2009, focusing on the Major Crime Task Force. According to DOD:

24. Ibid., March 2009, 38
27. Ibid., September 2008, 42.
The MoI’s Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) seeks to build capacity in investigating complex, high-profile crimes such as public corruption, assassinations, and attacks upon government officials. The GoI has assigned 12 experienced Iraqi investigators drawn from MoI’s Internal Affairs, the Inspector General’s Office, and the National Information and Investigations Agency. The GoI is also working to establish an MCTF-dedicated tactical team to support the work of the task force. U.S. federal agents serve as mentors, trainers, and advisors. The GoI is taking an increasingly active role in the MCTF, committing high-quality personnel and financial resources to create a sustainable, capacity-building training program.28

Some crucial, but often unnoticed, problems also seem to be unaddressed:

Despite efforts to establish a MoI healthcare system amidst a nationwide shortage of healthcare professionals, the MoI currently has only 12 physicians, three dentists, and approximately 270 medics, technicians and staff assigned to NP and DBE forces. The majority of MoI employees rely on services from the MoH [Ministry of Health] for their healthcare.29

The MoI is taking action on its own to address the corruption and criminality in its ranks. In late August 2008, it announced the opening of a new court system for MoI employees, including its police officers in the field. The penal code of the court is more stringent than the civilian criminal code. As of August 20, 2008, the system was still relatively small, with only 24 cases pending.30

New problems also surfaced within the ministry in December 2008, although their nature is still unexplained. It was first reported that 35 officials of the ministry had been arrested and later that 24 had been arrested. Interior Minister Jawad al-Bulani said that the arrests were made as a result of a terrorist operation against the ministry by those arrested as well as because of their ties to Al Awda—a largely Sunni terrorist group tied to the Ba’ath Party. All those arrested were released a few days later, however, after Prime Minister Maliki expanded the investigation beyond the ministry and created a committee that included a judge who dismissed the charges and ordered the detainees released. The statement gave no further explanation. The status of the detainees remained unclear, however, and a ministry official claimed they were still in custody.31

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29. Ibid., 44–46, 49. A U.S. adviser comments: “This was also true for Iraqi Army personnel during my tenure as an advisor in 2006–2007. Qualified medical personnel were in short supply and the IA had only modest medical capabilities. When at home station in the north, my IA Brigade relied upon Shorish (“Revolution”) Hospital in Sulaymaniyah for medical support—Shorish is a Peshmerga facility having no connection with the Iraqi Government. Likewise, when a number of Kurdish police officers in Diyala Governorate were badly wounded by U.S. fire in a friendly fire incident in summer 2007, all the victims were evacuated to a civilian hospital in As Sulaymaniyah that had no connection with MoI. During my IA brigade’s deployment to Baghdad the situation was somewhat better in terms of basic care, as the MoD was in the process of setting up a clinic at Al Muthana in the center of the city where my IA brigade was based. However, this clinic was still only capable of providing basic care such as sick call. The IA still evacuated battlefield casualties to civilian hospitals run by MoH throughout the city for their trauma care. This presented a particular problem to the Kurdish troops of my IA brigade, as they were extremely wary of sending their soldiers to the JAM-run civilian hospitals for care. To their credit, both my superiors in 2/1ID and at the U.S. CASH [Corps Area Support Hospital] at Abu Sina in the Green Zone fully appreciated the importance of this concern, and readily worked with my team to make special arrangements for the care of all of our Kurdish casualties at the U.S. CASH instead.”
Sherwan al-Waili, the minister of national security, explained the incident in ways that contradicted Interior Minister al-Bulani. He stated that the detainees were not being investigated for affiliation with Al Awda and declined to comment further on the nature of the investigation. Later reports indicated that the arrests may have resulted from an internal power struggle between factions taking different sides on the coming local and provincial elections, or because of Sunni-Shi’ite faction tensions in the MoI.32

A MNSTC-I summary developed in June 2009 went into far less detail, but showed the following mix of recent accomplishments and initiatives and continuing challenges:33

**Accomplishments**
- Force generation
- MoI court system started trials (penal code similar to UCMJ)
- Equipment deliveries: vehicles, weapons, and ammo; accountability is improving
- Budget management

**Initiatives**
- Developing specialist police units
- Supply chain management
- Healthcare
- Increasing investigative capacity
- Personnel audit
- 3-Year Strategic Plan
- E-Ministry (database)

**Challenges**
- Assimilation, professionalization, and specialization
- Strategic planning and programming; linked to the shrinking budget
- Utilizing information technology
- Land jurisdiction issues
- Transition to Police Primacy

This list is striking given that the MoI not only must manage the transition of its portion of the ISF to replace the role played by all U.S. forces by the end of 2011, but must also take over primary responsibility for Iraq’s cities and urban areas from the Iraqi Army as soon as possible, and convert to security based on a rule of civil law. In some ways, its future challenges are even greater than those of the Ministry of Defense.

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32. Ibid.
33. MNSTC-I briefing, June 2009.
MoI-MoD Cooperation

Independent reporting indicates that cooperation and coordination between army and police units has improved and is now effective in some areas and provinces. In October 2008, SIGIR found that the MoI and MoD were making real progress although they still required substantial time to develop effective capabilities and cooperation:

Although total budgets for the MoD and MoI have increased steadily since 2004, they continue to fall short of ministry requests. In 2008, the MoI requested $10.3 billion, but only 53% of that request was approved. The MoD received less than 63% of its request. These shortfalls, exacerbated by slow budget execution mechanisms, affect U.S. efforts to develop ISF self-sufficiency.

Notwithstanding these shortfalls, the ISF made progress this quarter. The MoD continues to improve interagency coordination, training, Army force generation, and to expand Iraq’s Air Force and Navy. But basic training is limited by deteriorating equipment and facilities. The Coalition Army Advisory Training Team (CAATT) noted that substandard living conditions and damaged tents have reduced basic training capacity by 14%.

The MoI improved as well. It advanced on efforts toward securing 100 of the required 108 land deeds for future structures, opened 4 forensics laboratories, increased National Police (NP) forces and provincial police conferences, and expanded facilities (including the construction or refurbishment of 175 police stations).34

More recent MNSTC-I reporting confirms that further progress has occurred in both ministries, and U.S. advisers at many levels believe that the remaining problems will not prevent a successful transfer of security responsibility to the ISF by 2011. A visit to Iraq in June 2009 also showed that the police have taken over security in some of the more secure urban areas, freeing the Iraqi Army to concentrate on dealing with AQI, former regime threats, and hostile Shi’ite militias. Such cooperation remains poor or uncertain in other areas of Iraq, and visits to Iraq confirmed this. Local conditions strongly influence this cooperation, however, and in some areas the police, or National Police, and the Army work well together.

The prime minister has also set up several operational commands that report through the MoD directly to the prime minister’s office. These operational commands were designed to improve coordination between the Army and the National Police. Cooperation remains poor in some areas, and the new commands are sometimes seen as pro-Shi’ite (and pro-prime minister) rather than as serving the national interest.

U.S. field commands do find, however, that the growth of joint operations centers is improving MoD and MoI cooperation, as well as helping to improve ISF planning, operations, and intelligence analysis. This improvement has been particularly striking where such centers can actually execute a clear line of command, have limited outside political interference, and are supported by U.S. advisers and participation. A number of U.S. officers and experts believe that the shift from parallel U.S. and Iraqi command centers to increasing reliance on joint Iraqi-U.S. operations centers following the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraqi cities at the end of June 2009 will further aid this process—particularly because the United States will be in a support role and Iraq will assume the lead and responsibility for all major operations.

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34. SIGIR, Quarterly Report to Congress, October 30, 2008, 46.
DOD reporting in the spring of 2009 showed that such progress was already taking place: “In most areas, coordination between the two ministries and their subordinate organizations is improving with the implementation of operations centers in each of the provinces. These centers allow MoI and MoD forces to jointly coordinate operations and share information, which has resulted in the apprehension of suspects and the discovery and destruction of weapons caches, as well as successful security planning and mentoring for the provincial elections.”

Reporting on the state of IA-IPS relations in Rawah, a small city in Anbar, however, reflects some of the larger problems the two organizations still face. The IA looks upon the IPS as unprofessional and amateurish. According to Brig. Gen Ayad Ismael of the IA, “We are professionals. They are often not.” Many members of the Iraqi Police Service understandably feel underappreciated by the IA. One young IPS officer in Rawah stated, “They do not respect us. They think they know everything.” The IA and IPS have refused to share the Joint Coordination Center in Rawah, which was originally designed specifically to encourage cooperation between the two organizations.

Interagency and Interministerial Intelligence

The development of Iraq’s intelligence agencies has made important progress in recent years. Although a great deal of intelligence has come through U.S. or non-official Iraqi sources, Iraq’s intelligence agencies have played an important role in fighting the insurgency and militias. Iraq’s intelligence agencies still have a long way to go, however, and there are some questions about the loyalty and coordination of Iraq’s various agencies.

DOD reporting summarized Iraqi progress to date as follows in March 2009:

The Coalition continues to support GoI development of the Iraqi Intelligence Community (IqIC), created to support senior policy makers and ISF operations. ISF intelligence organizations include the National Information and Investigation Agency (NIIA) in the MoI, the Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS), and the Joint Headquarters (JHQ) Directorate for Intelligence.

They have shown substantial progress in conducting credible intelligence operations and improvements in providing legitimate, uncoerced physical evidence for the Iraqi judicial processes. However, at present, the Intelligence and Military Security School (IMSS), which provides training for ISF intelligence professionals and investigators, suffers from a lack of adequate cadre and sufficient curriculum to meet ISF intelligence specialization needs.

The Coalition is working with ISF intelligence partners to address these and other specific shortfalls. Several significant challenges remain for the ISF intelligence organizations, including the absence of an Iraqi Intelligence Law that would delineate roles and responsibilities of organizations with clear legal mandates and C2 mechanisms, limited standardized security and clearance protocols to increase sharing of information among other IqIC members, and

37. Ibid.
a need to standardize intelligence into common databases readily available to support operations. Technology, Personnel and Management, and Media and Communications.

To date, the MTDC has conducted 130 classes, trained more than 2,500 GoI officials, developed 54 programs of instruction, and transitioned teaching responsibility for 20 courses to Iraqi instructors. The MTDC trains Iraqi Joint Forces (IJF) personnel, MoD civilians, and officials from the Ministries of Interior, Finance, and National Security, as well as the Counter-Terrorism Command and the Prime Minister's National Operations Center.38

The Department of Defense has also reported that challenges still exist in developing other aspects of Iraqi intelligence capabilities: "lack of full trust and confidence between national agencies, such as between NIIA [National Information and Investigation Agency] and the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS), impedes the exchange of criminal intelligence and collaborative intelligence products."39

The Joint Headquarters M2 (Directorate for Intelligence) and the Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS)

Both Iraq and the Coalition have been taking steps to make further improvements in Iraqi intelligence capabilities.40 Iraq's intelligence capabilities continue to mature and its many diverse intelligence institutions began to reach initial operating capabilities in 2008. MoD's Joint Headquarters M2 (Directorate for Intelligence) and the Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS) are operational, providing intelligence support to ISF. Likewise, MoI's National Information and Investigation Agency has filled its ranks and markedly improved its operations at the provincial level.

The DGIS had 4,581 personnel as of September 2008, and was at 89 percent of its authorized level. DGIS has 18 provincial headquarters and 91 field offices. In its first Iraqi-led Transition Readiness Assessment (TRA), compiled with INTEL TT assistance, DGIS assessed itself as "effective with limitations."41 The M2 also conducted its first TRA with INTEL TT support and assessed itself as being effective in both its capacity and performance, having shown progress in training, planning, collection management, analysis, and exploitation.

The M2 was staffed at 105 percent of its total authorized personnel as of September 2008. Its main limitation in reaching its full potential, as of September 2008, was the incomplete fielding of the Iraqi Intelligence Network (IIN) system, which will enable more rapid reporting and dissemination of intelligence.42 The Counter-Terrorism Command (CTC) G2 is the least mature intelligence element, but has made great strides in improving support to the Iraqi Special Operations Forces.

40. For example, MNSTC-I established an Intelligence Transition Team (INTEL TT) in the fall of 2007. The INTEL TT was officially established to assist the government of Iraq in developing national defense, investigative, and special operations intelligence capabilities. The team functions in a cross-ministerial capacity advising intelligence elements in the MoD, the MoI, and the Counter-Terrorism Bureau (CTB). The team is led by a Senior Executive Service (SES)-level DOD civilian intelligence professional. The INTEL TT’s Joint Manning Document called for 78 military and civilian intelligence and law enforcement advisers as well as specialized staff support, including 36 interpreters.
42. Ibid.
Institutional Interaction

Institutional interaction may increase cooperation and effectiveness as these organizations become fully operational during 2009–2010. According to MNF-I, the I2N was 50 percent complete as of September 2008 and was on track to be completed by December 2008. According to DOD, each intelligence agency’s connectivity to I2N varied:

The NIIA’s near-term focus is transition planning and occupation of new facilities, which scheduled [sic] for winter 2008. Also, Iraqi Intelligence Network (I2N) installation should be complete throughout NIIA by the end of CY08. This secure information network will join NIIA with other Iraqi intelligence organizations. Three of 15 provisional offices are currently operational with I2N. Construction of the new NIIA headquarters building and the new Baghdad Information Bureau is complete.

The development of Intelligence Fusion Cells (IFCs) has greatly increased intelligence sharing among Iraq’s many intelligence collectors. The growth of these cells is planned to continue: As of July 2008, IFCs were operational at Basrah, Mosul, Diyala, and, to a lesser extent, Amarah. Further planning is under way for fusion cells in Anbar, Samarra, and Karbala, which reached initial operational capability toward the end of October 2008.

ISF intelligence capabilities still have serious problems, however. These include a tendency to hoard information even within given elements of Iraqi intelligence; the failure to use intelligence to shape operational plans rather than to simply support operations once they have begun; and a lack of technical capability to support Iraqi human intelligence (HUMINT). Political interference, sectarian and ethnic rivalries, and excessive compartmentalization also present problems. Kurdish intelligence is largely separate from the rest of Iraqi intelligence, and it is divided into an overall KRG intelligence effort and separate KDP and PUK intelligence elements. Tensions between the prime minister, the Presidency Council, and the Council of the Republic over the control of the various intelligence services and the related counterterrorism activity sometimes make effective intelligence operations difficult.

According to DOD, “Several significant challenges remain for the ISF intelligence organizations, including the absence of an Iraqi Intelligence Law that would delineate roles and responsibilities of organizations with clear legal mandates and C2 mechanisms, limited standardized security and clearance protocols to increase sharing of information among other IqIC members, and a need to standardize intelligence into common databases readily available to support operations.”

Ministerial, Sectarian, and Ethnic Issues

Iraq’s intelligence agencies must still deal with the dangerous problem of serious political divisions. Iraq’s national-level intelligence apparatus remains divided between a CIA-supported official agency (the Iraqi National Intelligence Service, or INIS) and a Shi’ite-run agency (under the auspices of the Ministry of State for National Security [MSNSA], headed by Shirwan al-Waely).

44. DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, September 2008, 46.
45. Ibid., March 2009, 35.
46. Ibid.
Reporting on these problems has been limited, in part for security reasons. The levels of competition or cooperation between these agencies remain unknown. It is unclear, for instance, whether or to what extent the MSNSA participates in the I2N system. DOD experts indicate that there is certainly some level of mistrust between INIS and MSNSA. They also state, however, that MSNSA does take part in IFCs, thus demonstrating at least a minimal level of cooperation with Iraq’s other intelligence agencies.47

As is discussed in more detail in chapter 11, the de facto removal of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces from MoD control to a new counterterrorism command has raised some concerns that Maliki is trying to tighten his control over the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF). However, U.S. advisers and Iraqi National Counter-Terrorism Force (INCTF)-TT planners find the ISOF to be professional and observe that they conduct their operations in a non-sectarian manner—at least when working with their advisers. These efforts led the Council of Representatives to try to limit Maliki’s authority by depriving him of the separate funds to put the Iraqi Special Operations Forces and Counterterrorism Command directly under his office. In practice, however, Maliki simply moved them back under the MoD for funding purposes while his office retained practical control.

The ISOF, combined with Shirwan al-Waely’s intelligence agency, still give Prime Minister Maliki both an intelligence apparatus and a highly trained armed force, but this presents some risks. According to Dan Maguire, a former U.S. intelligence adviser to Iraq, these developments give Maliki dangerous power: “This looks and smells very much like a Saddam-era structure, where the prime minister has his hand on the throttle and can use it as he sees fit. If he decides he wants to go and hit Sunni targets with these guys, he’s got a killing machine to go do that.”48 Many democratic nations divorce their intelligence services and special operations forces into different agencies specifically to prevent this concentration of power.

The growing power of the prime minister’s office has also interacted with the broader political rivalries that have emerged out of the provincial elections and that now shape Iraqi politics in the struggle to win the national elections in January 2010 and the formation of a new government that will follow. Sunni parties and senior Sunni ISF personnel have been growing increasingly concerned about Maliki’s growing power, but so have rival Shi’ite factions and Kurdish parties. These risks have led MNF-I to advise Maliki and his National Security Advisor to include suitable checks and balances in all aspects of intelligence operations, including support to the ISOF within Iraq’s embryonic Intelligence Law, but such action has not yet been confirmed.49

47. The Coalition’s advisory and supervisory capabilities have been limited in dealing with the MSNSA (Ministry of State for National Security). According to MNSTC-I, the Intelligence Transition Team (ITT) has no official relationship with MSNSA, and ITT does not advise or train MSNSA. Although there is at least a minimum of contact between MNF-I and MSNSA, that contact is limited to meetings at which MSNSA is in attendance or at the IFCs (Intelligence Fusion Cells) that support the Regional Operations Command Centers. Some observers argue that MSNSA is not firmly grounded in Iraqi law. Moreover, they say that MSNSA is the least integrated of the intelligence organizations, although it does provide representatives at the IFCs. The Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) is clearly the most mature of the intelligence agencies, and there is some friction between INIS and the ministerial-level organizations, but that friction is decreasing as the other organizations become operational and contribute to the counterinsurgency effort.
The Way Ahead

Iraq faces a number of problems in creating an effective intelligence system. One is that the elements of Iraqi intelligence are still highly sectarian in character, with key sections dominated almost exclusively by Shi’ites. At the same time, the Kurds have their own intelligence services and Sunnis sometimes rely on media reports by Sunni sources. Intelligence is stovepiped by organization and element, with some serving elements of the military, others serving forces in the MoI, and key elements reporting to the prime minister. These problems are compounded by a culture where information is seen as power and is used to obtain personal prestige and influence. “Transparency” and “fusion” are not reforms that come easily to any branch of the ISF, and this is particularly true of intelligence.

This does not mean that Iraq does not have sophisticated and competent elements in its intelligence structure. Iraqi human intelligence has consistently been far better than the data the Coalition can collect and has played an important, and sometime vital, role in security operations. However, Iraq does need to break down as many internal barriers as possible and create technical intelligence capabilities to replace reliance on U.S. intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R) support. MNSTC-I outlined the following priorities in June 2009:50

- Increase capacity—improve intelligence infrastructure
- Improve and increase training and schools—new courses, greater throughput
- Multi-INT ISR—G beyond HUMINT
- Improve institutional performance and professionalism; security programs
- Operating as an intelligence community; ops-intel coordination and intelligence sharing
- Refining police intelligence and investigator career paths

These are all important reforms, and U.S. experts think other reforms are necessary. These include altering planned ISF operations based on detailed intelligence, rather than initiating such operations and then using intelligence in support. Hopefully, this may come as the ISF takes the lead in joint operations centers where Iraqis and U.S. personnel work together in an environment where Iraqis will see the benefits of the U.S. approach while Americans benefit from Iraqi HUMINT. In fact, this kind of cooperation will be steadily more critical with time as the United States reduces its forces and capability to collect and analyze both HUMINT and some forms of technical intelligence. The United States will be increasingly dependent on the ISF for both intelligence and security, and this is already taking place as a result of the departure of U.S. combat forces from Iraqi cities and towns.

The Impact of a National Budget Crisis on Iraqi Funding of the ISF

Iraq’s government and particularly the MoD and MoI must deal at every level with the combined impact of withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, massive reductions in U.S. aid, and a national budget crisis. The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq is only one of the major reductions in the U.S. role affecting the ISF, and it follows well behind massive reductions in U.S. aid that were largely

50. Interviews in Iraq, June 2009.
complete in FY2008. The United States has paid for much of the development of the ISF in the past. SIGIR reported in April 2009 that the United States had allocated a total of $18.04 billion to the Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF), nearly equaling the $20.86 billion spent on the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Fund. SIGIR reporting also noted that “total U.S. funding for Iraq security now stands at $27 billion, equaling about $56,000 per Iraqi police officer, soldier, and security officer.”

A SIGIR review of ISFF funding revealed in June 2008 that $4.7 billion, or approximately one-third of all ISFF funding, has been programmed for infrastructure. Unobligated balances for infrastructure projects amount to more than $1 billion, which means that ISFF-supported security construction projects could continue into 2010. A U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report in August 2008 found that the Iraqi government had allocated $12.3 billion to the security sector from the start of 2005 through April 2008, and had spent $2.9 billion. In comparison, the United States had allocated $22.5 billion, and spent $13.7 billion.

Significant progress in shifting the burden of ISF development to Iraq has already happened, and most major U.S. aid phased out in 2008. The United States reduced its Iraqi Security Forces Fund request for FY 2009 from $5.1 billion to $2.8 billion based on the Iraqi government’s projected spending on security of $8 billion in 2008 and $11 billion in 2009. A SIGIR audit in the summer of 2008 also found that Iraq had transferred significant amounts of money to the ISF budget.

Transition to Iraqi Funding and the National Budget Crisis

Iraqi government funding for the ISF increased significantly in 2007 and 2008. Record oil prices contributed to a rapid rise in Iraqi government revenue, which allowed the government to increase its spending on the ISF. In both 2006 and 2007, the Iraqi security ministries spent more on the ISF than the United States did. However, the global economic slowdown of late 2008 and the resulting oil price crash have severely affected the GoI budget and significantly shrank spending on the ISF. The total 2009 GoI budget was revised downward three times to $58.6 billion. While sources are deeply contradictory about such figures, SIGIR indicates that the MoD 2009 operating budget fell to $3.85 billion, from $4.92 billion in 2008. The MoI budget increased slightly, from $5.16 billion in 2008 to $5.27 billion in 2009.

These shifts are critical and may give the Ministry of Finance a steadily more important role in Iraqi security. The successful transfer of security responsibility to the ISF requires Iraq to not only take over all funding of Iraqi forces, but do so in a form that is affordable enough to make them effective. It also requires that this transfer take place in way that unites Iraq rather than divides it along sectarian and ethnic lines, and money is now a critical problem in both force development and political accommodation.

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51. SIGIR, Quarterly Report to Congress, April 30, 2009, 2.
52. Ibid., July 30, 2008, 4, 10.
53. Ibid., 5.
56. SIGIR, Quarterly Report to Congress, April 30, 2009, 10. An MNF-I source reports that the total ISF budget shrank from around $10 billion to $4.5 billion, of which some $3.9 billion was nondiscretionary spending.
In many ways, money has been the glue that kept much of ISF development on track. Both ministries had received significantly less than requested from the GoI to meet near-term and end-date objectives even before the oil price crash and budget shortfall. By mid 2009, it became clear that shrinking budgets were becoming one of the most important factors delaying ISF development. According to DOD, “In light of the decline in the market price of oil, MoD and MoI funding increases will be constrained by declining Iraqi revenues and large budgeted deficits. Further, the steady-state organizations for both the MoI and MoD beyond the year 2012 are facing significant funding challenges based on current budget projections that fluctuate with the price of oil.”

For the MoD, the main consequences of the budget shortfall so far have been sharply lowered actual manning levels in Iraqi Army units, delaying or eliminating planned weapons purchases and force modernization efforts, and curtailing the generation of new enablers and specialized units. Experts in Iraq stated in June 2009 that the freeze had had a major impact on Iraqi Army units, which were down from 135 percent of authorized strength to 100 percent. This often meant 80 percent actual manning and only 65 percent once personnel on leave were subtracted from the total. The freeze also helped keep officer and NCO strength close to 65 percent.

According to U.S. experts, the MoD had originally examined budget levels of $15 billion, had stated that it needed a budget of $9 billion, and had had to settle for $4.2 billion. This meant that its actual budget had to be allocated largely to salaries and other nondiscretionary expenditures, leaving little for modernization and expansion and inadequate funds for operations and maintenance (O&M). DOD stated in March 2009 that “the projected 2009 MoD budget is barely sufficient to sustain the current ground force. Exacerbating these difficulties are expanding expenditures from growing employee lists, rising wages, the need to purchase logistics support and enabling unit equipment, and ballooning sustainment costs that squeeze capital growth programs beyond 2009.” Although the MoD had not officially announced the cancellation of any major planned weapons acquisitions as of June 2009, that may be an inevitable result of the budget crunch, and the MoD’s three-phase force development plans to create forces strong enough to defend Iraq against foreign enemies must now be revised in virtually every respect—if not replaced entirely by a new set of plans.

The MoI has faced similar cutbacks in its budget and plans, has had to limit its 2009 budget to $5.4 billion, and has also had to institute a hiring freeze. In March 2009, Minister Bulani announced that the hiring of 66,000 new officers had been frozen as a result of falling budgets. DOD noted in March 2009 that “2009 budget constraints will affect the ability of the MoI to fund any expansion of security force equipping and sustainment through 2009.” U.S. experts in Iraq noted in June 2009 that the total for the personnel and life support of both MoD and MoI forces would account for 75–80 percent of the total 2009 budget and that full manning would cost roughly $7 billion.

57. Ibid., 48.
59. Ibid.
Problems in Budget Execution

The size of Iraq’s security budget is only part of the problem. Budget execution remains inadequate at virtually every level, and these problems are scarcely limited to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior. The July 2008 quarterly report of SIGIR noted that Iraqi oil export revenues might exceed $70 billion in 2008, but that

[n]otwithstanding its significant fiscal resources, Iraq continues to struggle to execute its capital budgets. In 2006, the GOI reported that it executed 22% of its capital budget. That rate notably increased to 63% in 2007, but execution rates of provincial capital budgets continue to be low. As of March 2008, only 2.7% of the cumulative capital budgets allocated to the provinces (excluding the Kurdistan Regional Government) for 2008 had been expended. To address budget execution problems, the GOI raised limits on contract authorization at the ministry level to $50 million for key ministries and to $10 million for the provinces. The GOI also eliminated the Central Contracts Committee, which had been attached to the Economic Affairs Committee of the Council of Ministers, replacing it with contract committees within ministries.62

GAO reporting indicates that Iraqi central government performance has been worse than such figures imply because the allocation of budget funds is sometimes accounted for as actually expended. But it also indicated that Iraq has enough current and potential budget revenues to pay for both the ISF and political accommodation:

From 2005 through 2007, the Iraqi government generated an estimated $96 billion in cumulative revenues, of which crude oil export sales accounted for about $90.2 billion, or 94 percent. For 2008, GAO estimates that Iraq could generate between $73.5 billion and $86.2 billion in total revenues, with oil exports accounting for between $66.5 billion to $79.2 billion. Projected 2008 oil revenues could be more than twice the average annual amount Iraq generated from 2005 through 2007. These projections are based on actual sales through June 2008 and projections for July to December that assume an average export price from $96.88 to $125.29 per barrel and oil export volumes of 1.89 to 2.01 million barrels per day.

From 2005 through 2007, the Iraqi government spent an estimated $67 billion on operating and investment activities. Ninety percent was spent on operating expenses, such as salaries and goods and services, and the remaining 10 percent on investments, such as structures and vehicles. The Iraqi government spent only 1 percent of total expenditures to maintain Iraq- and U.S.-funded investments such as buildings, water and electricity installations, and weapons. While total expenditures grew from 2005 through 2007, Iraq was unable to spend all its budgeted funds. In 2007, Iraq spent 80 percent of its $29 billion operating budget and 28 percent of its $12 billion investment budget. For 2008, GAO estimates that Iraq could spend between $35.3 billion and $35.9 billion of its $49.9 billion budget.

As of December 31, 2007, the Iraqi government had accumulated financial deposits of $29.4 billion, held in the Development Fund for Iraq and central government deposits at the Central Bank of Iraq and Iraq’s commercial banks. This balance is the result, in part, of an estimated cumulative budget surplus of about $29 billion from 2005 to 2007. For 2008, GAO estimates a budget surplus of between $38.2 billion to $50.3 billion. If spent, a proposed Iraqi budget supplemental of $22 billion could reduce this projected surplus.

62. Ibid., 3.
… U.S. government, coalition, and international agencies have identified a number of factors affecting the Iraqi government's ability to spend more of its revenues on capital investments intended to rebuild its infrastructure. These factors include Iraq's shortage of trained staff, weak procurement and budgeting systems, and violence and sectarian strife.

First, these officials have observed the relative shortage of trained budgetary, procurement, and other staff with the necessary technical skills as a factor limiting the Iraqi government's ability to plan and execute its capital spending. Officials report a shortage of trained staff with budgetary experience to prepare and execute budgets and a shortage of staff with procurement expertise to solicit, award, and oversee capital projects.

Second, weak procurement, budgetary, and accounting systems are of particular concern in Iraq because these systems must balance efficient execution of capital projects while protecting against reported widespread corruption.

Third, these officials have noted that violence and sectarian strife remain major obstacles to developing Iraqi government capacity, including its ability to execute budgets for capital projects. The high level of violence contributes to a decrease in the number of workers available, can increase the amount of time needed to plan and complete capital projects, and hinders U.S. advisors' ability to provide the ministries with assistance and monitor capital project performance.63

The Iraqi government increased its budget for the ISF by 23 percent between 2007 and 2008.64 Yet DOD reported in March 2008 that the baseline MoD budget allocation for 2008 was $3 billion short of operational requirements. According to DOD, this would require “additional GoI funding support or re-programming capability acquisition into 2009 or beyond.”65 It is not clear how much a later supplemental has affected this total, as DOD reported in December 2008 that both the MoI and MoD “are facing significant funding challenges based on current budget projections.”66

Operational budgets, which include salaries, have been disbursed slowly by the MoD and MoI, but have been timely enough to meet urgent needs. In contrast, SIGIR estimates that the MoD spent only 11.8 percent of its capital budget in 2007 and that the MoI spent only 11.1 percent. As of mid-2008, the MoD had spent only 13 percent of its total 2008 budget of $4,831 million and none of its capital budget of $242 million. The MoI had spent only 18 percent of its total 2008 budget of $3,806 million, and 0.3 percent of its capital budget of $116 million. The Ministry of Justice had spent only 21 percent of its total 2008 budget of $188 million, and 1 percent of its capital budget of $7.1 million.67

A different GAO estimate is shown in Figure 4.2. On the one hand, this estimate shows that total expenditures, not just budgets, are rising sharply. The GAO estimates that total spending by the MoD and MoI rose by an annual average of 48 percent in dollars during 2005–2007 (36 percent in Iraqi dinars). On the other hand, Figure 4.2 also shows that most of this rise occurred in operating expenses—heavily dominated by personnel compensation—and that investment spending rose to only token levels.

63. GAO, Stabilizing and Rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi Revenues, Expenditures, and Surplus.
64. SIGIR, Quarterly Report to Congress, April 30, 2008, 54.
Figure 4.2  GAO Estimate of Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior Actual Expenditures, 2005–2007 (US$ millions)

These low levels of total expenditure, and extremely low levels of capital budget expenditure, reflect the inefficiency of the MoI and MoD bureaucracies as well as the extent of corruption. Although MNF-I advisers are continually working on this problem, capital budget execution has shown little improvement.

At the same time, the SIGIR report to Congress for July 2008 noted that a lack of coordination and delegation at the ministerial and military-service levels limits effectiveness. Coalition advisors still operate in a lead role for planning at the strategic and operational levels for the Iraqi Army. The MoD faces other challenging issues, including:

- budget execution, decision-making, and business practices that continue to be influenced
- by the practices of the former regime
- rapid force growth
- “normal behavior in groups”
- trust

According to DOD, the MoD requires significant assistance in logistics and sustainment but remains committed to making the ISF “mostly” self-sufficient by the end of 2008. Of the 13 planned logistics commands, 8 have been built. The largest of these logistics efforts is the Taji National Depot, which will be the primary logistics unit for the ISF, supplying parts, repair services, and other equipment.68

SIGIR also noted that “Iraq has deposited $2.9 billion in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York for FMS [foreign military sales]. As of July 7, 2008, $2.5 billion of this total had been committed, and approximately $1.4 billion has been delivered—up from $1 billion last quarter.”69 While progress is taking place in both U.S. and Iraqi efforts to speed the transfer of weapons under the U.S. foreign military sales process, both U.S. and Iraqi officials believe that much still needs to be done to speed up the equipping of Iraqi forces. This requires new efforts by MNSTC-I and in Washington, but it also requires additional actions by the MoD:

Notwithstanding the gains in FMS [foreign military sales] efficiency, the program is still hampered by the inability of GOI organizations to report and transfer materials quickly. A key impediment to the process is MoD’s underdeveloped logistics ability—an area that the United States continues to strengthen by constructing warehouses and logistics facilities. MNF-I reported that the U.S. funds will continue to support the MoD should FMS delays affect Iraq’s military. Further, it reports that the MoD is beginning to streamline the FMS process by buying directly from countries, when feasible. Direct procurement allows Iraq’s police and border personnel to receive some goods and services even faster.70

SIGIR made similar comments about the management and spending capabilities of the Ministry of the Interior:

Eliminating sectarianism and corruption have been the MoI’s most significant challenges. The UN reported that a new MoI organizational structure and security strategy have been ap-
proved, which should improve the MoI’s ability to develop the professionalism of the services and foster a security environment that respects the rule of law and human rights.

… DOD reported that there is “steady, but uneven improvement” in ministerial capacity, but the fight against corruption continues, and the MoI services require more training to become a consistent professional service. Moreover, it must address these challenges:

- managing rapid force expansion
- modernizing hierarchy and processes
- improving the professionalism of the services
- integrating the Sons of Iraq
- enhancing and integrating the rule of law

… Unlike the MoD, the MoI does not have a formal logistics system (including specialized units across all police services). There is a sustainment brigade for the National Police, which maintains a broader patrol area than the IPS. The Coalition is constructing additional warehouses to remedy backlogs of goods received through the ISFF.

As is the case with the MoD ($181 million in contracts), the MoI must also be able to manage a large number of contracts being transferred to it by the United States, many of which have been found to lack proper accounting and management systems under U.S. management, or to fall far short of the performance required in the contract. At least some of the MoD and MoI’s problems in shaping and executing their budget will be heavily driven by the past inadequacies of the United States.

… Last quarter, MNSTC-I reported that the United States intended to transfer $240 million in life-support (and other service) contracts to the MoI. Since April 2008, the cumulative value of the contracts rose by more than $10 million to reach $251.1 million. As of July 7, 2008, all four life-support contracts and one of the life support and training contracts have been transferred. This quarter, MNSTC-I reported on four additional contracts to be transferred for security, maintenance, and Internet services. The value of the contracts is $14.89 million. Thus, the MoI is in the process of assuming responsibility for nearly $266 million in support contracts.

Future Progress and the Need for Continued Aid

As is the case with most aspects of ISF force development, the problems at the top of Iraq’s defense structure can be solved through patience, added funding, and political accommodation. It is clear, however, that it will take years to solve the problems at the top of Iraq’s structure of government and within its budget process that affect the development of the ISF. It is also clear that both the size of Iraqi oil revenues and the national budget, and Iraq’s internal political stability and quality of governance, are as critical as the purely military dimensions of the effort to create Iraqi forces in ways that ensure the U.S. and Coalition withdrawal do not create new problems for Iraq’s security and stability.

Like most of the problems now affecting the development of the ISF, this illustrates the need for a broad-based U.S. advisory and assistance effort that looks beyond the priorities set by the

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71. Ibid., 85.
requirement for continuing security operations and to ensure that U.S. forces withdraw on schedule. Iraq will need high-level support at the ministerial level. It will need aid that allows its Finance and Planning ministries to deal with the overall problem of funding combined civil-military efforts. The United States will need to be flexible in providing such support, and both the Iraqi and U.S. governments may need to look well beyond 2011 in determining how Iraq can best make the transition to creating forces that can fully secure the country. There will also be an equal need for continuing realism on both sides. Solutions come from honestly admitting that problems exist and actually solving them. They do not come from exaggerated claims of progress or from understating the seriousness of solvable problems until they become at least mini-crises.
The problems that affect the transition from U.S. to Iraqi forces go far beyond the problems in the MoI and MoD, or the problems in individual services and at the unit level. A wide range of crosscutting challenges affects all elements of the ISF. These are areas where all of the forces need to make improvements to the point where they can both replace all U.S. forces in the counterinsurgency mission and are ready to deter and defend against foreign enemies.

Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 (pages 106–107) put these issues in perspective. They provide the MNSTC-I estimate of the authorized strength of Iraqi forces in the MoD and the MoI as of June 2009. They also show targeted growth during 2009, which is the furthest that MNSTC-I can firmly estimate given Iraq’s budget crisis, all of the security issues in Iraq, and the uncertainties surrounding U.S. withdrawals and future priorities for the expansion of the ISF. The figures obviously are moving targets that will require steady revision and updating indefinitely into the future, but they act as a reference for understanding the size, structure, and near-term development of all the major elements of Iraqi forces that are discussed in this report.

Planning and Managing Force Expansion

One key crosscutting issue that affects all aspects of ISF capability and development lies in what is not shown in Figures 5.1 and 5.2. Iraq not only needs to make its current forces effective; it needs to develop real-world plans for their mid- and longer-term structure, plans that

- are practical and affordable;
- establish a proper balance between all of the elements of the ISF regardless whether they are under the MoD or the MoI (or the Counter-Terrorism Bureau, or CTB); and
- prepare for the conversion to military force structures to defend the country against outside enemies and police forces that support the rule of law.

This requires suitable planning efforts within the MoD and MoI and suitable coordination between them. It also requires some degree of coordination and review with the Finance Ministry, the Ministry of Justice, and the Planning Ministry. It may be years before the Iraqi government can carry out integrated planning of all its security and civil efforts, but some degree of coordination is needed as soon as feasible.

As has been noted, the Iraqi military did try to develop a three-phased plan for future force expansion and for the development of suitable counterinsurgency and national defense capabilities. Discussions with senior Iraqi officers and officials indicate, however, that these plans may have come close to being “wish lists” even before the national budget crisis began in 2008. It is unclear that similar plans were developed by the Ministry of Interior, which has had to evolve a
mix of paramilitary and conventional police and security capabilities in the midst of what can only be called armed nation building. If anything, however, the sheer size of the manpower numbers in the MoI again shows how important it is to develop affordable and sustainable plans.

These are areas where Iraq must make its own decisions but could benefit by adopting U.S. planning techniques and methods, particularly in developing rolling five-year force plans and sustainable long-term procurement plans. MNSTC-I already has a long-term planning cell to examine these issues, and the U.S. Defense and State Departments could provide additional expertise. The key, however, is for Iraq to begin to look more realistically at the future on its own. This will not be easy in a region where Iraq has so many heavily armed neighbors, and where Iran alone has a military with 545,000 men, more than 16,00 main battle tanks, some 1,300 other armored vehicles, more than 8,000 artillery weapons, 281 combat aircraft, large surface-to-air missile defenses, 5 major surface combatants, 3 submarines, mine warfare ships, and large numbers of patrol craft. It is essential, however, that both Iraq and the United States look beyond the current challenges posed by insurgent and extremist threats, and even beyond planning for U.S. withdrawal by 2011.

The Human Factors Aspect of Force Expansion

“Human factors” are of equal importance in shaping all aspects of ISF development. It is far too easy to focus on Iraqi forces as if units could be produced in some form of factory and did not consist of individuals with their own motives and goals. All of the chapters that follow are affected by several real-world realities in Iraq:

- **Pay and Privileges**: Leadership, motivation, and morale are all critical factors in force development. In practice, however, many Iraqis have joined various branches of the ISF because no other jobs were available, or jobs with the special status that working for the government has in Iraq. Even the most patriotic and nationalist Iraqis have to consider their status, careers, families, and relative pay scales. They also have to consider their security, medical care, and what will happen if they are incapacitated or killed in combat. The Iraqi government has often been erratic in dealing with these issues, particularly for lower ranks and the less prestigious parts of the ISF. Salary levels have sometimes fallen below market standards and sometimes been too high. Getting wages to families has often required physical travel, and travel has not been secure. Medical services have been particularly uncertain, and the lack of solid pension plans has meant that “ghost forces” have included personnel killed in combat as a method of paying their families. This situation has steadily improved, but it remains a serious problem. No amount of leadership, motivation, and morale are substitutes for the proper handling of pay and privileges—any more that they are proper substitutes for adequate equipment, training, and facilities.

- **Leadership Problems Interacting with Family, Tribal, Ethnic, and Sectarian Identity**: The broader ethic and sectarian issues in the ISF are discussed in the chapter 6. There is a different kind of problem at the human factors level. All Iraqis have a family, ethnic, and sectarian identity, and many have a tribal identity as well. Many may be broadly motivated to be part of a national force, but many still feel loyalty to this other mix of identities and act accordingly. This can lead to a wide range of problems and abuses at the individual and small-unit level, internal tensions and rivalries, and promotion and status problems. Even where units are broadly

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### Figure 5.1 Iraqi Forces under the Ministry of Defense (MoD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defense Forces</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Current Set Key Units/ Forces/Capabilities</th>
<th>Target Growth 2009 Key Units/Forces/Enablers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Army</td>
<td>201,423</td>
<td>144 Div HQs, 54 BDEs, 192 BNs</td>
<td>+3 Location Commands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Support</td>
<td>27,614</td>
<td>1 Mech Div; 13 Light Div</td>
<td>+12 Field Workshops;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Army</td>
<td>229,037</td>
<td>(9th IA Div is the Mech Div)</td>
<td>+12 Ordnance Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 Location Commands</td>
<td>+48 Provisioning Platoons;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Engineer Infrastructure BN; GTR</td>
<td>+1 MP Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 Motorized Transport Regiments</td>
<td>+1 Sig Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+13 Sig TOCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+3 ISR Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+13 LLVI Plts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+13 Lt MRTR Recon Plts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+6 Engineer Battalions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+1 EOD Regiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mortar: +20 82mm,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+10 120mm Platoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Air Force</td>
<td>2,888</td>
<td>Air Operations Center</td>
<td>+23 Total aircraft 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35 Fixed &amp; Rotary Wing Training Acft</td>
<td>(+10 Fixed &amp; Rotary Wing Training Aircraft, +12 Rotary Wing, +1 Fixed Wing Ground Attack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37 Fixed &amp; Rotary Wing Mobility Acft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 Fixed Wing ISR/Ground Attack Acft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training School &amp; Flight Training Wing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Navy</td>
<td>2,453</td>
<td>45 Small Vessels</td>
<td>+50 Vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Marine BNs (IOC)</td>
<td>+1,000 personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VBSS(IOC)</td>
<td>2 Bn Marines (FOC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Point Defense of KAA Oil Terminal</td>
<td>C4ISR system (IOC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Piers for new vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training simulators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total MoD</td>
<td>234,378</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with Iraqi</td>
<td>238,796</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces (ISOF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.2: Iraqi Forces under the Ministry of Interior (MoI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defense Forces</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Current Set</th>
<th>Target Growth 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Units/ Forces/Capabilities</td>
<td>Key Units/Forces/Enablers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+5 Headquarters contracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+40 Stations contracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+117 River Patrol Boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Police</td>
<td>300,373</td>
<td>1,193 Police stations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+18K to finish forming 4th Div, 5th Div</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+260 Armored Vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Police</td>
<td>42,430</td>
<td>4 Div HQs</td>
<td>+13k (to include PoE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 BDE</td>
<td>+260 UAH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Sustainment BDE</td>
<td>+2 Tugs; +20 Patrol Boat; +6 Gunboats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52 BNs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border Enforcement</td>
<td>40,722</td>
<td>13 BDE; 38 BNs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Commando BNs</td>
<td>+2 Tugs; +20 Patrol Boat; +6 Gunboats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points of Entry</td>
<td>2,087</td>
<td>29 Points of Entry (POE)</td>
<td>+Enhanced Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 Land; 7 Air; 5 Sea</td>
<td>+Standard POE design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil Police</td>
<td>29,954</td>
<td>1 Directorate HQ</td>
<td>+7 BNs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Regional Directorate HQ</td>
<td>+45 Fuel &amp; Water Tankers; + Buses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 Pipeline Security BN</td>
<td>+80 Cargo Trucks; +10 Road Graders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Police</td>
<td>415,566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with Facilities Pro-</td>
<td>433,214</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tection Service (FPS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


“national” in character, elements can take sectarian and ethnic sides. These problems are compounded by the shortfalls in officers and NCOs described in the chapters that follow. Weak leadership or one “bad” leader can trigger serious problems at the small-unit level. The result is that every element of the Iraqi order of battle involves complex mixes of loyalties that vary according to the specific force, local conditions, the mission, and progress in political accommodation. The problems involved are easing with experience, progress in accommodation, and better leadership, but they remain serious. This is particularly true when given elements within
the ISF still have clusters of a given sect or ethnicity or locally recruited forces. The ISF also still has considerable potential to fragment if the country returns to any serious level of sectarian and ethnic conflict.

- **Recruiting and Promotion**: There is no way to measure how serious the problems are, but far too many Iraqis are recruited and promoted because they pay for the position, or on the basis of political, sectarian, ethnic, and/or tribal favoritism. At the same time, competent officers can be denied promotion, forced out of service, or sidelined into meaningless positions or those without authority for the same reasons. As is noted elsewhere in this analysis, this is a serious problem even at top command positions and involves at least some ongoing discrimination against Shi’ites and Kurds and interference by the prime minister or his office.

- **Corruption and Crime**: Again, there are no valid ways to measure the scale of the problem, but all of the forces described in the following chapters are affected to some degree by serious problems with corruption and ties to criminal elements. Iraqi pay levels do not compete with the bribes that criminals and sometimes insurgents can offer. Iraqi officers can often misuse or steal funds with relative safety. Selling positions and promotions interacts with links to organized crime and a culture of corruption in some elements of the ISF. Crime and corruption also affect border and port security as well as management of security for some aspects of the petroleum sector. The problems are most serious where the money is.

- **Retention and Burnout**: To date, the ISF has sometimes put too much emphasis on expansion and recruitment, and too little on retaining experienced and proven personnel and ensuring that they are not overdeployed and overstressed. This is becoming more of a problem than it has been when Iraq has been caught up in violence and alternative careers have been lacking. The ISF needs to adjust to this change. It also needs to be careful to continue eliminating the incompetent, the failed, and the unmotivated—particularly those that can pay to stay or have political clout.

- **Officer and NCO “Culture”**: As with forces in much of the Middle East, Iraqi security forces have problems at all levels in delegating authority and giving younger men independence and allowing them to take initiative. There is also a tendency for officers to avoid hands-on labor and getting “dirty,” while treating other ranks as a de facto lower class. Efforts by MNSTC-I and other elements of the Coalition to change this culture, and introduce Western reliance on highly trained NCOs and technicians, have had very mixed success. Iraqi forces need to make such changes if they are to use complex weapons and systems effectively, but they still has a long way to go.

- **Keeping Authority and Information as Power**: All human organizations have people who use decisions and authority or privileged information to enhance their own status and power at the expense of effectiveness. Iraq’s political and bureaucratic cultures have made this problem worse than in many other countries, and it is a serious problem at many different levels in many elements of the ISF. The impact will become steadily more serious as Iraqi forces operate with less and less U.S. support.

- **Violence in Service**: Many of the complaints about violence within various elements of the ISF are exaggerated or politically motivated. Like corruption, complaints about violence have become a part of both AQI and Shi’ite extremism propaganda and political tools to use against the government. The fact remains, however, that such complaints are also often valid. Many elements of the ISF may have the proper training in terms of ethics and restraint, but irregular
wars and terrorism inevitably lead to the excessive use of force and improper interrogations and detentions in response. New, weakly led, forces use too much force. Badly planned operations, or those that put too much stress on the units involved, have the same result. Ethnic, sectarian, and tribal origin and loyalty are also factors. In general, most elements of the ISF are making progress in these areas, but Iraqi security forces have a history of using excessive force. Restructuring this aspect of Iraq’s military and police culture will take years of further effort to accomplish.

- **Combat Readiness:** Quantitative measures of manpower, equipment, training, and other factors have great value, but they can never provide an adequate picture of actual readiness, particularly in combat. Leadership and war-fighting capability depend on people at least as much as on assets and training. A unit that measures badly in quantitative terms can fight well, and vice versa. Unclassified MNF-I and Iraqi evaluations of readiness are misleading and often too high because they focus on assets and training. Evaluations of readiness can be notably different at the classified level if they take into account actual combat performance, leadership, and loyalty to the nation versus other factors. As a result, many of the ratings used to measure progress in the ISF, including those in this study, exaggerate the level of near-term progress, particularly in forces that have not yet had to operate independently and in combat. At the same time, they can underrate elements with proven combat performance.

All these factors emerge in Coalition and media reporting on virtually every element of the ISF. They do not mean that the ISF is not effective in many missions or is not improving; but many are challenges that may become more severe as the United States and other Coalition elements withdraw and play a steadily smaller role in Iraqi force development. They also are issues that the ISF is not going to be able to fully come to grips with for at least the next 5 to 10 years, and that any renewal of ethnic and sectarian conflict could make much worse. They also are the unwritten subtext to much of the analysis in later chapters. No parts of the ISF are totally free of these “human factors” problems, and in some elements these factors still severely limit force quality and effectiveness.

## The Real-World Manpower Situation

Bringing manpower up to the necessary levels is another crosscutting issue. The manpower totals shown in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 are the total personnel levels authorized for the ISF. They do not show actual personnel on duty or the number of personnel that are properly trained and qualified; those numbers are often much lower. These are key issues in a force that is still very much in development, and particularly one where most elements have serious shortfalls of officers, NCOs, and trained personnel.

The decrease in violence in Iraq from 2007 to mid-2009 has given the ISF much-needed breathing room in recruiting, retraining, and training its manpower base. Previously, IA units were sometimes rushed from training directly into hostile situations, as seen in the disastrous first few days of the battle of Basra. The expansion of the IA, together with the decrease in violence, has allowed less experienced units more time to train and to operate in the field before facing major fighting. The IA has been able to channel more experienced units into more demanding situations. IP units, although facing a different set of tasks, have also nonetheless benefited from the decrease in violence.

As the previous chapter has shown, however, Iraq faces serious manpower problems, needs to bring its manpower into better balance with its budgets and resources, and needs U.S. and other
Coalition support in shaping its forces and in providing combat capabilities until they are fully ready. Far too much of the past unclassified reporting on ISF manning levels has reflected a distorted view of force development planning progress, and has acted to create unrealistic and unfair expectations of progress.

Recent Defense Department quarterly reports (Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq) have been a major improvement over early versions of the report, with more detailed and realistic appraisals of the ISF. However, the unclassified reporting on the transfer of responsibility to Iraqi forces still does not provide enough detail and transparency to show the limits to ISF active strength and what needs to be done to build it up in ways that will allow the safe withdrawal of all the elements of U.S. forces.

Two major problems still exist in the kind of unclassified manpower reporting shown in Figure 5.2, as well as reporting on combat readiness, that disguise the risks in a too rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces:

One is treating forces as having national rather than sectarian and ethnic loyalties when many elements are loyal to given Arab Shi’ite, Arab Sunni, or Kurdish factions and have ties to various militias. Although some reporting touches on these problems in broad terms, their seriousness

2. There is another side to the story, and units with an ethnic or sectarian character can act as truly national forces in the field. One U.S. military adviser to Kurdish unit notes:

“While it is natural to wonder about the loyalty of Kurdish forces in the ISF, I did not encounter any problems with this during my year of close interaction with Kurdish ISF. If anything, the Kurdish forces in the ISF behaved more loyally than their Arab counterparts. I cite two examples of this. The first is the performance of Kurdish units on the Bayji-Kirkuk pipeline running southwest of Kirkuk. The chief of the Military Transition Team advising the 1st Strategic Infrastructure Brigade (later reflagged as 5th Brigade, 4th Iraqi Division) provided me with some interesting insight. Battalions from both my Kurdish Brigade (3rd Brigade, 4th IA—since reflagged 16th Brigade), as well as units of mixed ethnicity from 2nd Brigade 4th IA based in Kirkuk, were regularly rotated to the pipeline and attached to the 1st SIB.

“The 1st SIB MiTT Chief, told me that the Kurdish battalions from 3/4IA were consistently the best troops on the pipeline, outperforming both the locally-recruited Sunni Arab 1st SIB battalions and the mixed units from 2/4IA. The second example was the deployment of the all-Kurdish 3/4IA to Baghdad. The commander of the U.S. Iraq Assistance Group (IAG) told one of my subordinate battalion MiTT chiefs that the 3/4IA deployment had been the most successful Iraqi Army deployment to date. This is born out by the performance of the troops in the city, which was excellent.

“A final example is one provided by Mr. Salahadin Bahaudin, General Secretary of the Kurdish Islamic Union. He described the deployment of members of Jalal Talabani’s Presidential Brigade—all PUK and many former Peshmerga—to the Baghdad neighborhood where the KIU headquarters is located. He said that the troops performed in an exemplary manner and were respected by all parties, including Arabs.

“It is worth noting that there was significant resistance to deploying 3/4IA to Baghdad, but this resistance came entirely from the IA chain of command. While the deployment was very unpopular in the Kurdish population in Sulaymaniyah, and while the PUK was noticeably cool to the prospect, I discerned no interference from that quarter. On the other hand, the commander of the 4th Iraqi Division, LTG Azziz (a Kurd, to be sure) was extremely negative and problematic. Despite all this, however, it must be emphasized that, strong misgivings notwithstanding, the brigade deployed to Baghdad as ordered and successfully carried out their mission.

“Clearly, the PUK maintains an interest in their members that have been integrated into the ISF, and they are consulted about command assignments for the 3/4IA (now 16th IA). However, in my experience they nonetheless respect the formal chain of command and have not, to my knowledge, behaved in an obstructionist manner. In fact, by the end of my tour in Iraq in summer/fall of 2007, I was able to call upon the PUK Peshmerga leadership to assist me in reinforcing the orders of the IA chain of command as well as for support in my own advice and initiatives within the brigade that I advised.
is badly understated, as is the fact that creating truly national forces is probably impossible un-
til there is real political conciliation between Iraq's main factions. ISF development is hurt by a 
central government that is tied to Arab Shi'ite interests and militias and that is afraid of reaching 
some kind of stable and lasting bargain with Arab Sunnis. It is also hurt, however, by the lack of 
serious Sunni alignment with the central government and by Kurdish efforts to maintain control 
over largely Kurdish forces. The integration of the Sons of Iraq into the ISF will also exacerbate 
this problem, as the SoI members may not see their primary loyalty as lying with the central Iraqi 
government.

The second major problem in reporting is the focus on reporting the number of "trained" men 
in the ISF. For example, the State Department reported a total of 589,706 trained personnel in the 
ISF as of December 31, 2008. But the United States and MNF-I base such figures on the number 
of men that the MNF-I has trained and equipped, not on actual manning. Such figures bear little 
resemblance to the actual force levels that are really still in service. SIGIR found "a number of 
continuing limitations to the data published quarterly on authorized, assigned, and trained [ISF] 
personnel [and] that a primary reason for the variances in numbers reported over time appears to 
be the result of changing methodologies from report to report." SIGIR also found discrepancies in 
the Iraqi ministries' counting of absentees or AWOL personnel.

Many observers outside government cite the total "trained and equipped" numbers uncriti-
cally as if all of the men and women involved were still active and in service. The reporting makes 
it clear, however, that this is the total throughput of the training system and that large numbers 
of those trained are no longer active. DOD states, "It is unknown how many personnel trained 
in U.S.-funded programs remain in the force…. Numbers reflect total Iraqi forces personnel 
trained to date." A senior U.S. commander has gone further and has described these “trained and 
equipped” figure as “worthless” when they are not tied to the actual manning in specific units and 
force elements.

SIGIR addressed these issues more broadly in its October 2008 quarterly report, noting:

Since 2003, the number of trained ISF personnel has increased from 87,414 to 531,000. As-
signed ISF data, which reflects payroll information, totals 591,695 personnel. DOD considers 
assigned data to be a more realistic evaluation of current ISF staffing because trained figures 
do not reflect present-for-duty numbers and include personnel who are AWOL, away, or

“...(there are) ongoing tensions at Khanaqeen and in Sinjar (north west Iraq) between Kurdish forces 
and GoI forces or local critics. However, in both cases the Kurdish forces at issue are not GoI units but rath-
er Peshmerga units that answer to the KRG and not to GoI. In all cases that I know of, Kurdish units in the 
GoI ISF have done well.

“Despite all the foregoing, mistrust remains on both sides at times. I have encountered friction from 
subordinate leaders in the Kurdish brigade that I advised who resisted working with 1st SIB leaders that they 
did not trust. Conversely, an Arab officer countered all the successes enumerated above with the observation 
that the Kurdish units had not been “tested”—not in battle, where they have been tested, but rather in hav-
ing to choose between their private loyalty to the Kurdish cause on the one hand, their duty to the GoI on 
the other.”

4. Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction SIGIR), Quarterly Report to Congress, April 30, 
5. U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, Quarterly Report to 
Congress, September 2008, 33 (see chart).
injured. Iraqi military under the MoD, including an understaffed officer corps, inadequate logistics capacity, and poor procurement processes. Within the MoI, continuing corruption, sectarianism, command and control deficiencies, and maintenance limit progress.

This quarter, SIGIR followed up on its April 2008 report with an audit assessing the reliability of ISF reporting. SIGIR found numerous weaknesses arising from improper documentation, corruption, ghost personnel, unauthorized hires, and weak personnel management systems. Because reporting metrics and definitions have changed over time, SIGIR noted that meaningful ISF personnel trend analysis remains difficult. The United States funds an effort to develop an automated system for the Ministry of Defense (MoD), while the GOI is focusing on a system for the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

This same SIGIR report highlighted problems in leadership and manpower quality that are analyzed in more depth in the chapters that follow:

The 12,000 NCOs trained from July 2007 to July 2008 met only one third of the end-state goal required to lead current force strength. On September 6, 2008, the MoD sought to recall former NCOs and officers from the Saddam-era military. By October 6, 2008, nearly 97,000 former NCOs and officers had registered, which exceeded the GOI’s initial target of 80,000. MNC-I reported that those ranked below Colonel have the best chance of reinstatement. The MoD has formally reinstated 738 officers and 1,425 NCOs who were registered by September 13, 2008.

MNSTC-I data show that the authorized strength of Iraq’s military forces grew by 100,500 between June 2007 and April 2009, and that the forces under the Ministry of the Interior grew by 105,900 during the same period. The State Department has ceased to provide breakouts of the manning of Iraqi security forces in its weekly status reports, but earlier reporting states that more than 589,000 men were trained and equipped between the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 and December 2008.

The problem with such data is that a large percentage have left or deserted, and substantial numbers have been killed and wounded. Many officially counted personnel are “ghost soldiers,” whose pay is being collected by others. Some 10 to 20 percent of those who remain are absent at any given time 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 be only about 20 to 25 percent short of the totals reported for their trained and equipped manpower, but the percentages could be much higher. Certainly, many battalion elements have manning levels well under 50 percent, and as already mentioned, many units have critical shortages of commissioned and noncommissioned officers.

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7. Ibid., 49.
8. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
10. These percentages may sharply understate the problem. A U.S. adviser notes that, “Based upon my time with the IA in 2006–2007, a planning figure of 25 percent should always be used. This is because … Iraqi Army leave policy authorized soldiers to be on leave one week out of four, meaning a baseline of ¼ of the force on leave at any one time. It should also be noted that unit commanders frequently granted informal leave or time off above and beyond the officially authorized one week per month, particularly when the unit was off mission or when the commander perceived that the mission at hand did not require the full complement of soldiers slated to be on duty at any given time.”
This trained and actual manpower gap has been all too apparent in past State Department reporting. The State Department Weekly Status for December 10, 2008, shows that the ISF had a total of 628,751 authorized personnel as of October 30, 2008, but that only 565,723 personnel had been trained at any point since the fall of Saddam Hussein. It also stated that the trained personnel numbers “reflect total Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) personnel trained to date, some of which are no longer assigned due to casualties, AWOL, and normal separation.” The total for trained personnel was still only 90 percent of the total for authorized personnel, and if 70 percent of the trained personnel were still in service—a percentage that is almost certainty too high—this would drop to around 60 percent of total authorized strength.\(^{11}\)

It should be noted, however, that such comparisons do not reflect the very different ratios of trained personnel to authorized personnel in the forces under the MoD and the MoI. The MoD has received more training resources in the past, and actually has trained more personnel than are currently authorized: 265,556 trained to 203,686 authorized, or 130 percent. The MoI has trained far fewer personnel than are currently authorized: 310,438 trained to 426,869 authorized, or only 73 percent.\(^{12}\) As Figure 5.3 shows, these percentages also vary sharply by individual service.

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12. Ibid.
The practical problem is that simply stopping such reporting (as the State Department did in March 2009) does not provide a meaningful basis for understanding the actual manning of Iraqi forces and how many of them have been adequately trained and equipped. This is particularly true when interviews in Iraq in June 2009 indicated that the national budget crisis has led to a major drop in actual Iraqi manning levels, which may be as low as 65 percent in key Iraqi Army units, and an overall freeze of personnel. Proper manpower management is critical to creating Iraqi forces that can replace U.S. forces, and a focus on manpower quality and retention is more critical now than the past emphasis on force expansion. This is particularly true if the ISF is to bring its forces into balance with the kind of resources that current budget projections make possible, and if the ISF is to be resized to reflect the proper mix of qualified personnel and investment in equipment, modernization, and sustainability.

Problems with Weapons Procurement

Iraq currently plans for major purchases of armor, lighter vehicles, F-16s and attack helicopters, and a larger navy. It also plans to modernize and expand virtually every aspect of its military and internal security forces, build up more facilities and training centers, and develop new logistics and sustainability capabilities. These plans so far have been unrealistic and need to be downsized and made more affordable. At the same time, Iraq also needs to plan procurements that fund adequate supplies of spare parts, specialized maintenance, and support capabilities, and that allow it to sustain its weapons, other equipment, and facilities in combat.

Both Iraqis and Coalition experts recognize that an emphasis on affordability and sustainability to some extent requires a major change in Iraqi military culture. Iraq’s past history has been to use and replace rather than maintain and sustain. Like its neighbors, Iraq also sometimes seeks to buy the most advanced and expensive weapons regardless of its real-world needs and resources, and buys weapons in ways that maximize the numbers rather than provide for the capability to maintain and sustain such weapons in combat.

The problems created by these “glitter factor” buys are compounded by a lack of a systems approach to logistics and maintenance. They are also compounded by past personnel polices that did not create adequate numbers of technicians and NCOs to maintain and support advanced weapons and systems, along with a “hands-off” officer corps that did not involve itself in such “details.” This led, among other problems, to carrying out repairs only when major breakdowns and problems occurred, rather than providing preventive maintenance.

The chapters that follow analyze Iraqi success in dealing with many of these issues, but Iraq badly needs to develop transparent systems for evaluating and deciding upon major procurements—and systems that ensure that such buys include the capability to maintain and sustain such purchases. Iraq can solve some of its problems by relying on the United States Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. This program requires “lifecycle” buys that ensure that weapons are bought with the equipment and stocks necessary to supply them. It can solve other problems by insisting that non-U.S. suppliers provide similar support and packaging of their weapons sales.

13. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009, and discussions with senior Iraqi Army officers.
As of March 2009, the Iraqi government had signed 121 cases through FMS valued at $5.8 billion, with an additional 80 FMS cases valued at $8 billion being either offered or developed. As the U.S. government regulates the FMS program, it was hoped that this would help cut down on the massive corruption and mismanagement evident in previous Iraqi weapons procurement deals with other nations.

The U.S. FMS system is not, however, without its own problems. The FMS program has created significant difficulties for the force development effort in both Iraq and Afghanistan (as well for many other countries) and is a focus of MNSTC-I reform efforts. According to DOD,

[t]hroughout 2008, many of the initiatives recommended by the FMS Task Force to improve the U.S. process and implementation became a solid foundation for FMS in Iraq. The biggest improvements included the arrival of experienced FMS, acquisition and security cooperation personnel to provide training on the FMS program and processes and to work as the primary interface between the Iraqis and their advisory and training teams and the U.S. Security Assistance and Acquisition Agencies. Additionally, the MNSTC-I SAO grew and improved its performance markedly. Consequently, FMS case processing timelines in the United States improved significantly.

Although room for improvement remains, FMS cargo delivery times have also been reduced. In-transit visibility and delivery dates still need to be improved; however, the U.S. Security Cooperation organizations worked hard during the last two months of 2008 to provide the SAO and the GoI an accurate picture of in-transit visibility of the equipment they purchased. Overall, the common operational picture has improved as a result of daily communications supported by weekly teleconferences, better coordination, and use of the Defense Transportation System.

Execution of FMS in Iraq continues to be hindered by several factors. These factors include the lack of ministerial capacity in all aspects of defining requirements generation and processing of FMS Letters of Offer and Acceptance, the lack of a budget planning and execution process that allocates funds for needed requirements (leading to insufficient funds for must-pay requirements), and unrealistic accounting expectations of total system ownership costs, including equipment purchase, training, sustainment, and operations costs. These areas are all being addressed through an increased focus on building ministerial capacity through MNSTC-I advisors and increased training from the SAO team.14

There are also problems within Iraq. Although the Iraqi government has been somewhat successful in procuring weapons and platforms via the FMS system, there are signs that the ISF cannot handle the current pace of purchases. In late 2007, there were several hundred Humvees and other equipment in Iraq pending issue, as well as a backlog of 75 pallets and 250 vehicles in the United States pending shipment.15 In particular, the ISF has had particular problems processing vehicle repair parts.16

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Secretary of Defense Robert Gates ordered a special task force to be formed to clear the logjam in Iraqi equipment orders. Yet the FMS program, used by more than 100 allied nations, is designed for peacetime purchases, and its extensive regulations are designed to insure transparency, not speed.  

According to SIGIR:

Following an assessment of requirements, the Iraqis develop a letter of request, which must be approved. This process takes between 80-100 days in Iraq and an additional 80-100 days in the United States. Once a request has been accepted, the bidding, manufacturing, and transport processes also delay delivery.

DOD has indicated that problems continue:

Although improving, the processing of FMS Letters of Request (LORs) and Letters of Offer and Acceptance (LOAs) within the MoD continues to be cumbersome and time-consuming. As of September 2, 2008, about $738 million in offered FMS cases require MoD signature.

SIGIR reporting in October 2008 was not reassuring about the rate of progress:

The Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program allows Iraq to quickly procure defense-related goods, equipment, and services from the United States. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) oversees this process, which supplies a range of equipment to the Iraqis, including small arms, clothing, tanker trucks, trailers, and repair parts. More recently, Iraqis have requested more substantial equipment, including reconnaissance helicopters and transport aircraft.

Since September 2007, Iraq has committed $3.4 billion to the program. As of October 15, 2008, the total value of FMS cases is $2.9 billion (85 percent of the total committed), and the total amount delivered is nearly $1.7 billion. Between March 2008 and October 2008, the amounts committed by the GOI to FMS outpaced deliveries. Lengthy processing times had previously contributed to delays in approval and delivery. To streamline the FMS process, DOD established a task force to improve processing speed, and DSCA moved from a policy and oversight role to a more operational stance.

The DSCA has strengthened delivery mechanisms by improving relationships with the leadership of the U.S. Transportation Command, elevating shipping priority for FMS goods, relying on air transport, and switching the terminus for ocean shipments from ports in Kuwait to Umm Qasr.

Iraq also often purchases arms outside of the FMS program. This is done partly to speed the acquisition of urgently needed arms, but it also involves corruption and purchases of used or unevaluated equipment, and does not fund suitable spares, maintenance equipment, and sustainability. These purchases continue to present problems that are far more serious than the problems created by the FMS system. Like virtually every aspect of Iraqi government activity, such arms purchases have been riddled with corruption. A major weapons procurement scandal in 2005, which brought down then-Minister of Defense Hazam Shalan (who is now a fugitive), involved

18. SIGIR, Quarterly Report to Congress, April 30, 2008, 56.
Iraqi officials using middlemen to ferry huge bags of cash in order to purchase sub-par or nonexistent equipment.\(^{21}\)

Although such corruption seems to be less common today, a recently disclosed Iraqi deal to purchase arms from Serbia revealed the continuing problems with the MoD’s procurement process. The $833 million deal to purchase from Serbia “a large number of helicopters, planes, armored personnel carriers, mortar systems, machine guns, body armor, military uniforms and other equipment”\(^{22}\) was negotiated in September 2007 and was unusual in several ways. For one thing, it was negotiated without the knowledge of U.S. commanders or many senior Iraqi leaders, and it sidestepped anticorruption safeguards, including approval by uniformed IA officers and an Iraqi contract approval committee. The deal appears to have been negotiated largely by Defense Minister Abd al-Qadir and Planning Minister Ali Ghalil Baban. In response to mounting criticism of the deal, it was reduced to $236 million.\(^{23}\) As of August 2008, much of the equipment purchased in the deal had yet to arrive.

The IA, utilizing funding increases from the Iraqi government, has continued with its plans to up-arm its forces. In late July it announced its intention to purchase $10.8 billion worth of equipment through the FMS program. The most significant part of this purchase was $2.16 billion for 140 M1A2M Abrams tanks, as well as a number of other armored vehicles.\(^{24}\) According to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), Iraq requested:

140 M1A1 Abrams tanks modified and upgraded to the M1A1M Abrams configuration, 8 M88A2 Tank Recovery Vehicles, 64 M1151A1B1 Armored High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV), 92 M1152 Shelter Carriers, 12 M577A2 Command Post Carriers, 16 M548A1 Tracked Logistics Vehicles, 8 M113A2 Armored Ambulances, and 420 AN/VRC-92 Vehicular Receiver Transmitters.

Also included are: 35 M1070 Heavy Equipment Transporter (HET) Truck Tractors, 40 M978A2 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) Tankers, 36 M985A2 HEMTT Cargo Trucks, 4 M984A2 HEMTT Wrecker Trucks, 140 M1085A1 5-ton Cargo Trucks, 8 HM-MWV Ambulances w/ Shelter, 8 Contact Maintenance Trucks, 32 500 gal Water Tank Trailers, 16 2500 gal Water Tank Trucks, 16 Motorcycles, 80 8 ton Heavy/Medium Trailers, 16 Sedans, 92 M1102 Light Tactical trailers, 92 635NL Semi-Trailers, 4 5,500 lb Rough Terrain Forklifts, 20 M1A1 engines, 20 M1A1 Full Up Power Packs, 3 spare M88A2 engines, 10 M1070 engines, 20 HEMTT engines, 4 M577A2 spare engines, 2 5-ton truck engines, 20 spare HMMWV engines, ammunition, spare and repair parts, maintenance, support equipment, publications and documentation, personnel training and equipment, U.S. Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.\(^{25}\)

Iraq also requested 160 M1117 Armored Security Vehicles (ASVs) as part of this order. The ASVs provide better protection than Humvees. It requested 24 Bell Armed 407 Helicopters or 24 Boeing AH-6 Helicopters, probably to be used as light attack helicopters to support Special Operations Forces. In addition, it requested more than 1,100 120 mm and 81mm mortars, six

\(^{21}\) Moore, “Secret Iraqi Deal Shows Problems in Arms Orders.”

\(^{22}\) Ibid.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.


C-130J-30 aircraft to use for airlift, and 392 Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs). These purchases would be enough to equip two armored brigades, minus armored personnel carriers.

Progress is already taking place in developing Iraqi forces with heavy armor. As of December 2008, the 11th Iraqi division had begun training on U.S. M1s, and this division will probably be the first to upgrade to the new tanks. Iraq announced its intention in December 2008 to purchase an additional 140 M1A1 tanks. It also received U.S. State Department permission to order 400 Stryker armored vehicles.

Once these armored forces are integrated into the IA, the ISF will have taken a first step toward being able to defend itself from its neighbors without U.S. help. The ISF has not, however, as yet announced any major purchases of field artillery.

Unfortunately, the budget shortfall caused by the falling price of oil in 2009 will sharply affect the ISF weapons procurement process. Although no major weapons systems purchases have been cancelled as of May 2009, it is clear that many of them will have to be cancelled or extended, or else cuts in the ISF budget will have to be found elsewhere. DOD reported in March 2009 that “the MoD Force Generation and Modernization plan for 2009 currently exceeds the projected spending authorizations for 2009, requiring the security ministries to either significantly reduce their vision to grow, develop, and equip their forces or to petition the GoI for an additional $8 to $10 billion to support desired growth.”26

Problems with Training, Facilities, Logistics, and Sustainability

No Iraqi force structure can be effective that lacks the proper mix of “enablers” can be effective. These enablers include not only key capabilities like intelligence and command, control, and communications, but also training, logistics, sustainability, and other soft elements of military power. Once again, the following chapters explore these issues in more depth by key element in the Iraqi security forces, but SIGIR provided a good overview of the issues involved—and the need for continuing U.S. support—as of late 2008:27

Although Iraq is assuming a greater share of training and administrative duties for the ISF, the United States continues to provide critical advisory support to help leaders in the field and in the ministries reach their goal of “operational independence.”

The Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) oversees advisors who work as part of nine teams that specialize in assisting Iraq’s security apparatus. In addition to advisory teams in the MoD, MoI, and Joint Headquarters, the Coalition provides personnel to police training teams (including 766 international police advisors), border transition teams, and military assistance transition teams within each of Iraq’s military branches, including 179 U.S. advisors to Iraqi Army (IA) basic training.

Coalition forces oversee joint contingency operating facilities, which serve as shared bases of operation. Currently, 54 contingency operating bases and sites and more than 362 smaller contingency operating locations host ISF and Coalition forces.

DOD reports that the objective is to partially close or hand over these facilities to the ISF once security gains in an area are achieved. For example, during 2007, there were 63 major tracked bases during the height of the U.S. Surge, and as supplemental forces were withdrawn, 9 major bases and 17 smaller bases have either been handed over to the GOI or closed.

U.S. MoI advisors report improvement on budget execution processes, training capacity, and force-generation mechanisms but point to the challenges combating corruption and managing detainees.

Both the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team and the MoI Transition Team report that poor strategic planning, inadequate training center capacity, structurally inadequate facilities, and slow assimilation and professionalization of MoI forces continue to hinder progress.

Coalition forces provide advisory support to help the MoD bolster acquisition, storage, maintenance, and distribution systems critical to equipping personnel in the field. However, progress in developing self-sustaining logistics and maintenance systems is slower than anticipated and remains problematic.

The United States is taking action to bolster the IA’s logistics capacity, including: training nearly 3,000 soldiers as part of several logistics initiatives this quarter developing a logistics doctrine and mechanisms creating training and guidance to improve core competencies.

…It is standing up a general transportation regiment to move equipment and supplies from ports and depots to other facilities requesting $18.75 million for upgrading antiquated equipment to meet long-haul requirements requesting nearly $25 million in procurement actions to address equipment shortages at two motor transportation regiments supporting the production of a Highly Mobile Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle program with $45 million in supplies, repair parts, and a management team.

Completion of the U.S.-funded Taji National Depot and Complex—which will be the largest logistics facility in Iraq—is expected by early 2009. However, Coalition advisors will still be needed to train and oversee the facilities until the Iraqis can assume control. The small arms shop was handed over in May 2008, and training began in October 2008.

Unlike the MoD, the MoI does not have a formally dedicated logistics system, and its maintenance capability is not robust enough to sustain vehicle rates above 85 percent readiness. The MoI is in the process of developing a National Police Sustainment Brigade, which is expected to be completed by December 31, 2008. As of September 30, 2008, the brigade has approximately 46 percent of required personnel that comprise the maintenance, logistics, medical, and transportation companies.

In October 2007, SIGIR began reporting on U.S. efforts to transfer life-support responsibility to the MoI and MoD for facilities, security, transportation, maintenance, logistics, and information technology. Of the 33 contracts that the United States targeted for transition, 19 contracts for the MoD are valued at $181 million, and MoI’s 14 contracts total nearly $267 million. MNSTC-I reported that all contracts to the MoI will be transferred by December 31, 2008. As of September 8, 2008, 13 contracts worth $150 million have been transferred. This total is less than what was reported to SIGIR in July 2008 because MNSTC-I decided to retain control over seven contracts, which total nearly $94 million. Since July 2008, three contracts for $10 million were transferred, which leaves nearly $300 million in contracts retained by the Coalition.
It is tempting to ignore this level of detail and to fail to look beyond direct combat power in shaping the ISF. But it is dangerous—if not fatal—to do so. The United States is now providing Iraq with far more support than most Iraqis, and many American commentators, realize. This not only includes air support, armor, artillery, intelligence, and support for joint operations; it includes many of the elements of sustainability and support that will be critical to the ISF’s ability to stand on its own. It will be possible to phase out this support over time, but it will require careful planning and cooperation between the U.S. and Iraqi governments. The current schedule for U.S. withdrawals requires swift improvements in Iraqi capabilities at a time when the ISF is still involved in combat and faces serious budget problems If such progress does not take place, however, many elements of the ISF could become a hollow and ineffective force.
Iraq still faces major problems in creating truly national forces and in dealing with the impact of sectarian and ethnic tensions. Iraq’s politics still focus as much on Shi’ite-Sunni issues and Arab-Kurdish tensions as on the search for political accommodation. Iraq’s central government is just beginning to exercise effective national leadership and command.

The politics of the national election still generate divisions within Iraq as well as coalitions that may bridge the key sectarian and ethnic divisions. This has led the prime minister and other senior leaders to make decisions based on both immediate political advantage and favoring one faction over another, particularly in determining senior command positions within the ISF. Shi’ites fear some form of Sunni or Ba’ath revival of power. Sunnis fear Shi’ite dominance and exclusion from office and the ISF. At the same time, Arabs and Kurds see control of elements of the ISF and Peshmerga as tools to use in their struggles over the disputed territories in the North.

The provincial elections in January 2009 and the decline in violence in much of Iraq have also created questions as to how control of the ISF will be allocated at the provincial, district, and local levels. Local actors, ranging from provincial governors to militia and tribal leaders, have a great deal of influence outside of Baghdad, and seem likely to have steadily more control over the regular police and locally deployed forces than in the past.

If Iraq is to achieve political accommodation, and if the ISF is to become a mix of national forces serving Iraqi national interests—rather than a mix of forces with ethnic, sectarian, party, and tribal ties—the Iraqi government must do more to ensure that Iraqi force development is structured accordingly. The United States must do everything possible to assist Iraq to this end.

Sectarian and Ethnic Problems

The overall balance of Shi’ites, Kurds, and Sunnis in the ISF has improved over time. The ISF has become less Shi’ite-dominated, at least numerically. Although there are no official or reliable estimates, the *Christian Science Monitor* may be roughly correct in estimating that the ISF is now 54 percent Shi’ite, 31 percent Sunni, and 15 percent Kurdish. If so, the resulting ratios resemble the sectarian makeup of the overall population if Iraq.1

Nevertheless, sectarian issues continue to plague the ISF. Iraqi Sunnis and Kurds complain that key command positions go to Shi’ites, and Prime Minister Maliki uses temporary staff appointments to put loyalists in place while bypassing the CoR and other reviews called for by

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the constitution. Some Shi‘ites are also critical of the prime minister, and the issue goes beyond narrow sectarian and ethnic divisions and becomes one of relative political influence and power. At the same time, some positions are given to Sunnis and Kurds that effectively sideline them in hollow command positions or that put them in “safe” staff positions where they lack real authority. Recruiting and promotion is also sometimes sold in ways that benefit Shi‘ites at the expense of Sunnis and Kurds.

There is, however, another side to this story. The prime minister has made clear that he fears that Sunni and former Ba‘athist influence in the Army and other elements of the ISF poses a threat to the government—both direct and through the failure to take decisive action against insurgents. Other Shi‘ite political leaders have much sharper fears of Sunnis and Ba‘athists. Moreover, the central government has good reason to fear the threat from various Sadrist and other hard-line Shi‘ite elements and has made clear that it will operate against Shi‘ites as well as Sunnis.

The United States sometimes downplays the seriousness of this problem in its unclassified official reporting. According to DOD, “the development of a unified, nonsectarian force that will be capable of securing the country in the event of a withdrawal of Coalition forces is hampered by the loyalty of soldiers within many military units to their tribal and ethnosectarian or political affiliations and associated militias. These affiliations are often the basis for relationships between key officers and higher-level authorities who are not always in the direct chain of command.”

The command structure of the Iraqi Army and military forces has significant numbers of Sunnis and some Kurds, but has been structured to give Shi‘ites a rising share of key command positions. Promotions tend to favor Shi‘ites, and promises to increase the share of Sunnis at other levels within the ISF are sometimes ignored or half-kept.

The MoI continues to suffer from sectarianism, although later chapters show that the National Police has been largely reformed and the use of MoI forces against Sunnis has been sharply reduced. The MoI building itself used to be the scene of sectarian violence, and MoI employees were sometimes killed on their way to and from work. Violence at, or near, the MoI building itself declined significantly by summer 2008 and is now occurring at minimal levels—although this may partly be the result of a consolidation of power in the MoI by Dawa and ISCI/Badr.

The Badr Brigade, a major Shi‘ite militia, appeared to have joined the ISF almost in its entirety. According to a senior U.S. commander, the Badr Brigade had “melded” into the ISF. However, it is unclear the extent to which former Badr members retain their old loyalties. Sadr and the Mahdi Army seem to exercise little influence at the higher levels of the MoI, but sometimes have more influence over IP personnel in the field. The police are often unapologetically sympathetic to the Mahdi Army in areas where Sadr retains major influence or control.

The impact of sectarianism was demonstrated by an ISF raid on the Diyala provincial government headquarters in August 2008. Diyala has a Sunni majority but a largely Shi‘ite government. An NP special operations emergency response unit raided the government building to arrest Hu- sain al-Zubaidi, a Sunni politician. The botched raid led to a half-hour-long shootout between the emergency response unit and local police, and resulted in the death of the provincial governor’s

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secretary. Karim Khalaf, an interior ministry spokesperson serving as the interim commander of police in Diyala, described the emergency response unit as a counterterrorism force that is nominally under Interior oversight but has its own chain of command. The name of its leader and the size of its force are classified, according to Khalaf.

Sectarianism also emerged to some degree in the government’s treatment of the “Awakening” and the Sons of Iraq. The Iraqi government took operational and financial control of the SoI in late fall 2008, but took time to properly fund payments to the SoI, and was slow to incorporate them into the ISF or give them other government jobs. This situation had improved by June 2009.

However, occasional violence persisted between the ISF and SoI, underscoring the tensions over the Awakening movement and the larger Sunni-Shiite tensions in Iraq. In March 2009, an SoI group in the Fadhil district launched an uprising to protest the arrest of the group's leader. Iraqi Army troops regained control of Fadhil and disarmed the SoI group after two days of fighting. Four people were killed in the fighting, with 21 injured. Just two weeks later, several Awakening leaders were arrested on unrelated charges, further inflaming tensions.

It may be impossible to make major further strides in eliminating the sectarian tensions in the ISF until the national election is over, a new government is in place, and it is clear whether the end result helps move the country toward additional political accommodation. It also is far from clear whether the emphasis Iraqi training places on national unity will help reduce sectarian tensions over time. In practice, the United States and MNF-I need to make every possible effort to persuade Iraq’s leaders to create truly national forces.

Kurdish-Arab Tensions

Kurdish-Arab tensions have not improved along with the easing of Iraq’s security situation. Indeed, the lessening urgency of the fight against the insurgency may have allowed the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government more breathing room in which to compete. In fact, the threat of KRG-GoI violence has grown so intense that Brig. Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, who then oversaw much of northern Iraq, stated in October 2008 that U.S. forces would “step aside” if Kurds and Iraqi government forces fight.

The ongoing ISF operation in Mosul is aimed ostensibly at rooting out insurgents. However, according to the New York Times, “The Shiite-led government of Prime Minister Maliki is squeezing out Kurdish units of the Iraqi Army from Mosul, sending the national police and army from Baghdad and trying to forge alliances with Sunni Arab hard-liners in the province, who have deep-seated feuds with the Kurdistan Regional Government led by Massoud Barzani.”

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8. Ibid.
Iraq has not yet made serious progress in reaching lasting solutions to Arab-Kurdish tensions and to establishing an agreed-upon dividing line between Kurdish areas of control and the control of the central government. The Kurdistan Regional Government controls an autonomous region, but there is no clear constitutional or legal definition of the extent of this autonomy. The KRG occupies three provinces in the area that made up the former Kurdish security zone established after the failure of the Kurdish uprising in 1991. This zone is composed of Dahuk, Irbil, and Sulaymani-yah, and occupies roughly 10 percent of Iraq’s territory.

Although the Peshmerga are legally exempted from the Iraqi government’s ban on militias, they are allowed to operate only within the KRG. Yet Kurdish forces are present in parts of Nine-vah, Tamim, and Diyala; and Kurdish political pressure extends into additional areas that cover roughly 7 percent of Iraq. Often, KRG forces are deployed in heavily Kurdish areas outside of the KRG. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), while not in control of these areas, exert a very strong influence over them.

The Kurds have shown an interest in controlling parts of the greater Mosul area and towns as far south as Sinjar. Kurdish forces operate checkpoints and fly the Kurdish flag as far as 75 miles south of the KRG border. There is a serious and potentially violent struggle for the control of Kirkuk and the oil fields around it and for cities in Diyala like Khanaqin and Jalaw. This struggle threatens to divide the ISF along Kurdish and Arab lines and to weaken ISF efforts to fully defeat Al Qa’ida in Iraq.

The Kurdish expansion of control outside of the KRG zone has alarmed many Iraqi Arabs and sometimes U.S. officials. DOD stated in March 2009 that “the presence of Kurdish Peshmerga and Kurd-dominated IA units beyond the KRG boundaries exacerbates tensions and fuels the belief that the GoI and the Coalition are allowing the Kurds to act.” According to Maj. Gen. Mark Hertling, commander of U.S. forces in northern Iraq, “Quickly moving into those areas to try and change the population and flying KRG flags in areas that are specifically not under the KRG control right now—that is counterproductive and increases tensions.”

The extraterritorial Kurdish forces include the regular Peshmerga, Asayish (a Kurdish police force roughly analogous to the American FBI; see “Kurdish Forces,” below), and Kurdish intelligence personnel. The Kurdish presence outside of the KRG zone is extensive:

By its own admission, PUK deploys approximately 7,000 Peshmerga troops outside its own administrative area. These include two battalions (approximately 1,000 soldiers in total) deployed in Diyala Governorate as of this writing; one brigade of approximately 3,000 soldiers stationed at Qara Hanjer in Kirkuk Governorate, between Chamchamal and Kirkuk on the Sulaymaniyah-Kirkuk road; and six battalions of about 3,000 troops at Mosul in Ninewa Governorate. Not included in the foregoing numbers is the battalion-sized Kirkuk Counterterrorism

11. See ibid., 1 and 12, for excellent reporting on this issue and a good unclassified map of the potential dividing line.
Group at the city of the same name and the Presidential Security Brigade currently stationed in Baghdad and being paid by the Iraqi Ministry of Defense.\textsuperscript{14}

While exact numbers of KDP forces deployed outside of the KRG zone are not available, it is likely that they are a significant force. Asayish and Kurdish intelligence services also have a “substantial presence in areas adjacent to the Kurdistan Region.”\textsuperscript{15}

Another source of tension between Iraqi Kurds and Arabs is the large Kurdish presence in the regular Iraqi Army. There have been persistent doubts among Iraqi Arabs as to the loyalty of heavily Kurdish units in the IA, particularly before the Iraqi government began a concerted effort to ethnically rebalance its forces in 2007. Nonetheless, Kurds still make up a large portion of a number of Iraqi Army units:

The Iraqi Army’s 2nd and 4th Divisions were originally Iraqi National Guard formations with Manning levels originally more than 80% Kurdish. This lopsided Kurdish population can certainly be attributed in part to the incorporation of Peshmerga units, but another contributing factor may also have been the early boycott of the new Iraqi security forces by Sunni Arabs. Due to a concerted policy of ethnically rebalancing their forces, Kurdish Manning in 2nd Division has been reduced to 65–70% and in 4th Division to 40–50%. The Iraqi Army’s 3rd Division also has a sizeable Kurdish contingent—about 40% of its strength in 2005 and about 30% now. Three Iraqi Army brigades were organized inside the territory of the KRG, presumably with large Peshmerga contingents in their ranks. These are 16th Brigade, 4th Iraqi Division (originally 3rd Brigade) at Sulaymaniyah (currently forward deployed vicinity of Tuz); 5th Brigade of the 2nd Division was originally formed at Erbil (now serving in Mosul); and 8th Brigade, 2nd Division, originally formed at Dohuk, but subsequently deployed to Mosul and now training at Habaniya.\textsuperscript{16}

At the same time, Arab pressures have alarmed the Kurds. U.S. experts confirm that Kurds are being pushed out of command and intelligence positions in the Iraqi Army. A Sunni victory in the provincial elections in Ninewa give power to the new Al-Hadbaa list over the government formerly dominated by the Kurdish-led Ninewa Fraternal List, and made Atheel al-Najafi, the leader of Al-Hadbaa, the governor.\textsuperscript{17} The Kurds claim that he used his majority to totally exclude them from power. Sunnis, however, stated that the Kurds were offered positions but refused them when they were asked to confirm that Ninewa should remain an independent province unless some version of the Arab-Kurdish territorial referendum called for in Article 140 of the constitution decided otherwise.

A major confrontation occurred over KRG Peshmerga operations in the fall of 2008 when regular IA units were sent into Khanaqin, a largely Kurdish city outside of the KRG in which Peshmerga units had been stationed for some time. Maliki had previously ordered the Peshmerga unit stationed in the city, the 34th Garimian Brigade, to leave. The 34th Brigade refused to leave the city, agreeing to take orders only from the KRG. Kurdish pressure, both within the city and from the KRG, forced the removal of at least one IA unit from the city.

15. Ibid.  
16. Ibid., 165.  
As of September 2008, the Peshmerga forces within the city and IA units stationed just outside of the city remained in a tense standoff. A “senior U.S. military delegation” was sent to the city to help resolve the crisis on September 8, 2008. The Khanaqin controversy was eventually settled with a compromise—the Peshmerga withdrew from the city (but not from Diyala Province), and Asayish and other KRG personnel were allowed to stay. Partially in response to the controversy over Khanaqin, Kurdish leaders began questioning the sale of advanced weapons to the ISF, asking for guarantees that the weapons would not be used against them.

These tensions were made worse in early 2009 when a new commander, Maj. Gen. Abdul Ameer, was appointed to the 12th Iraqi Army Division, which is the key force near Kirkuk. Kurds charged that the commander had supported Saddam’s operations against the Kurds and they saw him as pro-Arab and strongly anti-Kurdish. U.S. sources confirmed that Kurdish officers had been replaced in command of two battalions in the 12th Division and that Kurdish officers had been removed from command positions in other units, along with Kurdish brigade-level intelligence officers.

There were also increased tensions between the Iraqi Army and Kurdish Peshmerga in May 2009 when the governor of Ninewa attempted to go to a festival in Kurdish areas with a large security escort and then called for troops when Kurds blocked his movements. Similar tensions over the Iraqi Army displacing the Peshmerga have required U.S. intervention to prevent a clash and broker a more stable arrangement.

Kurdish-Arab tensions may also grow worse as U.S. forces withdraw from Iraq. U.S. forces have played an important stabilizing role in northern Iraq, mitigating tensions between Kurdish forces and the regular ISF. According to DOD,

In disputed areas adjacent to the KRG in Ninewa, Diyala, and Tamim Provinces, tensions have increased between Kurdish Peshmerga and the ISF. These areas are ethnically mixed and resource-rich, and both the KRG and GoI assert security primacy but have not worked out a clear political arrangement. As U.S. forces depart and the profile of ISF units such as the 12th IA division rises, there will be numerous opportunities for miscalculation or provocation. For now, it appears unlikely that the IA or Peshmerga will intentionally instigate a military confrontation, preferring to see whether negotiations and elections can manage results acceptable to both. However, continued Coalition involvement is critical to help manage the delicate situation.

Kurdish Forces

It is difficult to make an accurate estimate of the size and character of Kurdish forces. The disposition, equipment levels, and training of the forces under the KRG remain unclear. However,

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unofficial reports from U.S. military sources indicate that the Peshmerga have been organized into a brigade-centric infantry force with some armor and artillery and support units. Most Kurdish forces remain divided between Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, although these were officially united under one ministry in 2009. The approximate size and composition of the Peshmerga as of late 2008 is as follows:

- **PUK Peshmerga**—Projected residual force: ~ 27,800
- **PUK Peshmerga**—Earmarked for transfer to 16th Division IA: ~ 14,700
- **KDP Peshmerga**—Projected residual force: ~ 40,000
- **KDP Peshmerga**—Earmarked for transfer to 15th Division: ~ 14,700
- **KDP Zervani**: ~ 30,000 (former Peshmerga transferred to Interior Ministry)

Total: ~127,200

**Figure 6.1** summarizes the organization of Kurdish Police and Army forces. The KRG receives 17 percent of the Iraqi budget and maintains its own MoI and MoD and runs its own military, paramilitary, and police forces almost entirely independent of central government or Coalition supervision. The KRG maintains police units as well as army brigades independent of the ISF. Despite the size and capabilities of this force, its overall structure and role in the ISF have received

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little reliable unclassified official or independent reporting. Only one detailed unclassified report on the modern Peshmerga was publicly available as of mid-2009.23

Although DOD’s quarterly report has included data on the number of Iraqi Police in the KRG, virtually no other unclassified information on the forces in the KRG is available from official sources. Moreover, there are no regular Iraqi Police in the KRG, as the KRG forces are independent of the MoI.24 Indeed, MNF-I stated in September 2008, “At this time there is only one point of contact for IP personnel numbers updates in those three provinces [under KRG authority] so the data in all three provinces is updated as often as possible.”25 Although it is not clear how often that is possible, one point of contact for the tens of thousands of Iraqi Police in the KRG is clearly inadequate.

Until recently, the Peshmerga was divided into KDP and PUK sections. Each party operates roughly half of the overall Peshmerga force, and there appears to have been limited coordination between the two, despite the official goal of eventually forming a unified force.

According to a U.S. military source familiar with the PUK Peshmerga and writing in August 2008, the force was divided into “Organized” and “Semi-Organized” units. The Organized units are better armed, trained, and disciplined than their Semi-Organized counterparts.26

The PUK Organized forces were reported to number 6,658 personnel and to be divided into 26 units. These units include a mechanized brigade (including 1 tank battalion and 2 mechanized battalions), 3 anti-tank battalions, 3 tank-destroyer battalions, 1 machine gun battalion, 6 field artillery battalions, 1 engineer battalion, 1 scout battalion, and a number of smaller units. The scout battalion is deployed to Baghdad as the core of the Presidential Security Brigade.27

The PUK Semi-Organized forces were divided into 16 infantry brigades of 300–2,000 personnel each, with a total aggregate strength of 25,000–26,000 men. Both Organized and Semi-Organized Peshmerga operated on a two-week-on, two-week-off schedule.28

Additionally, 8,000 soldiers were assigned to the PUK Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs. These ministry forces included 2 infantry battalions, 1 field artillery battalion, and 3 military intelligence battalions, as well as training academies.29

While details about the KDP Peshmerga are harder to come by, it is likely that they maintain units of similar size and capability to their PUK counterparts.

23. Ibid.
24. D. J. Elliott of *Long War Journal* writes in an e-mail dated 5 August 2008: “In the KRG, they do not have IP yet. That [reflagging] is part of MoI’s negotiations with KRG. The only MoI Peshmerga at this time are DBE Region I, all three brigades are Peshmerga. (Region I is the KRG borders with Turkey and Iran.)” Note: According to other sources, the decision to transfer the foregoing DBE forces to MoI control from the KRG occurred as part of the 2006–2007 negotiations to transfer the KRG to Region in Control (RIC—generally known as PIC for nonregional governorates). Mr. Elliott also alludes to negotiations to transfer “10,000–15,000 INP, and 10,000–15,000 IP (MoI numbers still in negotiation)” KRG forces to the MoI, and the *Long War Journal* Web site alludes to negotiations to stand up one INP brigade per governorate in the KRG.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
The situation has changed since these reports. U.S. officers in Iraq indicated in June 2009 that the Peshmerga was in the process of reorganization and that the KDP and PUK elements in the force had been officially unified under one Kurdish minister, Sheikh Jafar. At the same time, the officers indicated that the Peshmerga totaled nearly 190,000 and that the KRG government was actively seeking to downsize them from a relatively low-quality force, with significant numbers of functional illiterates, to a smaller and much more effective force of 90,000–100,000. Other experts believe that the 190,000 figure is an exaggeration and that Peshmerga forces may be downsized to as low as 60,000 (with an additional 30,000 Zervani).30

One way of accomplishing this would be to form the Peshmerga into two additional Iraqi Army divisions—the 15th and 16th Divisions—that would be Kurdish but could serve anywhere in Iraq. The 15th Division was to be formed of PUK soldiers, while the 16th was to be formed from KDP troops. Units transferred from the KRG to the regular ISF fall under the central Iraqi government's budget, thus giving the KRG a significant monetary incentive to transfer its forces.31

Such steps would create a force that would have reassured the Kurds while creating an integrated ISF that could be funded through the central government—a key concern to the KRG because of the cost of maintaining separate units. According to U.S. sources in Iraq, the cost of the Peshmerga alone approached $1.5 billion a year, of which substantially more than $1 billion went to personnel costs. The Iraqi government moved toward a plan to create these divisions in 2007, but it was never implemented. Senior Kurdish officials indicated in June 2009 that they had virtually given up on the plan, but U.S. advisers still have some hope that it can be implemented.

Kurdish forces also include the Zervani, a National Police-like force of about 35,000 that is drawn largely from supporters of the KDP. The Zervani are being placed under the KRG minister of the interior, Karin Sigari, and report to him. There is no PUK equivalent.

The KRG also maintains several intelligence agencies, although detailed unclassified information on them is almost nonexistent. There is a military intelligence force called the Hawalari, with both KDP and PUK branches. Very little is known about this force.

The KDP has an equivalent of the CIA called the Parastin, and the PUK has its equivalent called the Zanyari. Neither the Parastin nor the Zanyari appears to have any basis in KRG or central government law.32 Despite this lack of legal standing, both agencies operate both inside and outside the KRG and “have been known to operate their own jails and prisons.”33

The KDP/PUK split that runs throughout most of the Kurdish security services appears to be even more pronounced in the intelligence agencies: “Unlike the other elements of the KRG security sector which are constituted by statute and at least nominally serve the Kurdistan Region as opposed to their sponsoring parties, Parastin and Zanyari are purely creatures of the KDP and PUK respectively.”34 The Parastin is currently headed by Masrur Barzani (son of KRG president Maud Barzani), while the Zanyari is headed by Dr. Khasrow Gul but “ultimately answers . . . to Jalal Talabani [the president of Iraq and PUK leader].”35

30. Ibid., July 8, 2009.
33. Ibid., 205.
34. Ibid., 204.
35. Ibid.
Both the KDP and PUK have branches of a police force called the Asayesh or Asayish. These forces include uniformed police somewhat similar to the United States’ FBI and also separate intelligence branches. The manning of these forces is unclear.

The Asayish “has jurisdiction over major economic and political crimes such as smuggling, espionage, sabotage, terrorism, connections with ‘opposition armed groups,’ and other major crimes pending referral to the courts.” \(^{36}\) Yet it is clear that the Asayish often exceed this jurisdiction, having broad discretion in choosing matters to investigate.

The Asayish have been accused of operating, and even arresting suspects, outside of the KRG areas. They report directly to their respective party leadership, bypassing the local government in the provinces they operate in. The Asayish operate both overt and covert jails and maintain a network of informants. A Human Rights Watch report published in July 2007 accused the Asayish of committing a number of violations of Iraqi and international law, including the torture of detainees.\(^{37}\)

The Kurds also have a large civil police with a Provision Joint Coordination Center and fire fighting, traffic, and other emergency response elements. The KRG police forces remain divided between the KDP and PUK, despite the official unification of the Kurdish government in 2006.\(^{38}\)

KRG regular police force training is supported by Civilian Police Assistance Training Teams (CPATTs).\(^{39}\) However, details on KRG police training, including the number of hours of training, the nature of the training courses, and the level of trained as opposed to untrained Kurdish police in the field, remain unclear. The manning and cost of this civil police force are also unclear.

Finally, there are some 3,000 uniformed Turkish military in the KRG, and it is important to note that neither the KDP nor the PUK officially support the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and Kurdish militants in Turkey. The KRG has also established a joint intelligence center with Turkey and the United States to help halt PKK operations in the northern part of the Kurdish area, as well as to deal with Iranian and Iran-based Kurdish extremist groups in the northeastern border area. Turkey maintains 1,200–1,500 troops and up to 60 armored vehicles in a string of seven bases in Dohuk.\(^{40}\) While some Turkish-Kurdish tensions remain, these are a less serious problem for both the Kurds and for the development of the ISF and effective Iraqi security capabilities than in the past.

Other tensions have emerged over the fact that Kurdish forces procure their own weapons. This has caused sporadic problems with the central Iraqi government, which has sometimes opposed such purchases, while the Kurds feel that the central government should assume part or all the cost of Kurdish forces because these forces help defend the nation. In September 2008, a large shipment of small arms and ammunition arrived in Sulaymaniyah for KRG forces.\(^{41}\) But Iraq’s minister of the interior, Jawad al-Bulani, stated that such a weapons shipment would constitute a violation of Iraq’s constitution.

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36. Ibid., 181.
39. Ibid., 195.
40. Ibid., 140.
This statement was controversial. According to the *Washington Post*, “experts on Iraq’s constitution said the document does not clearly say whether provincial officials have the authority to import weapons. However, Iraqi and U.S. officials said the Ministries of Interior and Defense are the only entities authorized to import weapons.” The timing of this shipment of arms, amid rising tensions between the KRG and the central government, worried U.S. officials. Not long after the Sulamaniyah shipment was revealed, however, Ali al-Dabbagh, a central government spokesman, stated that Iraqi government officials do not oppose the Kurds arming their police if it was aimed at strengthening national or regional security.

At some point, Iraq can achieve stability only if it finds some solution to political accommodation that Arabs, Kurds, Turcomans, and other minorities can live with, and finds a solution to incorporating Kurdish forces into the ISF in ways that both make them national and give the Kurds some assurances of security.

**Localization of Security: A Key Challenge to the MoI and the Iraqi Police**

It is not clear whether future control of the Iraqi police will emerge as a serious local and sectarian problem as Iraq becomes more secure and the provinces become more powerful. The structure of the MoI makes it difficult for the central government to control all of the elements of the Iraqi Police. Many of the personnel involved are locally recruited, loyal to local authorities, and indebted (sometime literally) to them for their appointment and promotions.

DOD reported in March 2008 that “there are no reliable data on how many of [the IP] are the approximately 135,000 police who have received basic recruit and transition reintegration training from the Coalition. Estimates of the percentage of total trained by the Coalition that are still on the force range from 40 percent to 70 percent.” DOD also reported in March 2008 that the attrition rate is estimated at 17 percent annually. The MoI has continued to hire additional police beyond those trained by MNSTC-I. This is the result of “pressure from provincial and local governments that want additional police in their jurisdictions.” These “extra” police are hired, vetted, trained, and equipped by the local governments, often making them unreliable. These “extra” police have also strained the logistics of the already underequipped MoI forces. The United States only funded equipment for the authorized force levels. The MoI had to procure and fund on its own the police who have been hired in excess of the approved Objective Civil Security Force levels.

The September 2008 DOD quarterly report did not include any data on how many currently serving troops had received training; and although it reported the monthly attrition for Iraqi ground forces as 2 percent, it offered no information on attrition in the Navy, Air Force, or Police. Information on the IP training backlog remains difficult to obtain, with the March 2009 DOD quarterly report stating only that “training challenges, with equipment shortfalls, while improving, also remain a concern.”

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42. Ibid.
45. Ibid., 32.
46. Ibid., September 2008, 49.
47. Ibid., March 2009, 40.
Control of the IP could become a further source of sectarian or ethnic tension if the central government is weak or some part of Iraq opts for federal status. Command of police forces in the provinces is held by the provincial director of police (PDoP). The PDoP is elected by provincial councils from a list of candidates provided by the MoI. Once PDoPs are elected, however, it is difficult to remove them from office. According to some sources, PDoPs have been “closely tied to the governor and to the dominant political party in each province.”  

The central government can alter senior appointments, rote units, send in the National Police, limit funding, and alter the flow of supplies and equipment. Iraq is a federal republic, however, and as such it is to be expected that local and provincial authorities would seek a role in the sizing of their police as well as in the hiring and command control of police in their areas, particularly provincial police.

The central Iraqi government also has increased its control over ISF, and particularly IP, forces in the provinces through the use of Joint Operations Command (JOC) centers. Five JOCs were established as of April 2008, in Basra, Karbala, Baqubah, Samarra, and Baghdad. The commander of each JOC is chosen by the prime minister and maintains operational control of all ISF forces in his Area of Responsibility (AoR), including the IP and PDoP.

Incorporation of Sunnis into the ISF

The incorporation of more Sunnis, and in particular members of the SoI, has become a key to fostering political accommodation. Many SoIs are former militants, and the drop in violence across much of Iraq is a direct result of their decision to stop fighting against the Americans and the central government. However, the Shi’ite-dominated central government has been hesitant to incorporate large numbers of Sunnis into the ISF. Part of the reasoning behind this delay may be doubts about the SoI members’ loyalty; however, the central government may also wish to maintain the largely Shi’ite-dominated nature of the ISF. The loyalty of the SoI remains an open question. Most of the SoI are Sunni, and incorporating many of them into the ISF will create more mixed and Sunni-dominated units, something the central government fears.

Many U.S. officials see Bassima al-Jaidri, the head of Iraq’s Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation, as personifying the problem of incorporating SoIs. This committee is charged with spearheading efforts to mend sectarian ties and with incorporating new soldiers into the ISF. In practice, the committee decides who is allowed to join the ISF. Bassima repeatedly has been accused of sectarian bias in deciding who gets to join. Brig. Gen. David Phillips, in charge of the U.S. effort to train the IP, stated: “She [Bassima] is one of our significant impediments to reconciliation.”

In case after case, a long list of potential recruits is given to the committee, only to have it returned with almost all the Sunni names taken off. In one case, Brig. Gen. Jim Huggins sent a list to the committee of 3,000, mostly Sunni, men who wanted to join the IP. The list was returned

49. Ibid., 23.
with only 400 men approved. All were Shi’ite. According to Huggins, “That’s a blatant example that someone is still looking at this thing with a sectarian eye.”

The ISF and the Re-Ba‘athification Law

The passage of a law to allow ex-Ba’ath party members to work in the Iraqi government had been a major goal of the U.S. command, and of Sunni Iraqis, for several years. The de-Ba’athification law, which had been debated and negotiated over for months, was finally passed by the Iraqi parliament in January 2008. The law, at least the version the United States was pressuring the parliament to pass, was supposed to allow ex-Ba’athists to rejoin the Iraqi government. The law re-instates many ex-Ba’athists pensions and also compensates many of the people harmed by the party under Hussein.

The bill was vaguely worded, however, and, depending on how it is implemented, may result in the law having the opposite effect from the one originally intended. One U.S. diplomat thought that “the law is about as clear as mud.” Although it does include provisions for re-instating many Ba’athists, it excludes them from certain ministries, including the MoD and MoI. Some, including Ahmed Chalabi, head of the de-Baathification commission, believed that the law would result in the firing of all former Ba’athists now serving in the ISF, a total of 7,000 men. Implementation of the law would largely be overseen by a seven-member commission appointed by the cabinet and approved by the parliament. Concerns about the final effects of the bill delayed its approval by the Presidency Council, the last step before it became law.

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51. Ibid.
The growth of the Iraqi Army is shown in Figure 7.1, Figure 7.2, and Figure 7.3. The status of the Iraqi Army in June 2009 is shown in Figure 7.4 (page 138). The recent deployment of the Iraqi Army in 2009 is shown in Figure 7.5 (page 139). These figures show that the Iraqi Army is now a major force with a steadily growing ability to fight on its own, but, as is the case with almost any force expanding at such a rate, the rapid expansions of both the IA and IP have caused a range of ongoing problems.

Iraq now faces the challenge of creating a truly national force, creating Iraqi Army capabilities that can fully replace U.S. forces, creating an army that can defend Iraq against external enemies, and doing so in ways that Iraq can afford and sustain. These are not easy challenges to meet given that all U.S. withdrawals are to be complete by the end of 2011, the scale of the improvements the IA must make, and the pressure imposed by Iraq’s national budget.

Expansion of the Iraqi Army: Racing Quantity against Quality

Iraq must carefully manage each step in the transition from U.S. withdrawal to full Iraqi capability, particularly given the rapid expansion of the Iraqi Army. Although many have talked about the surge in U.S. forces, Figure 7.1 shows that Iraqi forces surged as well. According to Gen. David Petraeus, “It is sometimes overlooked, but the Iraqi surge was over three times our surge. They added over 100,000 Iraqi Security Force members. That’s an enormous generation of Iraqi forces.”

As of early 2008, 14,000 men were being recruited into the IA every five weeks. General Petraeus added in his Senate Armed Services Committee testimony on April 8, 2008, that “133,000 soldiers and police [have been added to the ISF] over the last 16 months, and the still-expanding training base is expected to generate an additional 50,000 Iraqi soldiers and 16 Army and Special Operations battalions throughout the rest of 2008, along with over 23,000 police and eight National Police battalions.” Iraqi Army strength had risen to 196,698 assigned personnel as of November 30, 2008, plus 22,724 more training and support forces.

References:
Figure 7.1  Growth of Iraqi Army and Other Security Forces

Growth in total authorized manning, August 2007–July 2008:


Growth of Iraqi combat units, September 2007–August 2008:

As of March 2009, the Department of Defense reported that the IA was divided into 13 infantry divisions and 1 mechanized division. The most recently created division, the 12th infantry division, had officially completed generation on December 4, 2008, although five of its battalions were still organized as infrastructure battalions guarding oil pipelines as of December 2008. DOD reported that the IA had 201 IA fully trained battalions, divided into 55 brigades, as of March 2009. A more recent MNSTC-I estimate for 2009 is shown in Figure 7.4. This estimate indicates a slightly smaller force structure of 192 battalions and 54 brigades. It also shows, however, that the IA had developed a large range of engineering, transport, and support capabilities, and that it planned to add substantial additional enablers and sustainment capability during the rest of 2009.

Notes:
The table represents Total Fielded Ground Forces (and what is planned or in generation, etc., with regard to ground forces [34,500] for 2009).
Data show personnel present for duty as a percentage of the personnel authorized for the various divisions and the Iraqi Ground Forces (IGF) Command Headquarters.

7. Ibid., March 2009, 47
This same MNSTC-I analysis produced the following summary of IA accomplishments, initiatives, and challenges. The analysis reflected the fact that the most important near-term challenges facing the IA were to modernize the Army's military culture, add the enabling capabilities currently provided by U.S. forces, develop suitable numbers of qualified officers and NCOs, and develop suitable logistic and sustainment capabilities:

**Accomplishments**

- Maneuver Forces: 14 DIV HQs, 54 BDEs, 182 BNs
- Training Base:
  - 6 RTCs: BCT, MOSQ, NCO Training, SQD to BN collective training
  - 11 DTCs: Individual Training, SQD to BN collective training
  - CTC: Individual to CO collective training; C-IED training, Mortar FDC, and M1A1 training

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8. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
### Figure 7.4 The Iraqi Army in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defense Forces</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Current Set Key Units/ Forces/ Capabilities</th>
<th>Target Growth 2009 Key Units/ Forces/ Enablers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Army</td>
<td>201,423</td>
<td>144 Div HQs, 54 BDEs, 192 BNs</td>
<td>+3 Location Commands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Support</td>
<td>27,614</td>
<td>1 Mech Div; 13 Light Div (9th IA Div is the Mech Div)</td>
<td>+12 Field Workshops;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Army</td>
<td>229,037</td>
<td>10 Location Commands</td>
<td>+12 Ordnance Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Engineer Infrastructure BN; GTR</td>
<td>+48 Provisioning Platoons;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 Motorized Transport Regiments</td>
<td>+1 MP Co</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Logistics Affairs Training Institute (LATI)
- Support Forces
  - Taji Supply and National Maintenance Depots
  - General Transportation Regiment
  - 12 Motor Transportation Regiments; 9 Location commands

**Initiatives**

- Grow Enablers: ISR, Div signal, Eng BNs, mortars, and Log units
- Transform Training Base: Centers of Excellence
- IED Center of Excellence
- Modernize Equipment: UAH, M16, SINCgars
- M1A1 Program Management
- C2: Joint Ops Center/Iraqi Logistics Ops Center (ILOC)
- Professionalize the Force
  - Warrior Training Program
  - Senior NCO Course; Tactical CDR's course
  - Institutionalize After Action Review Process
  - Military Values, Principles, and Leadership Development
Challenges

- Logistics/sustainment structure “Under Construction”
- Degrading infrastructure
- Force Generation expectations
- Force Management understanding
- Centralized decisionmaking
- “New School vs. Old Camp”

Prospects for Future Force Expansion

Although budgets and ethnic tensions are a problem, the expansion of the Iraqi Army may continue beyond the newly constituted 12th division: MoD may add two “mountain” divisions by incorporating Peshmerga soldiers. The massive budget shortfall and hiring freeze instituted in 2009, however, has cast doubt on all IA expansion plans.
The force expansion has succeeded because the IA has far better support in terms of training, embeds, partner units, facilities, and equipment than it had during the initial efforts to create a new Iraqi Army. At one point, Iraqi forces that were totally unready for combat, and suffered accordingly, were being rushed into the field. As the SIGIR reports in its analysis of the lessons of the U.S. aid effort,9

On October 14, 2003, the White House reported to the Congress that 70,000 Iraqis were engaged in security operations and another 13,000 were in training… Secretary of State Colin Powell claimed that the Department of Defense “kept inventing numbers of Iraqi Security Forces—the number would jump 20,000 a week! ’ We now have 80,000, we now have 100,000, we now have 120,000.” … CPA and CJTF-7 leaders felt that the inflated numbers hurt the Coalition’s effort. According to Ambassador Bremer, “it was increasingly clear that the Pentagon’s apparent preoccupation with the spring [2004] troop rotation was creating unhealthy pressures to wish a competent Iraqi security force into being faster than possible.” Lt. Gen. Sanchez echoed the point, noting that “at various times, the Department of Defense inflated the numbers of effective Iraqi forces,” while ignoring the fact that “the enduring challenge was building capable and effective Iraqi forces rather than simply adding numbers.”

At the same time, the rapid expansion of the IA in recent years has meant that new units were constantly being formed, and that many had to be led and manned by relatively inexperienced personnel. It also put heavy pressure on recruiters and trainers, which inevitably meant some sacrifice of quality to obtain quantity. The result has been a continuing need for U.S. training, embeds, and partner units until Iraqi Army forces can operate with complete independence from U.S. forces.

These challenges were initially complicated by the fact that some Iraqi forces, including roughly half of the Army’s divisions and almost all of the regular police, were originally recruited and equipped to serve locally in limited defensive roles; they were not trained and equipped as mobile forces to act as active combat units deployable throughout the country to deal with insurgency and civil conflict. This situation has changed radically in recent years, however. Virtually all the brigades in the Iraqi Army can now be deployed throughout the country, although this does not mean that they do not have a local sectarian and ethnic character that can present problems in other regions.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the Army still faces ethnic and sectarian divisions. Experts believe that the recruiting base must be broadened further to include more Sunnis, that new pay and arrangements are needed to create a nationally deployable force, and that new equipment and facilities will be needed for the deployable units to be thrust into more serious combat.

Another major unresolved problem facing the IA is its chain of command. Command and control is sometimes confusing, with multiple organizations and offices competing for control. According to DOD, “Lines of command and control, particularly at the national level, continue to be poorly defined. This inhibits planning, decisionmaking, and the ability to execute coordinated operations at all levels. Decisionmaking remains overly centralized at the highest level, particularly in the employment of the IA, with orders often bypassing elements of the chain of command.”10

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The IA has been steadily more effective in counterinsurgency and security missions despite these problems, although it remains at least partly dependent on U.S. support and enabling forces. It is doubtful the IA could be effective in conventional warfare with such a convoluted chain of command.

The establishment of joint operational command centers has helped clarify the chain of command somewhat, providing a central location for coordination of all military and police forces operating in the area. However, these developments have created different and largely uncodified chains of command and very different levels of coordination with local Provincial Directors of Police (PDoPs). As of September 2008, operational commands had been set up in Baghdad, Karbala, Ninewa, Samarra, Basra, Anbar, and Diyala.11

Manpower Totals and Leadership Issues

The Iraqi Army still suffers from major problems in actual manning levels. As a result, assigned manpower is much higher than the level of authorized manning as part of an effort to compensate for desertions, unauthorized absences, and high levels of leave. These were significant problems before the national budget crisis forced a freeze on new manpower. Army had only 196,698 assigned personnel as of November 30, 2008, plus 22,724 more training and support forces.12 Its authorized strength was 174,055 personnel, plus 22,345 more training and support forces.

Problems in Total Manning

The September 2008 DOD quarterly report found that overall average assigned manning of IA divisions had reached 103 percent of authorized strength (short of their 120–135 percent goal). An MNF-I source reported that the IA had achieved a rate of 120 percent unit manning by early 2008, and it was estimated that this would rise to 135 percent.13

The IA had a present-for-duty rate of 81 percent of total authorized personnel. Only the 5th division fielded at 100 percent present for duty, with the rest of the IA divisions averaging far lower (See Figure 7.2). However, MNSTC-I notes that these present-for-duty numbers are proportional to the amount of leave the division commanders allow.

MNSTC-I reported that October 2008 manning rates were at 109 percent overall, with 70 percent manning for NCOs and 71 percent manning for officers. The overall present-for-duty rate of authorized personnel for October was 82 percent, although this number fluctuated due to the number of personnel on leave.14

As of June 2009, the IA had a total authorized manning of 229,037, or more than 233,000 if Iraqi Special Forces were added. The budget crisis had forced the IA to drop its goal of overmanning its combat units at 135 percent (to compensate for the 20 percent or more of the force that can be on leave or absent at any time) and had moved authorized levels back to 100 percent. In

11. Ibid., 5.
practice, many units were manning at actual levels of 80 percent, or 65 percent if personnel absent or on leave were dropped from the total.\textsuperscript{15}

Problems in Leadership

There still are problems in terms of officer and NCO strength and imbalances in Army units—with some overmanned and some undermanned. MNSTC-I reported an overall IA manning figure of 108 percent (as of September 2008), but this total includes a much higher manning rate for enlisted personnel, and just 68 percent manning for NCOs and 69 percent manning for officers.\textsuperscript{16} Importantly, these figures are also not the percentages of personnel that are present for duty at any given time, which can be much lower.

The rapid expansion of the IA has increased these problems. The ISF has always been short of officers and NCOs. Officers and NCOs take time to promote up from the lower ranks, and the pace of ISF expansion has not allowed for this progression. The April 2008 SIGIR report found a significant shortfall in officers and suggested that it may take a decade to address this problem. Even DOD stated that “the shortage of leaders will take years to close.”\textsuperscript{17}

According to DOD, the IA is short of leadership in the mid-range NCO ranks as well as the mid-range officer ranks. The IA is taking several steps to mitigate the leader shortage, such as actively recruiting prior service officers and NCOs using mobile recruiting teams and exploring accelerated promotions of personnel currently in the Army. It is unclear if sufficient candidates can be recruited to offset increased requirements. The MoD is also considering other ways of generating officer candidates from within the current force.\textsuperscript{18}

The MoD runs a program to reintegrate former Saddam-era officers into the IA to help address the officer/NCO shortage. This program vetted and reinstated 3,760 officers and 4,094 NCOs between January 1, 2008, and July 31, 2008.\textsuperscript{19} The program is a subject of sectarian tension, however, as Sunnis think that it favors Shi’ites who served under Saddam and excludes many qualified Sunnis.

The MoD has instituted a number of other programs to address the officer/NCO shortage, including “accelerated officer commissioning programs for university graduates. ... On the enlisted side, the top 10 percent of each Basic Combat Training class is selected to attend a Corporal’s Course. Through July 31, 2008, this program generated more than 4,053 new corporals.”\textsuperscript{20} It is important to note, however, that several training courses for officers and NCOs require English language proficiency. Unfortunately, many officer and NCO candidates do not speak English, and the MoD “has not established an effective English language training program.”\textsuperscript{21}

DOD does not provide a summary of present-for-duty rates of officers and NCOs. However, it is clear that the past manning rates of 68 percent for NCOs and 69 percent for officers mean

\textsuperscript{15} MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
\textsuperscript{16} MNSTC-I, September 2008.
\textsuperscript{17} DOD, Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq, March 2008, 32.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., September 2007, 31.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., September 2008, 49.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
that even lower percentages of officers and NCOs are present for duty at any given time. In at least some cases, the actual rate is well below 65 percent.

Problems in the Training Cycle

The current IA cycle, from recruitment to field, is 12 weeks.\textsuperscript{22} This accelerated cycle gets units out into the fight quickly, but it has undermined the development of the Iraqi forces and led to the deployment of immature units that were not ready for combat. Some U.S. advisers and embedded training teams also have not been ready for their missions, compounding the problems inherent in creating new units. This situation helps to ensure that newly formed units, or units with large numbers of trainees, often are not ready for combat and cannot function with even moderate effectiveness until they are given time to work with embedded U.S. training teams and U.S. partner units.

Even the best formal training programs cannot prepare whole new units to be ready for combat. Historically, formal training systems have been effective only in providing manpower for units with existing structures and experienced officers, NCOs, and teams. Creating entirely new units has always been a high-risk effort and deeply problematic, and success has depended heavily on committing such units slowly, with experienced combat units nearby and assisting them, and being able to transfer in proven officers and NCOs.

This helps explain why some IA units have been much more effective and reliable than others. In the past, some Iraqi battalions and force elements were rushed through training and into combat well before they were ready. No nation or culture, including the United States, has been able to overcome these basic realities, and the fact that so many Iraqi units have been rushed into existence without meeting minimal preconditions for success has ensured troubled force development and a significant number of failures.

These problems will continue if the Iraqi Army returns to some of its past plans for further rapid growth. Prime Minister Maliki has examined expansion initiatives that call for up to five new divisions, including, as noted above, two Peshmerga divisions to be added to the regular ISF.\textsuperscript{23}

The budget crisis and improved security may defer such efforts at force expansion, but the recent history of the IA has been one of steadily increasing force goals, and it is still not clear what the final end-strength of the ISF will be. DOD stated in December 2008 that “total Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) requirements are expected to grow to between 609,000 and 646,000 by 2010.”\textsuperscript{24} A

\begin{itemize}
  \item Torrens-Spence, conference call, February 15, 2008.
  \item DOD, \textit{Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq}, December 2008, 31: “Four separate studies informed these Iraqi force end-strength estimates. The first was the May 2007 MNSTC-I In-stride Assessment of growth required in 2008 to protect the population, overmatch the enemy, provide the depth necessary to deploy forces across the country, and implement an annual retraining and reconstitution program. The second was Iraqi Military Service plans focused on the 2010-2015 period, and MoI Plan that addressed near-term police force growth. The third was an MNC-I assessment of the Iraqi Army’s required enduring posture by 2010. The fourth was a MNSTC-I directed, MNF-I sponsored Iraqi force analysis conducted by the Center for Army Analysis. The primary objective of this assessment was to determine if the projected, near-term (2010) Iraqi forces were capable of overmatching the anticipated threat. The assessment concluded that the ISF was incapable of overmatching the threat and recommended additional force structure growth and specific capabilities.”
\end{itemize}
senior U.S. commander stated that the eventual goal of the IA is to have 15–16 divisions. However, little official information has been published on the final size and disposition of the IA, and these estimates are thus heavy on speculation, particularly in light of the budgetary shortfall and hiring freeze imposed on the ISF in 2009.

According to the Long War Journal, the total planned end size of the IA could be as high as 20 regular divisions, including 4 armored divisions, 4 mechanized divisions, 8 light infantry divisions, and 4 light armored cavalry divisions. In addition, the ISOF is planned to expand to at least three brigades, and perhaps as many as six or seven.25

This raises serious questions as to whether Iraq needs or can sustain such a force once the insurgency is over. According to a senior U.S. commander, several Iraqi ministers, including Prime Minister Maliki, would like to eventually shrink the IA. However, until Iraq’s private sector can provide jobs for all of the former soldiers and policemen, it is doubtful that the ISF will be significantly downsized.

Issues Involving U.S. Advisers

The rapid expansions of the IA and IP strained the U.S. and Coalition’s ability to partner with Iraqi units long before Iraq and the United States agreed to have all U.S. forces withdraw by the end of

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25. The Long War Journal’s estimate of the size of the ISF in five years is extremely rough: “[This estimate] is heavy on speculation, estimation, and extrapolations. If sixty percent proves accurate, the estimate will be considered good.” That said, their estimate of the planned state of the ISF at the end of 2012:

4. The Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) sectors are not the basis for the Iraqi Army Corps. There are to be four active corps.
5. Iraqi Special Operations Force (ISOF) is considered a five-brigade strategic reserve with brigades assigned as needed.
6. The Iraqi Army is projected to grow to 20 divisions (including ISOF as a division equivalent).
7. The mechanization of the heavy components of the Iraqi Army and the artillery will probably be incomplete.
8. An Iraqi Army reserve probably will be based on existing Ministry of Interior paramilitary formations.
9. The principal forces for internal security belong to the Ministry of Interior (MoI).
10. The Iraqi National Police (INP) is currently inadequate for the planned primary internal security role.
11. The Iraqi National Police is expanding to a minimum of four or five divisions. In addition to police training, it is trained and operates as light infantry in wartime.
12. The Department of Border Enforcement (DBE) requires further expansion in logistics and may get artillery.
13. Kurdish Regional Guards (KRG) is being re-designated as army and police.
14. The KRG is retaining one de facto active IA (V) corps of three divisions and transferring two other divisions to the other IA active corps.
15. The Iraqi Air Force has a long-term plan for 38 squadrons in 10 years. It will be an army centric force.
16. The Operational Commands are not the basis of the four active corps, but will be used as joint corps/division headquarters for mobilization.
17. Provisional Emergency Response Units (ERU) and Brigades (ERB) would be mobilized as infantry in an emergency, and probably are planned to be incorporated into the INP/DBE.”

2011. U.S. commanders in Iraq announced in early May 2008 that, for the first time, contractors as opposed to U.S. military personnel would be used to staff Military Transition Teams (MiTTs).26

This development may not hurt training efforts, as long as the contractors recruited to the MiTTs are of high quality. However, the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) approved by the Iraqi parliament in November 2008 does not include immunity for contractors from Iraqi justice. This will increase the costs of hiring contractors of all types in Iraq and may force more reliance on Iraqi subcontractors.27

At the same time, some express concern about the willingness of contractors to go out into the field with the units they are advising and observe and interact with their supported units in combat. Training indigenous forces in the field is an inherently dangerous job. Contractors may be less willing to take such risks, particularly now that their immunity has been revoked.

These training problems may also become far more serious as the United States continues to carry out major force reductions. U.S. forces are scheduled to drop sharply after the Iraqi national election to 10–9 brigades (115,000–100,000 personnel) in January–March 2010, and then down to no more than 50,000 by the end of August 2010.28 The United States would then have phased out all combat forces, but have left six Advisory and Assistance Brigades (AABs) and roughly half of the enablers it had in January 2010. This would be a total of 50,000 U.S. military personnel.

It is not yet clear exactly how the Advisory and Assistance Brigades will be structured, how large they will be, or exactly what kind of support they will have in the form of engineers, intelligence, and surveillance equipment.29 The AABs will be "about the size of a standard BCT [Brigade Combat Team], but will include more field-grade officers serving as advisers, and more engineering, military police, civil affairs, transportation and other capabilities to support the training and mentoring mission."30 The AABs will be trained specifically for the ISF assistance mission, and will undergo “scenario-based training and mission-readiness exercises designed to prepare them for the complex challenges they will encounter in Iraq” in addition to standard combat training.31

The AABs will have to cover the entire country, and Iraqi forces will clearly have to be in the lead in all combat operations. At the same time, it is not yet clear what role they will play in combat alongside their Iraqi Army counterparts, as some training units currently do. The AABs will, however, continue to play some role in combat and will “conduct coordinated counterterrorism missions and protect ongoing civilian and military efforts within Iraq.”32 The first units assigned to the AAB mission will be the 3rd Infantry Division’s 1st, 2nd, and 3rd BCTs and the 4th Infantry Division’s 3rd BCT.33

31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Jelinek, "Army Units Ordered to Iraq for Changing Mission."
Gen. Raymond Odierno, the U.S. commander in Iraq, described the role of such forces as follows: “U.S. forces will be composed of a transition force that consists of a transition headquarters, several Advisory and Assistance Brigades, and appropriate supporting forces.”

There are also plans to eliminate MNSTC-I and to create smaller U.S. and NATO advisory teams. This too may have a major impact on efforts to build up the Iraqi Army and all the other elements of the ISF. The United States may well be downsizing some aspects of its advisory and training personnel too quickly, along with embedded trainers, partner units, and enablers. U.S. reductions will not present a problem if everything goes well, but Iraqi forces will still have readiness and force structure problems in the fall of 2010 and well beyond. The remaining U.S. forces may not be adequate if the IA faces any serious challenge from AQI, Shi’ite militias, or civil conflict.

**Operational Competence Is Increasing, But...**

Despite these problems, the IA has shown a steady increase in operational competence. This is reflected in the rise in battalion readiness seen in Figure 7.6. More importantly, it has been reflected in actual operations. For example, in Operation Blackhawk Harvest in early 2008, the main highway between Baghdad and Diyala was cleared by Iraqi and U.S. troops. Six hundred Iraqi and 200 U.S. soldiers took part in the operation. A U.S. commander, Col. Marshall Dougherty, stated that U.S. troops “largely protected their flanks” and played a secondary role. According to Colonel Dougherty, “The Iraqis could have conducted and been successful in this operation without our help.” This statement did, however, exaggerate some aspects of Iraqi progress.

Although the operation did kill 48 insurgents, according to the executive officer of the Iraqi 5th, Gen. Rasheed Abed al Kareem, most were killed by U.S. air strikes, not Iraqi troops. The Iraqi Air force had only a very limited ability to carry out offensive airstrikes in 2009, using Cessnas modified with air-to-ground missiles. Nonetheless, the IA did play a major role in the operation, clearing many roadside bombs and suffering only three deaths.

In another example of ISF competence, the ISF played a major role in protecting pilgrims heading to Karbala for the Shi’ite religious festival of Ashura from attacks by a militant religious millennial cult. The cult, called the Soldiers of Heaven, attacked pilgrims in several cities across southern Iraq, including Basra and Nasiriyah. Although dozens of people were killed, casualties were relatively low compared to the millions of pilgrims taking part in the holiday. Furthermore, although attacks on the pilgrims were not unexpected, the cult members attacked without warning, and the ISF was able to respond. Casualty reports were unclear, but it appeared that many of the casualties were members of the cult itself. Clearly, despite its myriad problems, the overall trend within the IA is towards greater operational competency.

The best and most sustained demonstration of increasing ISF operational competence has been its performance in the ongoing series of offensive operations following the offensive in Basra, including in Sadr City, Mosul, and Diyala in 2008 and 2009, and in providing security for the provincial elections in January 2009. The ISF has shown an increasing competence in logistics, planning, tactics, and command and control.

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Still Dependent on U.S. Support

Both Iraqis and Americans need to be realistic about just how far the IA has moved toward the level of readiness necessary to deal with insurgents without U.S. and Coalition support and how far the IA still has to go. As has been touched on earlier, U.S. support should be conditions-based and not tied to a rigid timetable. The IA and other elements of the ISF can improve only so quickly. If they run into trouble, the Iraqi government must be ready to invoke the Iraqi-U.S. Strategic Framework Agreement and the United States must be ready to respond.

Iraqi Army Combat Readiness

As is seen in Figure 7.6 and Figure 7.7, the number of units achieving Operational Readiness Assessment (ORA) Level 2 (capable of planning, executing, and sustaining counterinsurgency operations with Iraqi security force or Coalition force assistance) has increased significantly in the last year. However, according to a senior U.S. commander, even if the number of units reaching ORA Level 2 continues to increase, fewer units will reach ORA Level 1 for some time to come because of the many problems discussed in this report, particularly the shortage of officers and NCOs.

The lack of focus on the distinction between QRA Level 2 and QRA Level 1 readiness in some unclassified U.S. reporting has presented problems, particularly because it is based largely on quantitative measures and not on the actual quality of leadership and performance in combat—measures that are now carried out but are classified. Both Iraqi and U.S. political leaders have failed to understand that reports that “Iraqi forces are in the lead” often did not mean that these units were independent of MNSTC-I training and U.S. support.
A senior defense adviser to Iraq’s prime minister made it clear in December 2008 that he did not fully understand this distinction and also had never been fully briefed on how long it would take for Iraqi forces to be able to operate without continuing U.S. advisory support and “enablers.” He noted that the lack of understanding of the time frame needed to create fully independent Iraqi forces was a major political problem in Iraq, and that the failure to communicate this, and plans to make Iraqi forces fully independent, had been a serious problem in the Iraqi political debate over the SOFA and the Strategic Framework Agreement and was an ongoing problem in Iraqi politics.36

He also made it clear that few Iraqi political leaders fully understood the extent to which the ISF continues to rely heavily on Coalition support for combat operations. Many do not understand the difference between being in the lead in counterinsurgency capabilities against a limited enemy like Al Qa’ida and being ready to deal with foreign conventional threats. They do not understand that battalion readiness is not the same thing as brigade or divisional readiness. Nor do they understand the role that U.S. support still plays in terms of airpower, mobility, and IS&R capabilities, or the potential need for support from U.S. armor or artillery in an emergency.

These problems are not unique to Iraqis. Members of the U.S. Congress—including some senior members of the Senate and House committees dealing with defense and foreign policy issues—have long focused on this kind of readiness reporting as a reason to rush Iraqi forces into

36. These comments are based on the author’s interviews with senior Iraqi officials and on discussions during briefings with members of Congress.
assuming full responsibility for combat and/or for making rapid withdrawals of U.S. forces. Other members have seen such reporting as evidence that the United States can make faster withdrawals.

**Iraqi Army Sustainability**

There is a similar lack of understanding about the ISF’s need to improve its sustainability and the level of U.S. aid that may be needed to make the IA fully independent. For example, as of March 2008 the Coalition was still supplying the MoD with emergency fuel supplements, despite long-running promises that the ISF would be able to provide fuel itself. Although the December 2008 DOD quarterly report stated that Iraqi Joint Forces were “nearly self-sustaining in refined petroleum products used to fuel their combat and support vehicles and generators,” no reporting indicated that the emergency fuel supplements had ceased or that the scale of these shipments had decreased.

The ISF is improving its logistical and sustainment capabilities, but it will be several more years before these capabilities are fully developed. In its September 2008 quarterly report, DOD stated that “the ISF are currently on track to achieve the goal of becoming mostly self-sufficient in tactical force sustainment by the end of 2008. Specific focus areas for improvement include improving logistic distribution and supply chain management, supply planning, and acquisition of sustainment stocks.”

Iraqi logistics have been a key focus of MNSTC-I efforts for several years now. Most improvement in this area has taken place at the tactical level, rather than at the operational and strategic levels. According to DOD,

The key inhibitors to Iraqi logistical self-reliance reside at the Ministerial or JHQ level, not the tactical level. Iraqi logisticians are generally capable operators. Unfortunately, current Iraqi acquisition and distribution policies and procedures continue to prevent effective stock replenishment, subsequent maintenance, and repair operations. The DG Acquisition-Sustainment, DG Infrastructure, and DCoS-Logistics all lack contracting and purchasing expertise and authority necessary to replenish stocks, repair equipment, or renovate infrastructure facilities. These authorities reside solely at the MoD level.

As already mentioned, despite equipment and provisions shortfalls during operations in Basra, the fact that the ISF was able to field so many soldiers for the operation at all was itself an achievement. Thus MNSTC-I efforts in this area have not been for naught, as IA logistical capabilities have steadily grown in recent years. However, as with many areas of ISF development, the budget crunch and hiring freeze of 2009 may adversely affect the development of IA logistical capabilities and in particular the generation of additional logistics, sustainment, and support units.

**Conditions-based IA Development and U.S. Assistance**

Accordingly, there is a clear need to develop a common understanding among both Iraqi and U.S. political leaders, legislators, and media about where the Iraqi Army and other elements of the ISF
really stand, and about the timescale and resources needed to make the ISF truly independent. Current reporting implies a degree of progress that has not really been obtained, and different and more realistic kinds of reporting that illustrate future requirements are urgently needed.
The Iraqi Air Force and Navy are still very much in the early phases of development, although the Air Force now provides an increasing number of IS&R, support, and mobility missions; and the Navy carries out active patrol missions. They have limited equipment, and both are well below authorized manning levels (53 percent of authorized strength in the IqAF, and 56 percent of authorized strength in the IqN).\footnote{U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), \textit{Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq}, March 2008, Quarterly Report to Congress, December 2008, 51–52.} Iraq will, however, need effective forces for both counterinsurgency and national defense missions. This poses major challenges for Iraqi force development, particularly given Iraq’s budget problems. It also poses major challenges for the U.S. assistance and advisory effort.

**The Iraqi Air Force**

As of August 2008, only $457 million of the $8.5 billion the United States had appropriated to train and equip Iraq’s security forces in 2007 and 2008 had gone to the Iraqi Air Force. The IqAF is still in its early phase of development. A report on the force by Ernesto Londono in the August 13, 2008, edition of \textit{Washington Post} noted that

> U.S. officials say they share Iraqis’ long-term vision for a well-equipped air force capable of protecting the country from foreign enemies. But they think Iraq needs to focus on basics before investing in front-line combat aircraft. “They don't have the infrastructure to support it,” said Brig. Gen. Brooks L. Bash, the lead Air Force official overseeing the rebirth of the Iraqi air force.

The air force training school opened in September at Taji Air Base, outside Baghdad. It is run by Iraqi and U.S. instructors, and most maintenance work is done by Western contract employees. About 1,000 airmen have completed basic training, and the Iraqi air force expects at least 600 more to graduate by the end of the year. Helicopter pilots are trained in Taji, and airplane pilots are trained at a base in Kirkuk, in northern Iraq.

…Iraqi aircraft were deployed to Basra and Mosul this year to carry out transport, medical evacuation, and surveillance missions in support of military operations. They regularly carry out surveillance missions over the country’s main oil pipelines.

…All of the Iraqi pilots flying missions worked for the former air force. The first three rookie pilots are expected to start flying missions later this year. Recruiting pilots has been challen-
ing because they must be fluent in English, the global language of aviation. The starting pay, roughly $700 a month, is a deterrent.2

The Current State of Iraqi Air Force Development

The March 2009 quarterly report by the Department of Defense indicated that the IqAF had 89 aircraft. These aircraft were donated by the United States and other nations and consisted largely of C-130 transports, small IS&R aircraft, and unarmed helicopters.3 The report stated that 34 additional aircraft were planned to be added in 2009. The report described the strengths and weakness of the Iraqi Air Force as follows:4

The challenge for the IqAF will be to expand current capabilities and build the foundation of a credible and enduring IqAF for the future. Currently, the IqAF has minimal capability across the spectrum of capabilities, but progress is being made in ISR, airlift (fixed/rotary wing), and developing its Airmen, with a focus on the COIN fight. These areas should achieve foundational capability by December 2010. Ground attack, airspace control, and C2 lag behind, with these foundational capabilities expected by December 2012. Despite its rapid growth in the past year, the IqAF lags behind all major Middle Eastern air forces, and achieving a credible and enduring IqAF will require continued Coalition support.

Doctrine

The IqAF has taken important steps to develop its doctrine. Iraqi and Coalition partners have begun codifying their ISR lessons learned in tasking, collecting, processing, exploiting, and disseminating information. In kinetic operations, the IqAF is preparing for operations of its first precision air-to-ground attack aircraft by establishing preliminary rules of engagement. Coalition airpower planners are actively contributing to the development of rules of engagement.

Organization

Over the past 12 months, the IqAF aircraft sortie rate has increased significantly, and its proficiency in scheduling and conducting flight operations continues to improve. Today, the IAOC [Iraqi Air Operations Center] provides command and control (C2) of more than 350 sorties per week, spanning training, ISR, and airlift missions.

Training

Training remains a top priority within the IqAF as it strives to reach 6,000 personnel accessed and trained by 2010. Today, the IqAF has 100 officer and enlisted specialties spread across 10 functional areas and anticipates adding approximately 15 more over the next 12 months. Over the past quarter, IqAF officer initial-entry and enlisted technical training has advanced. Enlisted Basic Technical Training (BTT) courses in communications, flight medicine, fire fighting, aircraft maintenance, aircraft structures, aerospace ground equipment, aircraft weapons, aircrew gunners, and professional military education were successfully accomplished, many for

3. Ibid.
the first time. Several BTT syllabi currently in development will expand training in operations, maintenance, supply, and infrastructure support personnel.

In addition, the IqAF commissioned 165 officers after successfully completing Basic Military Training (BMT) and the Air Force Officer Course at the Iraq Military Academy at Rustamiyah (IMAR). An additional 107 IqAF cadets are forecast to graduate from IMAR by the end of 2009. To satisfy the demand for more officers, the IqAF has increased its officer class size to 250 personnel.

The Flying Training Wing at Kirkuk Air Base expanded to reach an annual basic flight training capacity of 128 students with 65 currently enrolled. During the first quarter of 2009, the IqAF graduated nine pilots, the largest pilot class to date. Also, four instructor pilots successfully completed basic flight instructor training. Despite rapid growth of its flight training capacity, the IqAF aircrew manning will continue to lag behind requirements as IqAF inventory of aircraft grows. This aircrew shortage will be met only by further expansion of domestic flight training resources and use of appropriate foreign training opportunities.

English Language Training (ELT) continues to be a top training priority for IqAF leaders. ELT currently focuses on aircrew, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control, and communications personnel. Although the Coalition continues to provide the vast majority of ELT instruction, efforts are under way to generate an Iraqi ELT program with an annual ELT training capacity of nearly 800 students.

**Materiel**

The IqAF added 36 aircraft in 2008 to reach a total of 89 assigned aircraft. 34 Plans call for adding another 34 aircraft in 2009. The IqAF’s inexperience in acquisition continues to make procurement a challenge. This is complicated by a process that requires the defense minister to make most acquisition decisions. The IqAF has shown a nascent capability in requirements generation, FMS case development, and source selection, but significant staff development is still necessary. Work continues in building robust institutional processes for the GoI to obtain the aircraft, materiel, and support necessary to build and sustain its force. The IqAF will achieve an initial precision air-to-ground attack capability, forecast for early 2009, with the delivery of 20 Hellfire air-to-ground missiles for use with the AC-208 Combat Caravan. On December 9, 2008, Congress was notified that Iraq may purchase 26 additional Armed Scout Helicopters, 36 AT-6C Texan light-attack aircraft, and 20 T-6A Texan II training aircraft through the FMS process.

**Personnel**

The IqAF continues to slowly increase its personnel but has still filled only 57 percent of its authorized military and civilian strength. Those numbers must grow significantly in the future to match anticipated growth in aircraft numbers. Such growth is slowed by the time required to recruit, access, and train airmen on complex aircraft and ground support systems.

Of particular concern is a severe shortage of mid-career officers. More than 50 percent of pilots and 35 percent of ground officers will reach retirement age before 2020, and the few remaining mid-career pilots lack flying experience. These numbers point to a shortage of senior IqAF leaders in ten years. This could be partly mitigated by the review and accession of some
of the more than 2,400 former Iraqi military members currently being evaluated for either return to active duty or retirement. Finally, the IqAF must identify mid-career officers with potential to serve in the highest ranks and guide them through rigorous professional military development.

Facilities
On-going projects at Taji, Kirkuk, and New al-Muthana Air Base will increase training capacity and adequately support the requisite growth in IqAF personnel through the spring of 2010. Over the next four years, the IqAF plans to expand to 11 main operating bases. Coalition turnover of key infrastructure, including aircraft parking ramps, hangars, and dormitories is critical to growth, but the IqAF has limited capability to conduct infrastructure maintenance. Coalition advisors are helping the IqAF fill this capability gap by creating training programs for engineers.

The Department of Defense has since notified Congress that it approved the sale of 24 attack helicopters to Iraq, valued at as much as $2.4 billion. According to such reports, Iraq announced plans in 2008 to purchase at least $10 billion in U.S. tanks and armored vehicles, transport planes and other battlefield equipment and services from companies such as General Dynamics, Boeing, and Raytheon. Those planned purchases were all cast into doubt, however, by the budget crunch of 2009.

A MNSTC-I briefing in June 2009 provided a more detailed picture of current IqAF force strength and force development plans. These data are shown in Figure 8.1.

This same June 2009 MNSTC-I briefing provided the following summary assessment of the IqAF’s progress to date:

Accomplishments
- Aircraft 93: 37 training, 37 mobility, 18 ISR, 1 ground attack
- Personnel doubled in 2008 from 1,300 to more than 2,500
  - Specialty codes increased from 10 to 58 in one year
- AOC command and control of more than 350 sorties/week
- 7,500 fixed-wing flight training hrs; 18 pilots graduated
  - 103 pilots in pipeline (67 in-country and 36 out-of-country)
- Initial-entry rotary-wing training began January 2009; 12 students
- Operational sorties; ISR, airlift, battlefield mobility; MEDEVAC
- Supported operations in Basrah, Diyala, Karbala, Sadr City

Initiatives
- IqAF HQ move to Victory Base
- Battlefield Mobility/Spec Ops support capabilities w/Mi-17
- T-6 Bed Down/Air Force College at Tikrit

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### Figure 8.1 Iraqi Air Force Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defense Forces</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Current Set</th>
<th>Target Growth 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Air Force</td>
<td>2,888</td>
<td>Air Operations Center</td>
<td>+ 23 Total aircraft 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35 Fixed &amp; Rotary Wing Training Acft</td>
<td>(+10 Fixed &amp; Rotary Wing Training Aircraft, +12 Rotary Wing, +1 Fixed Wing Ground Attack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37 Fixed &amp; Rotary Wing Mobility Acft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 Fixed Wing ISR/Ground Attack Acft</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training School &amp; Flight Training Wing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Long-Range Radar/Sector Ops Center at Ali Base
- Air-to-Ground Attack capability
- Ac-208S, Mi-17s, Gazelles
- Partnering opportunities w/Coalition operational forces
- Aircraft acquisition: C-130J, Armed Scout Helo, F-16
- Integrated C2 System/ISR
- Focused on building IQAF Foundational Capabilities

### Challenges

- Trained people
- 3-5 years to train pilots, maintainers, and air traffic controllers
- English Language Training is IqAF foundational capability
- Sustainment: delayed GoI-funded cases impacting operations
- Infrastructure
  - IQAF needs to expand airfield infrastructure
  - Need for Coalition-occupied space at IQAF airfields
- Airspace Management
- Partnering vs. Security

The IqAF is set to obtain a limited offensive capability for counterinsurgency missions in 2009. The IqAF will be flying Cessna AC-208 Combat Caravans fitted with Hellfire missiles. These, small, light, easy-to-maintain aircraft are systems that the IqAF should be able to use effectively, and their slow speeds help in targeting and surveillance missions. The Hellfire missiles were slated to arrive in early 2009, but delivery has not been confirmed.6

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Air Force manning is set to expand in the near future, although Iraq’s funding constraints may have some impact. The IqAF’s strength was roughly 2,000 in the spring of 2009. This will triple to more than 6,000 by 2009.\(^7\)

**Iraqi Air Force Development after 2009**

Many of the key issues affecting IqAF development focus on what happens after 2009. The IqAF must become as independent as possible in counterinsurgency missions during the period of U.S. withdrawal from 2010–2011, and then build up combat forces that can defend Iraq against foreign threats in the years that follow. The IqAF needs to make immediate efforts to supplement and replace U.S. air enablers, and it needs to develop conventional air combat capabilities.

There were reports in September 2008 that the Iraqi Air Force was seeking to buy 36 F-16 fighters from the United States at a projected cost of some $3 billion, and that this sale request would be made known to Congress. The United States now deploys some 300 aircraft in Iraq, however, and a successful sale and transfer of 24 attack helicopters and 36 fighters to Iraq would only be the start of the creation of a modern national air force.\(^8\)

The acquisition of F-16s would greatly add to the IqAF’s capabilities, as well as its prestige (no small matter in Iraq’s rough neighborhood). The F-16s make a good investment at this time, because they represent an aircraft that is advanced enough to have a long life cycle, and that could form the core of the IqAF’s growing ability to defend its airspace.

At the same time, any advanced fighter will be expensive to produce, sustain, and support with advanced munitions and facilities. The IqAF is at least several years away from being able to effectively fly and maintain the aircraft. Pilot training programs are continuing, though they are still far too small. In addition, an air force needs more than pilots. Some studies indicate that it takes about five years to train a combat pilot, but it takes up to seven years to train senior personnel to maintain aircraft at the highest level.\(^9\)

Flying the F-16s will require a complete set of transport, maintenance, and storage personnel and facilities. Depending on which version of the F-16 is sold to Iraq, the weapons systems attached to the plane will also require personnel, maintenance, and facilities. At present, 2011 seems a very early date for the IqAF to take over all missions and responsibility from U.S. forces.

Some Iraqi plans do not seem feasible and have called for excessive levels of force development. According to some reports, Iraq announced its intention to purchase an additional 516 military aircraft from the United States and France in November 2008.\(^10\) The *Long War Journal* estimated that these aircraft would be delivered between 2011 and 2015 and would be deployed in squadrons as follows:\(^11\)

- 2011: 2 fighter, 1 trainer, 1 armed recon helo, and 1 attack helo Squadron.
- 2012: 3 fighter, 1 armed recon helo, and 1 utility/attack helo squadron.
- 2013: 3 fighter, 1 armed recon helo, and 1 utility/attack helo squadron.

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11. Ibid.
• 2014: 3 fighter, 1 armed recon helo, and 1 utility/attack helo squadron.

• 2015: 3 fighter, 1 armed recon helo, and 1 utility/attack helo squadron.

• Total of 25 squadrons (14 fighter, 1 trainer, 5 armed recon helo, and 5 attack helo squadrons).

This was too large a force for Iraq to buy and sustain even under Iraq’s optimistic budget assumptions at the time, and would have required the IqAF to acquire between 34 and 38 squadrons by 2015, with 14 fighter squadrons, 1 trainer squadron, 2 transport squadrons, 3–4 reconnaissance squadrons, 1 helicopter training squadron, 2–4 helicopter transport squadrons, 1 utility/search and rescue squadron, 1 special operations squadron, 5 armed reconnaissance helicopter squadrons, and 5 attack helicopter squadrons. As mentioned before, the government of Iraq’s budget shortfall and the ISF hiring freeze of 2009 casts doubt on all of these IqAF expansion and acquisition plans and estimates.

Iraq will also need to invest in surface-based air defenses, but no clear plans for such investment have been announced. While the IqAF has announced plans to purchase aircraft, build airbases, and establish a training and maintenance architecture, almost nothing has been announced regarding equipping Iraq with a fully integrated air defense force. At least publicly, the IqAF does not appear to have plans to acquire surface-to-air missiles and supporting radars. Nonetheless, if these arms purchases are successfully executed, it will represent a major step toward the creation of Iraq’s capability to independently defend its own air space.

The Iraqi Navy

The Iraqi Navy is also just beginning to acquire real mission capabilities, although—as Figure 8.2 shows—its role is limited by Iraq’s small coastline and limited port and offshore facilities.12

The commander of the Iraqi Navy, Rear Adm. Mohammed Jawad, described the state of the Iraqi Navy as follows in a press briefing on August 10, 2008:13

The current size of the Iraqi Navy is relatively small. It is consisting of 1,900 personnel. It is expected to reach 3,000 within the end of the year 2010. The Navy capabilities are limited, but the level and the high training that the Navy elements have acquired from office... from the officers and high-ranking officials enabled them to undertake lots of the responsibility in the operational sector.

The marines now are undertaking the focused defense and all the terminals, KAAOT [Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal]. It is also carrying out independent duties to searching ships. Also daily and ... during the day and during the night patrols in the territorial water of Iraq; also rescuing in the north Arab Gulf area, also defending the oil terminals..., side-by-side with the Coalition Navy, also securing the sailing in the naval canals in the territorial water, the Iraqi’s territorial water, and Khor Abdullah Canal, for the ships, the commercial ships that are coming and leaving the Iraqi terminals. The Navy are receiving training in order to receive total responsibility, hopefully, during the coming year, to take the responsibility of protecting oil terminal [unintelligible], also the total security... responsibility for the operations section.

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13. Ibid.
This would lead us to talk about the role of the Navy and building the capacity, the defense capacity, ... and the infrastructure for the oil institutions, which is a strategic role of the Iraqi Armed Forces. Considering where [oil is] being exported, through the oil platforms, nearly 90 percent of the local product is being produced, which forms the fortune and the resource for building the new Iraq.

To accomplish the mission of the Iraqi Navy, the government has approved [buying] … new Navy equipment, to secure the accomplishments of the mission precisely. It is true that we have contracted to build four patrol ships, big patrol ships with Italy… and two backup ships and three patrol boats with the Canadian/Malaysian partnership company. The… Iraqi Navy is supposed to receive these pieces by the second quarter of the coming year. The Ministry of Defense has contracted with other ... for other parts of the Navy. Hopefully in October, the Iraqi Navy is going to receive 26 combat boats. By the year 2010, we’re going to have 47 Navy pieces. Still, we have a lot to accomplish, and the administrative infrastructure, the docks, the accommodation for the fighters, also maintenance workshops, storage, warehouses, all these are going to be ready when the equipment, the needed equipment will be received.
The first stage of building the Iraqi Navy is based on fighting terrorism and the illegitimate operations in the sea; the second phase is going to be concerning the foreign threats for ... naval security.

We have talked about the marines and their role on the sea, but we did not talk about their role on the coast. As you know, the Iraqi Navy...was a part of the forces that have participated in [the] Charge of the Knights operation in Basrah. The marines have taken the honor of protecting the commercial terminals in al Qasr, Khor al Zubair, also protecting the electric power stations, and have accomplished the mission successfully. All the armed elements and militias have been eliminated. This would lead to the encouragement of foreign investment and that would give chances and opportunities for the labor for the Iraqi citizen, and that eventually would raise the economy level. The revenues of Mina ... of Umm Qasr Terminal for February until June have doubled, and... have doubled in July only, and what [has] happened in the commercial terminals [has] escalated the trust and confidence for the navy dealing with Iraq.

The March 2009 quarterly report by the Department of Defense provided the following description of the strengths and weaknesses of the Iraqi Navy:14

Organization
The IqN headquarters is co-located in the Baghdad MoD buildings, from where it sets maritime policy and provides strategic guidance for the Navy. To counter 2009 budgetary constraints, the staff developed a phased approach to deliver capabilities within the projected fiscal limits. Subject to budgetary approval, this strategy would see a contract for Patrol Boats and Offshore Support Vessels that will result in a phased delivery from 2011 through the beginning of 2013. The headquarters focus in 2009 is to improve its staff capability to support the new fleet and prepare the institutional IqN for future growth.

Training
The 80 Coalition trainers, led by a British Royal Navy Captain, continue to provide training for the IqN. The arrival of 16 eight-meter DEFENDER fast boats, 24 eight-meter boarding craft, and 10 eight-meter rigid hull inflatable boats will complete replacement of the IqN's old small-boat fleet. Once training is complete, these craft will give Iraq an enhanced boarding capability in the North Arabian Gulf and allow the IqN to conduct increased patrols of Iraq's inland seas. The Iraqi crew of the first 55-meter Patrol Ship is in Italy, preparing to sail the 5,500-mile passage back to Iraq in June 2009.

Officers training in the UK are meeting with mixed success. The younger, junior officers have tended to do well because the courses assumed a lower basis of fundamental seamanship knowledge. The more senior officers, on the other hand, fell short of the required standards, as the courses assumed a level of capability beyond their expertise and competence. This training experience reinforced the requirement for continued IqN training and underscored the need to significantly improve IqN standards. Budget constraints will limit the 2009 UK class to eight officers.

Progress has been made in growing and professionalizing the Iraqi Marines this quarter. The force gained 250 basic training graduates. In addition, the training of the Oil Platform Defense

and Vessel Board Seize and Search Marine Platoons is almost complete. Five platoons of the Second Battalion have completed an enhanced “Warfighter” enhanced training program at the Shaibah DTC. The training focus for the remainder of 2009 will be on the Versatile Marine Training Program.

The Basrah Maritime Academy is now under MoD control and negotiations have begun between the MoD and MoI to rebuild the faculty and curriculum. The IqN aspires to rebuild this facility, regain International Maritime Organization accreditation, and resume its position as the single academy in Iraq to train all maritime-related personnel (ports, merchant marine, coast guard, and police). This will re-establish the New Entry Training institution for the IqN and ensure the long-term well-being of the service. The Coalition team, led by a UK officer, is developing a plan to assist in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of both the faculty and curriculum.

Materiel

Delivery of 44 small craft this quarter provided a much needed boost to IqN morale but will strain both the training and logistics sustainment capabilities. The arrival of the first two Patrol ships from Italy towards the end of 2009 will see the first real capability increase for the IqN. Without significant improvement in the HQ command and staff capacity, the IqN will find it increasingly difficult to support its growing fleet. The medium-term solution is to obtain a contract logistics and engineering support arrangement to assist Iraqi engineers while they build their capability.

Personnel

The IqN has approximately 2,000 personnel out of an authorized 3,596, with an additional 500 marine recruits due by April 2009. In the spring of 2009, 275 naval recruits will start basic training at Umm Qasr. An additional 250 naval recruits will then follow them in the fall. This will bring the IqN total to 2,900 personnel by the end of 2010, which is consistent with plans to achieve the objective of 6,500 personnel by 2015.

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**Figure 8.3 Iraqi Air Force Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defense Forces</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Key Units/Forces/Capabilities</th>
<th>Target Growth 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Navy</td>
<td>2,453</td>
<td>45 Small Vessels</td>
<td>+50 Vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Marine BNs (IOC)</td>
<td>+1,000 personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VBSS (IOC)</td>
<td>2 Bn Marines (FOC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Point Defense of KAA Oil Terminal</td>
<td>C4ISR system (IOC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facilities
The final design for the new pier and seawall is complete and construction on track to conclude in September 2009. Resolution of legal difficulties tied to repairing an existing pier and building a repair workshop and ship-lift facility will allow renovations to be complete by July 2009. Iraqi funding was secured for additional barracks, dining facilities, training aids, and simulators. Coalition assistance, in partnership with the Iraqi MoD, will deliver warehouse facilities, a command headquarters, and an ammunition storage magazine. By the end of 2009, the IqN should have sufficient infrastructure and training facilities to support and train crews with its new fleet of vessels.

A MNSTC-I briefing in June 2009 provided a more detailed picture of the force strength and force development of the Iraqi Navy through 2009. These data are shown in Figure 8.3.

The briefing also provided the following summary assessment of the Navy’s progress:

**Accomplishments**
- Naval Squadron at 30 vessels—limited capability
- 2 Marine Battalions
  - 1st for Vessel Boarding Search and Seizure (VBSS) and Oil Platform security
  - 2nd for UMM Qasr & Az Zubayr port security
- 50 patrols per week (300% increase over last year)
- Assumed approximately 30% security responsibility of oil platforms and 100% port security at Umm Qasr

**Initiatives**
- Training
  - USMC MiTT
  - English Language
- 4 Patrol Ships due from Italy in next 9 months
- Navy Intelligence cadre
- Command and Control facilities on oil platforms
- Handover full security of KAAOT [Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal] in December 09
- Umm Qasr Naval Base Infrastructure

**Challenges**
- Infrastructure—magazine, warehouses, and simulators
- Overcome IMOD Maritime Blindness to generate Navy
  - 15 Patrol Boats—training and integration
  - 4 Patrol Ships—return to Umm Qasr

15. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
Looking Beyond 2009

Both the Iraqi Air Force and the Iraqi Navy have made significant progress in recent years. The head of MNSTC-I, Lt. General Frank Helmick, noted on September 10, 2008, that the Iraqi Air Force was expected to have more than 120 aircraft at its disposal by next year, and had expanded its intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities to support not only military forces but also other agencies within the Iraqi government, such as the border enforcement and the oil police. Lt. General Helmick also reported that the Iraqi naval forces were operating out of the port of Umm Qasr and had had one float squadron that conducted more than 40 weekly patrols and provided security for offshore oil terminals. He also stated that the Iraqi Navy was accelerating the growth of two Marine battalions to conduct oil-security and search-and-seizure operations.16

Nevertheless, reporting in the spring of 2009 indicates that both the Air Force and Navy remain short of officers and NCOs, and that the Air Force is heavily dependent on older officers and pilots whose time in service is limited.

The Iraqi government’s budget shortfall will hinder the expansion and development of both the Iraqi Air Force and Navy. Also, the transition of both forces to independent operations will be more difficult than that of the Iraqi Army and the forces under the Ministry of the Interior. Both services have been highly dependent on U.S. aid and Coalition advisers. It is unclear what goals and plans exist for the period after 2009, and whether these services have plans that Iraq can actually afford. Both will have to create new timelines for their development into combat services that can take over from the United States in both the counterinsurgency and national defense missions.

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The Iraqi Police Service, or IPS, now consists of all provincial police forces (station, patrol, traffic, and special units) assigned to the 18 Iraqi provinces—although the police in the Kurdish area are under KRG control and are recruited and trained by the KRG. DOD reports that the director general of police (DGoP) for each province oversees operations and sustainment of more than 1,300 police stations across Iraq. The IPS directs policy and strategic planning and has technical control over the training, vetting, and hiring of shurta (extra police) and officers. The other significant departments and directorates within the IPS include the Criminal Evidence Directorate, SWAT/Emergency Response Unit, and the General Directorate of Crime Affairs.1

The development of the Iraqi Police (IP) has been slower than that of the forces under the Ministry of Defense, and there is less evidence of improvement. There were serious problems in developing the police during 2003–2007. The police training effort in Iraq was initially run by the State Department, with much help from contractors. However, due to a host of problems, ranging from a lack of State Department capacity to the increasing violence in Iraq, the police training mission was switched over to DOD.

This shifted the focus of police training toward more paramilitary skills. As a result, some elements of the IP today are now overtrained in military skills, but lacking in more traditional police training. At the same time, DOD initially lacked the resources and advisers to properly perform the mission. Plans for a “Year of the Police” were a failure, and the result is a series of serious ongoing weaknesses in the effort to create a regular police force that can take over the security mission from Coalition and Iraqi Army forces; that is vetted, trained, and equipped at the national level; and that can convert to effective civil policing and enforcing the rule of law.

This is a critical area of concern for both Iraq and the United States. Regular police forces must play a critical role in ensuring local security and in replacing military action with the rule of law.

Police Manning and Force Size

The need for effective force development, and U.S. advice and support, is reinforced by the fact that the regular police are the largest element in the ISF. They totaled 300,373 in June 2009. This compares with an authorized strength of 229,037 in the Iraqi Army.2

2. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
The Iraqi Police have not expanded as quickly as the Iraqi Army. MNSTC-I and State Department estimates of manning of Iraqi Police and other Ministry of Interior forces as of December 31, 2008, are shown in Figure 9.1. The IP numbered 305,831 assigned personnel as of that date. A slightly different MNSTC-I estimate, reflecting force strength in June 2009, is shown in Figure 9.2. This figure shows 300, 373 personnel—a lower, not higher, force strength estimate. In prac-

4. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
tice, however, estimates of the authorized strength of the IP are more uncertain than those for most other elements in the ISF, and present-for-duty rates in the IP are highly variable from unit to unit. It is nearly impossible to determine with much accuracy how many IPs are actually operating in Iraq at any given time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defense Forces</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Current Set Key Units/ Forces/Capabilities</th>
<th>Target Growth 2009 Key Units/Forces/Enablers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Police</td>
<td>300,373</td>
<td>1,193 Police stations</td>
<td>+5 Headquarters contracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+40 Stations contracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+117 River Patrol Boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Police</td>
<td>42,430</td>
<td>4 Div HQs</td>
<td>+18K to finish forming 4th Div, 5th Div</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 BDE</td>
<td>+260 Armored Vehicles</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Sustainment BDE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52 BNs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border Enforce-</td>
<td>40,722</td>
<td>13 BDE; 38 BNs</td>
<td>+13k (to include PoE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ment</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Commando BNs</td>
<td>+260 UAH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+2 Tugs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+20 Patrol Boats;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+6 Gunboats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points of Entry</td>
<td>2,087</td>
<td>29 Points of Entry (POE)</td>
<td>+Enhanced Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 Land; 7 Air; 5 Sea</td>
<td>+Standard POE design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil Police</td>
<td>29,954</td>
<td>1 Directorate HQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Regional Directorate HQ</td>
<td>+7 BNs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 Pipeline Security BN</td>
<td>+45 Fuel &amp; Water Tankers; + Buses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Emergency BN</td>
<td>+80 Cargo Trucks;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35 Sections (pt security)</td>
<td>+10 Road Graders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Police</td>
<td>415,566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with Fa-</td>
<td>433,214</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>cilities Prote-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ction Service (FPS)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The same MNSTC-I briefing from which Figure 9.2 is taken provides the following summary of the IP’s development:

**Accomplishments**
- Expand IPS forces to assume police primacy
- Develop Training and Qualifications Institute
- Build 175 of 232 programmed local police stations
- Periodic Provincial Police Conferences
- Develop/equip four forensic laboratories
- Female basic/officer course; coed commissioners’ course
- Develop IP and NP strategic visions

**Initiatives**
- Complete force generation (MoF cap 476K)
- Increase Officer strength (25%)
- Professional training programs
- Growing Iraqi K-9 program from 30 to 450 in three years
- Right-sizing of police training centers
- Leader development programs in foreign countries
- Memorandum of agreement between Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Oil
- Define Special Police roles/responsibilities

**Challenges**
- Shift from force generation to professionalization
- Minimum training and performance standards for all Mol police training
- Oil Police force size determination
- Equipping an expanding force
- Completing infrastructure requirements
- Ensure qualified instructors/leader development

**Uncertain Manning Quantity and Quality**

It is clear from this MNSTC-I summary that manpower quality is a key issue as well as manpower numbers. There are serious problems in determining how many IP have really met their various training requirements, and how many of those who have had some training have had enough training to be effective. According to the director general of the Civilian Police Assistance Team,

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5. Ibid.
there were 250,000–300,000 personnel awaiting training as of August 2008. This total was still at least 100,000 at the beginning in 2009.

Yet, it is far from clear what this training backlog number really means. These numbers seem to include almost all locally recruited personnel, as well as personnel who have signed up to join the IP through normal channels but have yet to be trained. MNSTC-I also reports that the backlog is being more rapidly reduced through the MoI policy of allowing training centers to conduct a 240-hour Basic Recruit Training (BRT) course in four instead of eight weeks.

All official police personnel hires should be approved by the MoI in Baghdad. However, local and provincial governments recruit forces on an ad hoc basis, with little oversight from Baghdad. It is not clear how many such extra police, or shurta, have been hired by provincial and local authorities. They seem to have numbered 88,000 in December 2008. These shurta were supposed to receive the full program of 300-plus hours of training, but the rapid pace of hiring has led to a backlog of untrained personnel. Many shurta were given only 80 hours of training, receiving only basic operational skills.

Expanding police training facilities enables the MOI to handle the training of 88,000 shurta per year, and this is one area where Iraq's budget crisis has had a positive effect. The hiring freeze on new police has freed training facilities to train existing hires, and MNSTC-I hopes that many of the serving police with little or no training will be trained by the end of 2009.

The shurta are only part of the police training backlog. DOD notes that “much more remains to be accomplished, as increases in end strength exacerbate the police training backlog challenges.” This backlog exists despite the creation of several different training tracks to speed recruits through. In addition to the normal three-year police officer training program, a one-year training program for recruits with a college degree, a nine-month program for recruits with significant previous policing experience, and a three-week program for Army personnel switching to the IP were added.

Yet the shurta remain the major challenge, as they were recruited locally and without proper vetting, were rushed into service, and often have effectively paid for their positions and/or promotions. SIGIR noted in April 2008 that local police academies had been forced to curtail higher-level training activities in order to concentrate on meeting the basic training needs of the huge number of recruits. DOD reported in March 2008 that “the MoI has no mechanism that correctly matches funding with valid requirements and growth projections.”

DOD reporting in December 2008 warned that “the total number of MoI personnel assigned continues to exceed the number of total personnel trained, as rapid hiring outstrips training center throughput capacity. Also, as the MoI receives additional missions (e.g., from the Oil Police and

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7. Author interviews in Iraq, June 2009.
10. Ibid., March 2009, 40.
11. Ibid., 37.
12. Senior Defense Department official.
the Facilities Protection Service), personnel are transferred from the Ministry of Oil or Electricity with limited, if any, training or equipment."\(^{15}\)

DOD reported in March 2009 that\(^ {16}\)

[t]he MoI’s ability to address basic equipping shortfalls remains a concern. As of January 2009, one IP provincial headquarters and ten IP districts showed improvement in their readiness assessment over the last reporting period. The reason for the improvement is more effective leadership, in addition to planning, training, and sustained police operations independent of Coalition support. Training challenges, with equipment shortfalls, although improving, also remain a concern. To address training challenges, the Minister of Interior held a training conference on November 29, 2008, resulting in the creation of a special training commission to determine the best way to utilize MoI human and material resources. The result of this commission was the MoI 2009 training plan, which addresses all untrained IP with improvements expected by December 2009.

These manpower problems have been compounded by funding problems. Although the MoI’s budget execution has been improving, all of the forces under the MoI still face problems in formulating their budgets, and some have elements that are not properly budgeted for, DOD noted in March 2009 that “the most significant difference between the MoD and the MoI budget execution success— and the reason the MoI is realizing greater progress—is that the MoI effectively delegates decisionmaking authority, including areas of budget execution, contracting, and hiring.”\(^ {17}\)

### Leadership Problems

The MoI also has more serious shortages of competent and loyal noncommissioned officers and mid-level officers in its forces than the MoD does. As in the IA, there is no short-term solution to this problem: good officers and NCOs take time to develop and promote. As of October 30, 2008, the regular police could fill only 78 percent of their authorizations, the NP could fill only 45 percent, and the border police could fill only 88 percent.\(^ {18}\)

DOD reported in March 2008 that there was a “leadership shortage” within the officer and NCO ranks. Further, “tactical leadership within Iraqi units is improving, but numbers of proficient leaders, especially in the field and NCO grades, are not, as the growth in the Iraqi military and police force structure outpaces efforts to identify, recruit, and develop leaders.”\(^ {19}\)

DOD also reported:

Because the training effort of the past four years has focused on generating policemen, and because of the time it takes to grow professional junior officers, there have been inadequate numbers of officer-rank police entering at junior levels. The resulting low officer manning has affected command and control, planning functions, street-level supervision, morale, retention, and ethical conduct. The Iraqi Police Service (IPS) and the NP use various paths to acquire officers. Both of the police services are actively seeking to increase officers through four meth-

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15. Ibid., December 2008, 32.
17. Ibid, 33.
ods: a three-year officer course; a nine-month officer course; a six-month police commissioner’s course; and a three-week officer transition program (for previously trained police officers). The police services have difficulty attracting officer candidates because they compete with the Iraqi Army for the same pool. The MoI is also considering various incentive programs to attract new recruits.20

The MoI has made progress in this area. Between July 2007 and July 2008, police academies graduated 704 classes totaling 77,684 trained personnel. The National Police graduated 128 classes, with 25,875 trained personnel.21 DOD reported in March 2009 that substantial further progress has been made since then:

[T]he MoI continues to make progress toward increasing training capacity to eliminate the backlog of shurta (non-commissioned entry-level police men and women) requiring completion of Basic Recruit Training (BRT), [and] the focus is moving more toward specialized training. The MoI Training Qualification Institute (TQI) has launched several initiatives to improve professionalization and quality of training, as well as address specific skill sets needed by its operational forces. Specifically, programs are being developed in English language training, criminal investigation techniques, ethics and human rights, forensics and crime scene management, community policing, police information and intelligence, and technology applications.

The MoI training base is currently capable of training more than 88,000 shurta per year. In addition, 5,600 resident and 9,720 non-resident officers can be trained annually, with a total student capacity of nearly 25,000 students at any given time. In early 2009, resident capacity will increase to 8,900 as Phase II of the Baghdad Police College (BPC) expansion is completed on the main campus and branches are opened in Mosul and Basrah. In 2008, 3,430 officers and commissioners attended professional and leadership development courses at the BPC. TQI courses have graduated police in human rights instruction (955), instructor certification (385), basic criminal investigation (193), advanced criminal investigation (439), leadership development (1,389), and internal affairs (69). Since the previous report, the MoI has added additional training facilities, with 17 of 19 training facilities now under its full control.

The jointly funded MoI training-base expansion plan includes building 12 new training centers, as well as expanding 6 existing training centers. In the meantime, the Coalition and the MoI have collaborated to develop temporary officer and commissioner tasks, provide a basic shurta curriculum for all MoI forces, and continue to take on an increasing proportion of the specialized and advanced course loads. MNSTC-I advisors and International Police Advisors (IPAs) continue to assist by providing advice, overwatch, and quality control assistance in each of these courses. Coalition advisors assist the MoI TQI in a continuous review of BRT and officer curricula to ensure the course standards are consistent with internationally acceptable practices and that courses meet the dynamic needs of the field.

Ongoing professionalization of the basic police forces is crucial to develop and maintain a credible police force. Coalition IPAs work closely with Iraqi curriculum development committees chaired by members of the BPC faculty. A training program curriculum for basic officer leadership is complete, with a successful pilot class in December 2008 and full program fielding currently under way. In addition, a mid-level officer leadership course and commissioner

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20. Ibid., 31.
basic and advanced leadership courses are under development, with fielding anticipated in April 2009. The MoI is also pursuing partnerships with established international police academies for the development of an executive leadership course in 2009. Furthermore, the BPC has established working partnerships with the MoI’s Directorate of Human Resources to develop options for embedding leader-training requirements in personnel management policies and recording completed training in personnel files.

In 2008, the Ethics Center trained 2,101 officers, commissioners, and shurta. Curricula developed by the Human Rights Center are also used in ethics programs of instruction for all officer, commissioner, and shurta basic accession courses. In 2009, TQI also has plans to expand the center to teach more police students. Recently, the Human Rights Center has begun exploring possible collaboration with the Ministry of Human Rights for a curriculum review and a guest lecture series.

The Minister of Interior is personally taking an active role in training; he directed that more training be focused on ethics and human rights, leadership, management, and administration, as well as core policing skills such as community policing and responsiveness to local citizen concerns. Training in the areas of investigative and forensic skills; intelligence data collection, analysis, and reporting; English language proficiency; and specific investigative training to counter corruption, organized crime, and drug trafficking is a priority. The MoI is actively developing a program designed to expand training and education opportunities abroad for IPS officers to expose them to best practices and techniques in other countries.

This will supplement more than 750 European-based training courses arranged by Coalition partners, the UK Department for International Development, and the European Union’s integrated rule of law and police training mission to Iraq. An example program with select U.S. city police organizations is in development.22

This reporting does focus more on what is still to be done than on what has actually been accomplished. Nevertheless, MNSTC-I, other Coalition experts, and Iraqi officials believe that the professionalism of the IP—although still needing major improvement—is considerably better than it was at the start of 2008.

### Shifting toward Conventional Policing

The IP will continue to face significant insurgent and terrorist threats through the entire period of U.S. withdrawal, and probably for at least several years beyond 2011. With luck, however, its primary mission will shift from paramilitary and security missions to conventional policing and the rule of law. This will require carefully and well-phased retraining, major efforts to limit the scale of corruption, and clearer Iraqi decisions as to how the IP and other police fit into Iraq’s evolving system for criminal and civil justice.

Iraqis will make their own decisions about how to structure their civil police, whether to convert from the confessions-based system of justice that Iraq has used in the past to a more evidence-based system of the kind used in the West, and how active policing will relate to more traditional tribal and religious forms of justice. This requires both better overall Iraqi planning

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within the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice, and some clear Iraqi political decisions about the future nature of Iraqi law and just how secular it will be.

It also requires the United States to rethink how it will shape its future aid to the IP and the justice component of the rule of law effort. Like a number of U.S. efforts in Iraq, the aid effort now needs to focus on helping Iraqis improve how they do things their way instead of continuing to try to pressure them into doing things the U.S. way. The reality is that a HUMINT and confessions-based system of civil law has worked well in most of the Arab world.

 Iraqi policy and criminal justice can be improved through the use of “evidence-based” techniques, but it is far from clear that the United States should seek to replace most of the existing system. Human rights complaints have correctly focused on the past abuse of the state security system and special security courts, rather than on the normal process of civil justice, and the United States needs to focus more on key reforms—particularly in the civil areas where new laws and legal practices will be critical to successful Iraqi economic development and foreign investment.

Legal efforts to eliminate all corruption and the black economy, rather than to restrict it to functional levels, will be equally pointless and impractical. The United States needs to focus on essentials and not on trying to create a mirror image that largely ignores the United States’ own problems in dealing with evidence-based criminal justice and different forms of corruption. This does not mean that helping Iraq move toward evidence-based forensics and reducing corruption is not helpful, but again, the goal should be to improve, and not change, the system.

In short, there seems to be too much U.S. emphasis on changing the entire culture and structure of the Iraqi legal system rather than in improving the existing system. Adding some aspects of evidence-based U.S. and Western practices is certainly of value, but a hard look may be needed to set realistic goals as to what can actually be done to help Iraq versus trying to convert its legal culture and overall policing methods on a broad level.

U.S. aid may also be needed at the civil-military level to help Iraq make the transition from stability operations to a true civilian rule of law. MNSTC-I and the PRTs have already focused on the need to transition from the Iraqi Army to the Iraqi Police in providing day-to-day security and from counterinsurgency/counterterrorism to a more normal rule of law. It is not clear, however, that either Iraqis or U.S. advisers have an integrated plan to tie together the civil and military efforts and fund a proper rule of law effort from 2010 onward.

There already are useful Iraqi and U.S. efforts in each of these areas. The challenge is to make these efforts more cohesive, to go from concepts and projects to a clear overall strategy supported by workable plans that can be reshaped according to the realities of Iraqi politics, oil prices, and other factors. From a U.S. perspective, there needs to be a consistent effort to move beyond both the past military focus on stability and security and the past problems in the U.S. and international aid effort and to shift to a cohesive state-led effort that can take over from the military during 2010–2011 and sustain itself into the future.
The National Police has changed from a largely Shi’ite institution that committed serious sectarian abuses to a force that acts as a national force and that has become one of the most effective paramilitary forces in Iraq. As of June 2009, MNSTC-I reported that the National Police was organized into four divisions with 15 brigades and one additional sustainment brigade and had a total of 52 battalions. It sought to increase its strength by 18,000 personnel in 2009 to finish forming its 4th and 5th Divisions and to acquire some 260 armored vehicles.¹

Most NP forces are currently stationed in or near Baghdad. The MoI plans to slowly expand the NP to all of Iraq. As part of this plan, the NP would expand to station units in Diyala, Mosul, Anbar, Wasit, Maysan, and Dhi Qar in 2009. This would give the NP a battalion or larger presence in nine provinces by the end of 2009.

Reform of the National Police

During the worst violence in 2006–2007, National Police units were implicated in numerous sectarian crimes and were widely seen as being run by, or heavily influenced by, Shi’ite militia groups. The poor performance of the NP even prompted the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq to conclude in September 2007 that “the National Police have proven operationally ineffective. Sectarianism in its units undermines its ability to provide security; the force is not viable in its current form. The National Police should be disbanded and reorganized.”²

The NP began an extensive reform program and weeded out many of its most sectarian members. It also increased the proportion of Sunnis in the force. (Many Iraqis, however, particularly Iraqi Sunnis, still see the NP as a sectarian institution.)

The NP reform program, known as “Re-Bluing,” resulted in the replacement of all nine brigade commanders (one of them twice)³ and 18 of 27 battalion commanders, and the firing of 1,300 lower officers.⁴ Of the 1,800 officers who graduated from the Numaniyah Training Academy on January 21, 2008, more than 50 percent were Sunni.⁵ By early 2008, Sunnis made up 40 percent of the NP officer corps.⁶

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¹. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
⁴. Ibid.
At the brigade level, the NP was about 30 percent Sunni and 70 percent Shi’ite in early 2009; the battalion level, about 20 percent Sunni and 80 percent Shi’ite. All National Police brigades finished the Re-Bluing in November 2007 and initiated Carabinieri Training in October 2007 at Camp Dublin. The Carabinieri training was under the direction of the Italian-led NATO Training Mission. The NP, like much of the ISF, continued to face a shortage of junior officers, although it saw an increase in junior officer strength by 53 percent in late 2007–early 2008.7

Progress in reforming the NP has also been mixed. Although “re-blued” units have certainly improved and the number of Sunnis in the NP has increased, there are charges that some units still commit abuses. The so-called Wolf Brigade, which operates near Doura, has continued to face allegations of aiding the Shi’ite militias in driving out Sunnis. In response, however, the chief of the NP, Major Gen. Hussein Awadi, fired the brigade commander, reassigned roughly half its members, and brought in Sunni officers.8 A number of U.S. experts believe that these actions solved the unit’s problems, but there have been continued (if unsubstantiated) allegations that unit members have aided Shi’ite militias in driving out Sunnis. Although the NP has made major progress since 2006, it is still unclear whether the NP as a whole will successfully make the transition to a national and nonsectarian organization.

### Manning Levels and Combat Readiness

DOD reported that the National Police had 43,000 personnel assigned as of January 2009. MNSTC-I reported in June 2009 that the NP had an authorized strength of 42,430.9 The authorized strength increased to more than 60,000 personnel with the addition of three new security force missions to the NP portfolio and the creation of units designed to carry them out: the Central Bank of ISF force, the Embassy Protection Force, and the Antiquities/Ruins Security Force.10

The National Police is a force run by the central government, and no additional NP personnel are hired by local or provincial governments. This makes the personnel figures for the National Police more accurate than those for the IP, but these figures also show how much still needs to be done.

The Department of State reported that 52,707 personnel had been trained as of November 30, 2008 and that the NP stood at 87 percent of its authorized force strength as of that date.11 Yet this number is deceptively high and may have declined since. Like the rest of the ISF, NP personnel still periodically return to their families to transfer their pay, thus causing 10 to 20 percent of the force to be away from duty at any given time. This results in actual manning numbers lower than 87 percent of authorized manning. Additionally, as the NP personnel authorization jumped to 60,000 in 2009 (after the Department of State derived the 87 percent figure), the actual manning percentage is far lower than 87 percent of authorized strength.

Reporting on the combat readiness of the National Police is shown in Figure 10.1. The National Police units that have gone through their full reform and retraining process are now seen as

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7. Brownlee, “National Police Fact Sheet.”
highly effective. Like the rest of the ISF, however, the NP still has a serious shortfall of officers. As of December 2008, the NP had only 48 percent of the officers it required, and less than 25 percent of those authorized for the crucial ranks of first lieutenant, captain, and major.\(^\text{12}\)

Again, like the rest of the ISF, the NP faces serious logistical challenges. DOD reported in December 2008 that the NP continues to suffer from “infrastructure problems, including a lack of adequate housing, unit headquarters, maintenance facilities, motor pools, and warehouse storage.”\(^\text{13}\) MNSTC-I reports that the NP, like other elements of the ISF, still has problems in every aspect of creating systematic and effective logistic and sustainment systems and in executing basic tasks like preventive maintenance.

**Force Structure and Force Expansion**

The NP is composed of 4 divisions, with separate mechanized and sustainment brigades, as well as other smaller units.\(^\text{14}\) The 4th division HQ and subordinate units are planned to begin generation

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13. Ibid.
in southern Iraq upon the completion of the 3rd division units in northern Iraq.\textsuperscript{15} DOD reported in March 2009 that\textsuperscript{16} depending on funding, the NP will expand with the completion of the 3rd Division units in the northern region, and begin generation of the 4th Division HQs and subordinate units in the southern region. Additionally, the NP has assumed three new security force missions. The new special security unit missions are the Central Bank of ISF, Embassy Protection Force, and the Antiquities/Ruins Security Force. With the planned addition of these units, the 2009 authorization for the NP has increased to over 60,000 members. The NP had 43,000 personnel assigned as of January 2009 and will continue to recruit and train to meet the generation of the new 3rd and 4th Division units. Based on projected MoI budget shortfalls for 2009, the NP will likely struggle with hiring, training, and equipping the additional personnel required to reach the desired end strength of approximately 60,000.

The 3rd Division units will expand to provide a presence in Diyala, Mosul (to add to existing units in Salah ad Din), and Anbar. The 4th Division will generate units in Wasit, Maysan, and Dhi Qar in addition to the units already in Basrah. As part of the plan to regionalize the NP and provide direct support to Provincial Directors of Police (PDoP), it is projected that the NP will have a battalion or larger presence in 9 of 15 provinces by the end of 2009. The NP continues to have success in recruiting across all of Iraq’s ethnic and religious sects in each province, and the NP leadership is dedicated to a diverse ethnic force that represents the Iraqi population.

In Baghdad, the 1st and 2nd NP Divisions, as part of the Rusafa Area Command (RAC) and Karbala Area Command (KAC), continue to assume greater responsibilities as the Coalition withdraws to an overwatch status. In the KAC, in East and West Rashid, the 5th and 7th NP Brigades have assumed most of the security responsibility from the Coalition and are in the lead. Progress continues in the RAC, with the NP Brigades expected to assume full security responsibility from the Coalition by mid-year 2009.

Continued expansion of the NP into the provinces is supported by a three-year plan to base a brigade-sized NP force into each of the provinces, with a regionally based division HQ and division support battalions controlling these units and providing logistical support. The NP HQ is aggressively seeking available properties in the provinces to base these new units and has had initial success in acquiring properties. However, there remains much work to provide basing locations to all current and planned units. The continued support of the MoI is required to plan the equipping and infrastructure improvements required for the new units, as well as the ongoing need to replenish existing units’ equipment and improve their basing locations.

The final phase of the NP reform program will give the force more armored units and make it more mobile and regional, rather than the static Baghdad-centric force operating today. As part of this phase, the MoI procured 160 M117 infantry support vehicles from the United States.\textsuperscript{17} Funding issues may, however, hamper the NP expansion plan. DOD noted in March 2009 that, “based

\textsuperscript{15} DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2009, 41.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} D. J. Elliott, “Iraq Develops the National Police Mechanized Forces,” Long War Journal, December 10, 2008.
on projected MoI budget shortfalls for 2009, the NP will likely struggle with hiring, training, and equipping the additional personnel required to reach the desired end strength of approximately 60,000.”

A Still Uncertain Future

Current plans call for one National Police brigade per province and for the NP to become a central government force that can not only take on paramilitary missions but also fight more demanding counterinsurgency missions. The National Police would remain part of the MoI and would not be converted into Army units or placed under the MoD as some have suggested.

The key questions now affecting the future of the NP are whether this expansion is realistic and affordable, and whether the process of reform will truly succeed in creating a national force rather than a Shi’ite one. While the NP has made real progress in becoming a more honest and effective force, many Iraqis still see it as more Shi’ite than national. The MoI has acknowledged this problem and the importance of public opinion, and the NP has started running commercials on Iraqi television promoting its new, reformed image. Whether this re-branding effort will succeed is unclear.

The Army, National Police, and regular police will be the core of Iraq’s capability to “win, hold, and build,” but Iraq’s other paramilitary and security forces play an important role in Iraqi security and stability. Like their counterparts, they also need further development. This will present important challenges for both Iraq and the United States—challenges that must be coupled to broader reforms of Iraq’s criminal justice system and the establishment of rule of law based on Iraqi traditions and standards.

The Counter-Terrorism Bureau and Iraqi National Counter-Terrorism Force (INCTF)

One key force stands apart from both the MoD and MoI, although its position is deeply controversial. The Iraqi National Counter-Terrorism Force (INCTF) is headed by the ministerial-level Counter-Terrorism Bureau (CTB). It includes the Counter-Terrorism Command (CTC) and Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF). The CTC is the operational headquarters for combating terrorism in Iraq. It exercises command and control over ISOF units that execute combat operations. INCTF advisers also monitor personnel accountability, promotions, and personnel policies of the ISOF. At the same time, one of its key functions is to improve coordination between the INCTF, MoD, and MoI in strategic-level planning, targeting, and intelligence fusion. The CTB is housed in two compounds in the international zone.1

DOD reported in March 2009 that the INCTF was planned to consist of more than 8,500 operators, staff, and support personnel. The INCTF’s manning increased 30 percent during 2008 and early 2009. Overall, the INCTF is manned at 61 percent, and all battalions are expected to be steady-state by December 2009. Currently, officer manning is at 34 percent and NCO strength is at 44 percent. The CTB is was manned at 40 percent, CTC at 48 percent, and the ISOF brigade at 67 percent in February 2009. Unit strengths remained low due to a decision in May 2008 to double authorized strength, and it will take several years to achieve the increased manning levels because of the timelines associated with the specialized training requirements for these personnel.2

DOD also reported that the INCTF is a nonsectarian force, as reflected in its leadership, its personnel, and the methodologies with which it conducts operations. INCTF personnel generally reflect the Shi’a, Sunni,

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1. This description is adapted from U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2009, Quarterly Report to Congress, 53–56.
2. Ibid., 55.
Kurdish, and other minorities’ breakdown in the general populace, according to recent statistics. INCTF’s non-sectarian approach is also seen in the internal vetting of personnel in key positions. As of September 2008, CTB and CTC were well ahead of any other ISF organizations with respect to the number of personnel voluntarily screened by U.S. counterintelligence assets. This screening consisted of both interviews and polygraphs to verify background investigations.\(^3\)

Control of the INCTF, CTB, and Iraqi Special Forces has been the subject of controversy and a power struggle between Prime Minister Maliki and Iraq’s Council of Representatives (CoR). Under Prime Minister Directive 61, signed in April 2007, the INCTF has been independent of both the MoD and MoI. Legislation awaiting the Council of Representatives’ approval is intended to make the CTB its own ministry, which would give the prime minister direct control over the CTB and Iraq’s Special Forces. There has been resistance in the CoR and from the MoD, however, about granting ministerial-level status to the CTB. According to a September 2008 *Long War Journal* article, the CoR felt that this legislation would give the prime minister too much power.\(^4\)

Beginning in 2008, the CTB was granted semiautonomous budget authority, and it submitted a 2009 budget for $580 million to the Ministry of Finance. The MoF has since informed the CTB that because of the effect of falling oil prices on the national budget, it was likely the non-payroll budget for the INCTF would remain as it was in 2008, $167 million. Besides its payroll, the INCTF continues to rely on MoD support for finance, logistics, medical, aviation, and engineer support and training. The MoD’s IqAF provides Mi-17 helicopter and Cessna KingAir ISR support for ISOF training and operations. (Air elements were incorporated for the first time in initial ISOF training in October 2008.)\(^5\)

There is some risk that the forces under the INCTF could be misused if they stay under the prime minister’s de facto or formal control. Special operations forces are inherently highly trained and well armed, and they are used in many countries in the Middle East as tools of intimidation and repression. The continued operation of the quasi-legal, Shi’ite-leaning intelligence agency run by the MSNSA, combined with the ISOF, would give the prime minister both an intelligence agency and a special operations force directly under his control and outside of the control of the MoD or MoI. A rogue raid by ERU units of the National Police in Diyala in August 2008 serves as a warning of what special operations forces might do without proper oversight.\(^6\)

Serious efforts have already been made, however, to ensure that the CTB and ISOF do not become a tool for the abuse of power. MNSTC-I has helped the Iraqi government set up a detailed process for approval of ISOF operations in order to avoid abuse. MNSTC-I reported in November 2008 that

the CTB has been operating as a separate entity since April 2007 under Prime Minister Directive 61. The CTB law will codify this process in a law debated and passed in parliament versus an executive order as now. The result to date of placing the Iraqi National Counter-Terrorism

\(^3\) Ibid.


\(^5\) Ibid., 53.

Force under a separate entity has been a rapid increase in the professionalism and ability of this force. CTB is not expected to be placed under the Minister of State for National Security Affairs.

The ISOF uses a documented targeting process prior to conducting operations...including the recent Diyala operation. The targets for operations go thru a Target Working Group, a Target Review Group, and a Target Validation Council, three levels of checks each consisting of a different set of Iraqi senior officers and Coalition advisors. The targets are forwarded to the National Security Council for approval. This process is approved by both Coalition and Iraqi senior leaders. Before an operation is conducted, the Prime Minister personally approves and the Prime Minister’s National Operation Center (PM-NOC) deconflicts with other operations. All operations that ISOF executes have valid arrest warrants issued by an Iraqi Investigative Judge who is part of an independent judiciary. Any individual who is detained is questioned and remains in custody if the evidence supports the charges, and they are ultimately brought to trial.7

In regard to future force development, MNSTC-I reported in June 2009 that the main goals of the INCTF were the following:8

- Expansion of the ISOF throughout Iraq and bringing the ISOF units up to full strength:
  - 1st ISOF Brigade (ct Bn, CDO Bn, SPT Bn, Recce Bn, Tng Bn, Garrison Spt)
  - 2nd ISOF Brigade (4 x CDO Bns throughout Iraq)
- Developing CT rotary-wing air requirements and capabilities
- Establishing Regional CT Centers to Enhance Intelligence Fusion
- Developing a professional NCO Corps for SOF
- Unilateral operations within Iraq
- Creating an effective Target Approval Process
- Shifting to fully Warrant Based Operations

These plans remain somewhat uncertain. Until legislation that clarifies the role of the CTB and its chain of command is passed, and all the operational provisions of such legislation become clear, it is difficult to predict how the INCTF forces will evolve. What is clear, however, is that the Iraqi government will need the capabilities of some form of CTB and ISOF for years to come.

**Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF)**

The development of Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) has been a clearer success story. Iraq currently has an operational ISOF brigade that has demonstrated a relatively high level of capability, and additional forces are being created. In March 2009, DOD described the ISOF’s capabilities as follows:

The ISOF Brigade conducts tactical operations in conjunction with U.S. advisors. The brigade is composed of nine battalions: the 1st Battalion (Bn) (Commando); 2nd Bn, which is desig-

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8. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
nated the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Force (ICTF); 3rd Bn (Support); 4th Bn (RECCE); and 5th Bn, which conducts the Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School (ISWCS). In 2008, the ISOF Brigade underwent expansion to include four 440-man regional commando battalions: the 6th (Basrah), 7th (Mosul), 8th (Diyala) and 9th (Al Asad). The 6th and 7th Bns achieved full operational capability (FOC) in mid-2008. The 8th Bn is to achieve FOC in March 2009 and the 9th Bn in December 2009. The four regional battalions will be housed on regional commando bases, each of which will also incorporate a regional counter-terrorism center (RCC), a regional reconnaissance team, and a garrison support unit (GSU). These RCCs will have intelligence fusion cells that will be linked to the CTC, but as yet, they have not been integrated into the MoD and MoI intelligence networks. A separate RCC is also planned for Baghdad. The Coalition has provided secure communications and information networks for use throughout INCTF. The Coalition also has Military Training Teams at all three echelons that have 24-hour contact with their Iraqi counterparts.9

The ISOF brigade has maintained relatively high equipment strength, having received 95 percent of the materiel for eight of its nine battalions as of March 2009.10 As of January 2009, the ISOF brigade was equipped with “1,443 vehicles, including 306 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV), delivered to its units. An additional 249 HMMWVs are expected by August 2009.”11 Transition of command and control for this brigade from Coalition forces to the CTB/CTC is on track. Phase IV of the transition—Iraqi command and control of ground operations with U.S. oversight—began in the summer of 2008.12 It is now effectively complete.

The ISOF continues to expand, and some sources indicate that the ISOF command may eventually grow to five brigades. The MoI’s NP Emergency Response Units (ERUs) and Provincial ERUs may also be added to the CTB.13 Additionally, the IqAF’s 15th squadron is beginning training to work with the special operations forces in a counterterrorism role, providing Mi-17 and Cessna KingAir ISR support for ISOF operations and training.14

The ISOF’s command and control transitioned to the ISF in 2008. However, the exact chain of command for ISOF is unclear.15 Additionally, despite being nominally independent of the MoD and MoI, the INCTF “continues to rely on MoD support for finance, logistics, medical, aviation, and engineer support and training.”16

Although the ISOF is an evolving force, elements have performed well and can rightfully be considered some of the best-trained and best-equipped special operations forces in the Middle East. The ISOF is a relatively new force, and it has avoided many of the ethnic and sectarian problems that plagued other elements of the ISF.17

Nevertheless, the ISOF still needs to transition out of reliance on Coalition support, on Coalition rotary wing assets for insertions, and on other combat enablers such as intelligence, logistic

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10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 54.
13. Elliot, “Iraq Strengthens the Counter Terrorism Bureau.”
15. Elliot, “Iraq Strengthens the Counter Terrorism Bureau.”
17. Ibid., 55.
support, and close air support, among others. DOD reported in December 2008 that “challenges remain to ensure that all echelons in the CTB are focused on the proper targets, have complete situational awareness, and understand implications (military and political) of specific objectives.” At some point, Iraq will also have to give the ISOF a clearer path to obtaining all of its necessary enablers, either from within the MoD or as dedicated elements of the ISOF.

**Directorate of Border Enforcement (DBE) and Ports of Entry Directorate (PoED)**

The other key elements of the ISF consist largely of additional forces under the MoI. These include the Directorate of Border Enforcement (DBE) and Ports of Entry Directorate (PoED), which are responsible for protecting some 3,650 kilometers of international borders and 28 air, land, and sea ports of entry against smuggling, sabotage, and infiltration activities. The two organizations are also supposed to enforce compliance with international treaties and protocols as they apply to international agreements and boundaries.

In June 2009, the DBE was divided into five regions, 13 brigades, 38 battalions, and 6 commando battalions. It also had a Coastal Border Guard assigned to Region 4 at Basrah. Several DBE battalions are mobile commando battalions that perform operations based on the orders of the DBE regional commander. Each of the five regional commands was responsible for border control and control of the ports of entry in its own zone.

The main security technique the DBE relies on is the use of border forts. In January 2008, the director general of the DBE released a three-year plan that called for an increase to 46,000 personnel, several improvements in the force, and the construction of additional border forts. The plan called for a total of 712 border forts, of which 514 were complete as of August 2008. Many of the forts are complete in the areas along the Syrian and Iranian borders.

The PoED is responsible for administration and security of 13 land ports of entry throughout Iraq, as well as ports of entry in six international airports and four seaports. There are an additional five ports of entry in the Kurdish Region that are not recognized or managed by the government of Iraq.

MNSTC-I reports that combined DBE and PoE forces had an authorized strength of 40,722 personnel in June 2009. In March 2009, DOD reported that the DBE was authorized at 45,000 personnel with more than 40,000 assigned. More than 34,000 personnel have completed BRT [Basic Recruit Training]. The PoED is authorized 2,500 personnel and is fully staffed at this time. The DBE is a part of the MoI training commission that was recently appointed to seek Iraqi solutions to eliminate the backlog of personnel who had not received BRT by the end of 2009.

18. Ibid., September 2008, 35.
20. Ibid., March 2009, 41.
23. Ibid., September 2008, 45.
The MoI has instituted a training commission to address the ineffectiveness issues caused by problems in training and leadership. The Coalition placed Logistical Training and Border Transition Teams in all regions to work on solutions to ISF logistical challenges.

In addition to these leadership and personnel issues, the DBE and PoED, as well as several Iraqi ministerial Directorates, continue to struggle with claims of corruption. The GoI is trying to combat this challenge through ongoing ethics training for PoED employees, and has responded to corruption allegations with select re-assignments of personnel.25

Unfortunately, the DBE faces many of the same problems as the IP. It is underfunded and undermanned. It also faces severe officer and NCO shortages, equipment shortages, fuel shortages, poor logistical support, inadequate maintenance capability, and poor facilities. The DBE also faces problems with the loyalty of its personnel, as many are locally recruited and loyal to, or complicit with, smugglers.

Even if many of these problems could be overcome, Iraq's borders will always be porous. Smuggling routes have crossed in and out of Iraq for thousands of years. Even if, as some U.S. analysts have suggested, Coalition troops were sent to secure the borders, smuggling would continue. Iraq's borders are too long, too remote, too rugged, and have too many long-established smuggling routes and tribes dependant on smuggling to ever truly be secure. Smuggling into and out of Iraq is a problem that can be managed, but never eliminated.

Oil Police (OP)

The Oil Police (OP) are also now under the MoI, although their status has changed with time. The names, missions, training and composition of the oil infrastructure protection forces have been changed several times since 2003. Yet another change was made in 2007. Iraq's Oil Ministry had previously been charged with protecting this infrastructure, employing the Oil Protection Force. At the end of 2007, however, this force transitioned from the Oil Ministry to the MoI and was renamed the Oil Police.26

The force then had a reported strength of 29,411 personnel and was little more than a collection of specialized security guards.27 As of June 2009, MNSTC-I reported that the OP had a strength of 29,954. It was organized into a Directorate HQ, 3 Regional Directorate HQs, 8 Pipeline Security battalions, 1 Emergency battalion, and 35 Sections that provided point security. Plans for 2009 include the creation of seven more battalions.28

The Oil Police are part of the MoI's mix of forces and play a potentially critical role in securing Iraq's petroleum facilities, which are the main source of income for Iraq's GDP and budget and fuel most of its electric generation. This not only makes the OP an important part of the ISF in terms of Iraq's current economy, but potentially critical in protecting the efforts of Iraqi and foreign oil companies to guard oil production infrastructure, including oil fields, pipelines, refineries.

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OP forces are now located throughout Iraq to protect facilities and distribution lines in both remote and urban areas. DOD has reported that the OP operates 12 battalions in three districts—south, central, and north—a higher strength than reported by MNSTC-I. However, the OP has no standardized unit organization or coverage area, and its forces are growing.

If additional funding becomes available, the MoI plans to form an additional seven battalions over the coming year. The OP completed formation of two of these new battalions in the spring of 2009. At present, select units of the IA guard designated areas of the oil production infrastructure, with the MoI scheduled to resume full responsibility for this mission in late 2010. The MoI plans to create a total of 13 additional battalions by 2012, which would make possible nationwide infrastructure security coverage.

Even existing OP units, however, now lack the basic equipment required to perform their mission. The MoI and the OP are acquiring weapons and uniforms, as well as specialty equipment such as buses, fuel tankers, water tankers, road graders, and tow trucks. Much of the needed equipment was delivered in February 2009 on a cost-share basis with the Coalition. The delivery of 80 additional cargo trucks, 10 road graders, buses, and fuel and water trucks is planned during the rest of 2009.

Training is still minimal, and much of the force has not had even these low levels of training. Approximately 78 percent of the existing force has achieved training certification through the three-week OP course. The only significant shortfall in leadership is in the junior officer and noncommissioned officer ranks. DOD reported in March 2009 that a detailed plan was needed to solve this problem in conjunction with the MoI. DOD also reported, however, that discussions were under way to establish a surge training program to ensure capacity keeps pace with growth projections. Additionally, there was a plan to begin training OP in the 240-hour IPS course to increase professionalism. OP leaders are actively involved in their organizations and are qualified for their positions, with most officers trained in a police or military academy.

Facilities Protection Services (FPS)
The status of the Facilities Protection Service (FPS) is less clear. Some elements are under the MoI and some are not. The FPS is responsible for the protection of critical infrastructure throughout Iraq, including government buildings, mosques and religious sites, hospitals, schools and colleges, dams, highways, and bridges. Under CPA Order 27, FPS forces were decentralized within each ministry and province.

29. This description of the Oil Police, and that in most of the following paragraphs, is based on DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2009, 42; and interviews in Iraq in June 2009.
31. This description of the OP, and that in most of the following paragraphs, is based on DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2009, 42; and interviews in Iraq in June 2009.
32. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
33. This description of the OP is based on DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, 42; and interviews in Iraq in June 2009.
The Facilities Protection Services are still a loosely trained group of units controlled by various ministries. The Facilities Protection Services Reform Law provides government authority to consolidate the FPS under MoI authority. However, DOD reports that this law has yet to be passed, as it “still lingers between the CoM [Council of Ministers] and CoR [Council of Representatives].”  

It may take years for the MoI to fully absorb the elements of the FPS.

The FPS has always been among the worst trained and equipped parts of the ISF. The FPS has traditionally been the unit with the lowest priority for equipment issue within the MoI. DOD estimated in March 2009 that the FPS had less than 10 percent of its authorized equipment on hand. Manning rates for the FPS are rarely released, but it is likely that they are very poor. How the MoI will handle the training, equipping, funding, and deployment of FPS units is an open question.

If the FPS Reform Law is passed by the CoR, the Iraqi government will consolidate all FPS within the MoI except those FPS forces currently detailed to the Ministry of Oil (MoO) and Ministry of Electricity (MoE), as well as the Higher Judicial Council (HJC). The FPS directorate is spread across three divisions providing oversight of 28 ministry facilities and various other facilities in 14 provinces.

The FPS assigned to the MoI had just over 17,600 employees in June 2009. Another 110,000 FPS employees work in other ministries and approximately 89,000 of these are expected to meet MoI hiring criteria and transfer to the MoI when consolidation occurs. During the first quarter of 2009, the MoI FPS began signing contracts with the other ministries’ FPS, which marks a significant step toward consolidation. The projected end strength of this force is expected to be around 108,000 when consolidation is complete, but progress may be affected by budget problems, bureaucratic infighting, and Iraqi politics.

The MoI’s FPS is currently training in the 240-hour course given by the IP. The MoI has also provided training to other ministry FPS personnel in a three-week course, with 1,934 personnel and 83 instructors trained since the beginning of 2008. The FPS plans to continue training in the three-week FPS course once consolidation occurs.

This may not matter if the insurgent and terrorist threat continues to drop, and the role of the FPS becomes one limited to normal security guard functions. Today, however, many facilities remain highly vulnerable. The FPS personnel also receive limited pay and are susceptible to bribery by criminals and insurgents.

The Criminal Justice System

Far more broadly, the creation of an effective criminal justice system, including courts and prison/detention systems, is an underreported but crucial complement to the development of the ISF. This is particularly true of the forces under the MoI. Iraqis can have little confidence in the Iraqi police if the criminal justice system does not support them. They also must be confident that all the elements of the ISF—including every element of the police—will not abuse the civil population, operate to sectarian or ethnic advantage, work with local criminals or corrupt officials, carry out torture and other forms of violence, or push the level of corruption beyond the standards that sometimes seem necessary to make any aspect of Iraqi government function.

35. MNSTC-I briefing in Iraq, June 2009.
The State Department Country Reports on Human Rights for 2006 to 2008 are a warning that much still needs to be done. They document ongoing abuses and problems in all of these areas that still affect virtually every element of the ISF and related civil and criminal justice activities. They show that progress is being made in improving the conditions of Iraq's jails but that this progress is still limited and that arbitrary arrests and prolonged detentions remain a problem. They also warn that the ability of defendants to receive counsel and due process can still be an open question.

These are areas where Iraq often has the right laws and procedures, but it is still extremely difficult to discern how the various elements of the ISF and criminal justice system will really interact in the future and how the system will actually react to the changing power dynamics between the central government and the provinces. Despite statements from former U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey in early 2008 that “significant progress” was being made in strengthening law enforcement in Iraq, State Department reporting shows that such progress at best remains slow and uneven.36 There has been progress at the top, in national-level courts, but progress on lower levels has been far slower and inconsistent.37 In many areas, the criminal justice system remains dominated by local, tribal, religious, or sectarian interests, and in some areas criminal justice is effectively nonexistent or does not deal effectively with security needs. According to Justice Department lawyer Reid Pixler, “No terrorists were being tried [in Mosul]. It was a catch-and-release program.”38

The actual security of the justice system has also been an issue. Judges and witnesses fear assassination, and more than 35 judges, lawyers, and judicial employees have been assassinated since 2007. According to SIGIR, “Intimidation of judges significantly hinders administration of the criminal justice system, has impeded the rule of law in Iraq, and has led to unfair criminal justice procedures and an overwhelming backlog of pretrial cases (three years in some districts) in many parts of Iraq. To reduce judicial intimidation and accelerate case reviews, the Higher Judicial Council (HJC) has hired additional guards to increase protection for each judge.”39

In response, most provincial judges have sent major terrorist cases to the main criminal court in Baghdad. The Rusafa criminal court in Baghdad is located in a secure “Rule of Law Complex,” in which court facilities and employees are protected from attacks and intimidation. Six other secure complexes are either proposed or are being built in Ramadi, Hillah, Basrah, Baqubah, Tikrit, and Mosul. But justice cannot rely on a limited series of secure facilities; the rule of law must eventually be secure at the local level.40

Despite a law mandating that detention facilities be under the sole control of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), detention facilities were operated by four separate ministries: Justice, Interior, Defense, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) for juvenile detention. Additionally, the Kurdistan Regional Government’s Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs operated its own detention facilities. As previously mentioned, the KRG internal security (Asayish) forces and the

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KRG intelligence services operated separate detention facilities outside the control of the KRG MoI, according to a July 2007 report by the NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW).\textsuperscript{41}

Some progress has been achieved as a result of the decrease in violence in 2007 and 2008. The number of judges steadily increased in 2006 and 2007, from 500 to 1,200,\textsuperscript{42} and increased significantly in 2008 and the first half of 2009. According to the chief investigative judge of the Central Criminal Court in Baghdad, "People trust the judicial system more than before. For the first time, a judge can order the arrest of a minister. All the judges believe the same as I do in the new Iraq."\textsuperscript{43}

U.S. efforts have been resource-limited and have focused on the top of the legal system. The United States has helped to develop the Major Crimes Task Force, a joint U.S.-Iraqi unit meant to eventually become a professional investigative agency.\textsuperscript{44} The unit investigates high-profile cases, many of them referrals from the Iraqi government involving sectarianism. The contentious nature of the cases it investigates has led to many of the Iraqi investigators, as well as the investigative judge who works with the units, receiving death threats.

The State Department also continues to report that the Iraqi judicial system has made limited progress in trying corrupt government ministers or individuals connected to the major militias.\textsuperscript{45} Long delays in awaiting trial are common. One major problem is Rule 136-B, which allows cabinet members to halt an investigation if it implicates a ministry employee.\textsuperscript{46} The acquittal of two Shi‘ite health ministers (widely seen as connected to the JAM) on charges of orchestrating the kidnappings and killings of Sunni officials who worked at the health ministry is another glaring example of how far the judicial system, like much of the rest of the ISF, still has to go.

The full scale of these problems is described in detail in the State Department’s human rights reports, and these reports show that such abuses continued to permeate the Iraqi criminal justice system in 2007 and 2008 and were committed by a wide range of elements of the ISF:

- The law provides for an independent judiciary. Although the judicial system was credited with efforts to maintain an independent stance, unstable circumstances in the country, as well as the law, made the judiciary weak and dependent on other parts of the government. Threats and killings by insurgent, sectarian, tribal, and criminal elements impaired judicial independence. The law also restricted the free investigation of wrong-doing. Ministers were afforded the opportunity to review and prevent the execution of arrest warrants against ministry employees lawfully issued by sitting judges presiding over criminal investigations. This provision provided immunity to selected government employees and enabled a component of the executive branch to terminate proceedings initiated by the judicial branch.

- The judiciary at all levels--investigative, trial, appellate, and supreme--is managed and supervised by the Higher Juridical Council (HJC), an administrative body of sitting judges from the

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\textsuperscript{42} Leinwand, “Wheels of Justice Slowly Returning to Iraqi Courts.”

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} Johnston, “U.S. Struggles to Tutor Iraqis in Rule of Law.”


\textsuperscript{46} Leinwand, “Wheels of Justice Slowly Returning to Iraqi Courts.”
The judicial system includes civil courts that address domestic, family, labor, employment, contract, and real and personal property claims. Challenges to the judgments rendered in these civil proceedings are first taken to the appeals courts of the provinces in which the trial courts sit; after that, secondary appeals may be made to the Court of Cassation.

In addition to the criminal and civil trial and appellate courts, the court system includes a Federal Supreme Court, the jurisdiction of which is limited to resolving disputes between branches of government, between the federal government and the provinces (governorates), and reviewing the constitutionality of laws, regulations, procedures, and directives of the various branches and units of government throughout the country. The Presidency Council appointed the nine members of the Federal Supreme Court.

…During the year investigations continued into a number of crimes allegedly committed by members of the former regime, including atrocities following the 1991 uprising, the draining of the marshes in the southern part of the country, and the invasion of Kuwait. Cases related to the 1991 uprising were being tried in the IHT at year’s end.

Judicial security remained a serious concern as violence and threats of violence affected judges in virtually all provinces. For example, in east Baghdad, gunmen killed the chief judge of a local criminal court, Mustafa Kadhim Jawad, and his driver in late September. In August Midhat Mahmoud, head of the Supreme Judicial Council, stated that he and other judges received a stipend for bodyguards, but that most of the jurists had been unable to renew the guards’ gun permits since a security crackdown began in February. He also noted that attacks on judges increased.

Judges frequently faced death threats and attacks. Between July 2005 and December 2007 at least 24 judges were assassinated. Some judges declined to try cases related to terrorism or the insurgency because of intimidation and security concerns. The judiciary suffered from a severe shortage of security and other support for judges, which has contributed to major deficiencies in the rule of law.

While individual judges were viewed as objective and courageous, judges also were vulnerable to intimidation and violence. In some cases judges refused to hear cases against insurgents and terrorists for fear of retribution. There were reports that criminal cases at the trial level or on appeal to the Court of Cassation were decided by corruption or intimidation. There were also reports that court-issued detainee release orders were not consistently enforced.

…There was a problem with serious delays in adjudicating claims for property restitution. The Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes (CRRPD), formerly the Iraq Property Claims Commission, was established in 2004 by Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Regulation 12 as an independent governmental commission. Its purpose is to resolve claims for real property confiscated, forcibly acquired, or otherwise taken for less than fair value by the former regime between July 17, 1968, and April 9, 2003, for reasons other than
land reform or lawfully applied eminent domain. The CRRPD process is intended primarily to benefit those whose land was confiscated for ethnic or political reasons as part of the former regime's “Arabization” program and other policies of sectarian displacements. The previously announced deadline for filing claims of June 30 was extended and remained open at year’s end. In 2005 new laws replaced the old CPA order clarifying and making the CRRPD process more equitable.

A significantly backlogged property restitution process delayed justice. By year’s end the CRRPD received more than 132,000 claims nationwide. More than 36,000 of these claims were reportedly Kirkuk-related. To date, the CRRPD has reportedly resolved more than 34,000 claims nationwide. The claims were handled on a case-by-case basis through a technically complex process often taking years to complete. There is a CRRPD appeals court in Baghdad. Since 2003 many dislodged Arabs (wafadin) returned to their prior homes and have applied for compensation.

…The constitution mandates that homes are not entered or searched except with a judicial order issued in accordance with the law. The constitution also prohibits arbitrary interference with privacy. In practice security forces often entered homes without search warrants and took other measures interfering with privacy, family, and correspondence.

Under the state of emergency, the prime minister may authorize authorities to detain suspects and search them, their homes, and their work places. The law provides that all such actions must be pursuant to an arrest or search warrant unless there are extreme exigent circumstances. The state of emergency lapsed in April and was not renewed by year’s end; however, there were reports that law enforcement activities often continued as if the state of emergency were still in effect. For example, the police were instructed to comply with legal warrant requirements but reportedly often entered homes without search warrants.

In the KRG-controlled provinces, there was pressure on citizens to associate with the PUK party in the province of Sulaymaniyah, and the KDP party in the provinces of Irbil and Dohuk.

…At year’s end there were nine MOJ prisons and seven pretrial detention facilities. However, the total number of MOI detention facilities was unknown. Including police holding stations, there were estimated to be more than 1,000 official MOI detention locations. The MOD operated 17 holding areas or detention facilities in Baghdad and at least another 13 nationwide for detainees captured during military raids and operations. Additionally, there were reports of unofficial detention centers throughout the country. Unlawful releases and continued detention beyond the date of ordered release, as well as targeting and kidnapping of Sunni Arab detainees, were reported. Kurdish authorities operated eight detention facilities that combined pretrial and post conviction housing and an additional eight Asayish pretrial detention facilities.

Treatment of detainees under government authority was poor in many cases, although MOJ prison and detention facilities and personnel (otherwise known as the Iraqi Correctional Services or ICS) generally attempted to meet internationally accepted standards for basic prisoner needs.

The constitution prohibits “unlawful detention” and mandates that preliminary investigative documents be submitted to a judge within 24 hours from time of arrest, a period which can
be extended by one day. Under a state of emergency, the prime minister has the authority under "extreme exigent circumstances" to provide authorization for suspects to be detained and searched without an arrest warrant. Law enforcement authorities reportedly continued to detain and search individuals without an arrest warrant after the state of emergency expired in April, although there were no reliable statistics available on such incidents.

...According to MOHR data reported in the UNAMI quarterly report, at mid-year the number of non-Coalition detainees in the country totaled 23,218, the great majority being Sunni. The ICS held 12,031; the MOI, 5,110; the MOD, 3,319; and the MOLSA, 652. The KRG total was 2,106. The MOI figures were considered to be low estimates. During an interview published in the independent Awene newspaper on December 11, the KRG MOHR estimated the number of prisoners in the region to be closer to 2,556, 826 of whom were in Asayish jails. According to the KRG MOHR, the KRG total did not include numbers held by the KRG intelligence services, which unlike the KRG Asayish, continued to decline to release information on detainees.

In practice few detainees saw an investigative judge within the legally mandated time period. Many complained of not seeing the investigative judge until months after arrest and detention. In some cases, individuals identified as potential witnesses were also detained for months. Incommunicado detention took place. For example, according to UNAMI, at year's end five Palestinians who were arrested in mid-March remained in MoI custody under incommunicado detention, without referral to court. Also, according to UNAMI, on January 28 and again on February 27, families of detainees arrested by Asayish forces demonstrated before the Kurdistan National Assembly in Erbil, demanding information on the whereabouts of detained relatives and the reasons for their arrest and urging that human rights abuses and the ill-treatment of detainees in these facilities be addressed.

Lengthy detention periods without any judicial action were a systemic problem. The lack of judicial review was due to a number of factors, whose relative weight was difficult to assess, but included undocumented detentions, backlogs in the judiciary, slow processing of criminal investigations and a grossly insufficient number of judges.

There were a number of reports that KRG detainees were held incommunicado. KRG internal security units reportedly detained suspects without an arrest warrant and transported detainees to undisclosed detention facilities. There were reports that detainees’ family members were not allowed to know their location or visit them. In July HRW reported that scores of detainees interviewed in Asayish detention facilities in 2006 stated that detention facility officials had deprived them of contact with their families since their arrest, a period lasting up to two years. Reportedly, police across the country continued to use coerced confessions and abuse as methods of investigation.

Although the law allows release on bond, in practice criminal detainees were generally retained in custody pending the outcome of a criminal investigation. Judges are authorized to appoint paid counsel for the indigent and did so in practice; however, at least nine attorneys complained that poor access to their clients after their appointment hampered adequate attorney-client consultation.47

DOD reporting in March 2009 underscores these problems, as well as illustrates the fact that U.S. advice and aid in improving Iraq's rule of law is as important as U.S. advice and aid to the ISF:

Iraq's criminal justice system continues to face serious challenges. Judicial intimidation significantly hinders administration of the criminal justice system and has impeded rule of law in Iraq. Judicial intimidation has led to an overwhelming backlog of pre-trial cases—three years in some districts—and unfair criminal justice procedures in many parts of Iraq. To reduce judicial intimidation and accelerate case reviews, the Higher Judicial Council (HJC) has hired additional guards to increase protection for individual judges. Additionally, with Coalition assistance, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and HJC have negotiated a comprehensive plan for establishing the Judicial Protection Unit within the MoI's Directorate of Dignitary Protection. The plan will be presented to the Minister of Interior for his approval and implementation. In the meantime, representatives from the U.S. Departments of Justice (DoJ) and Treasury are assisting in creating a draft budget to be presented to the Minister of Finance.

Representatives from Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I) and DoJ are also developing a curriculum to train the judicial protection officers. The Coalition has established a Community of Interest working group to address the issue of judicial assassinations. This resource allows for the sharing of information regarding possible targets among the judiciary. Additionally, the U.S. Marshal Service continues to provide judges and their security details with handguns and assist them in obtaining MoI weapons cards.

In addition to protection officers, the Coalition assists with securing courthouses and protecting judges and their families by locating judges in secure complexes throughout Iraq. Judges living in the first Rule of Law Complex (ROLC) in Rusafa are enthusiastic about this arrangement, and Chief Justice Medhat supports the ROLC program. Another initiative intended to overcome judicial intimidation is the Traveling Judge Program. Chief Justice Medhat continues to support travel for judges from Baghdad to local areas with significant case backlog. Recently, the Coalition assisted in transporting judges to Diyala to reduce the case load and relieve severe overcrowding at the 5th Iraqi Army Division pre-trial detention facility. The Coalition will continue to provide such assistance when requested by the HJC.

Courts hearing the most serious insurgent crimes continue to be overwhelmed, particularly in Baghdad. Approximately 9,000 pre-trial detainees in Baghdad detention facilities are awaiting trial. The courts' ability to process cases in a fair and timely manner is hampered by the sheer number of criminal cases, the lack of timely and complete investigations, insufficient detainee files, poor court administration, and judicial intimidation. However, the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI) offices located at Karkh and Rusafa are beginning to show improvement in case processing time.

MNF-I’s Task Force 134 and the U.S. Embassy’s justice attachés work closely with the judiciary and the GoI to improve the quality of the Iraqi juvenile justice system and the treatment of convicted women in Ministry of Justice (MoJ) prisons. Recent progress includes expanded vocational programs at juvenile detention facilities, access to defense services, and expedited review of languishing cases. Although the quality of Iraqi post-trial detention facilities and detainee treatment varies, nearly all still require improvements. Many MoJ facilities, particularly post-trial facilities, are overcrowded and understaffed. The GoI reopened the Abu Ghraib detention facility—renamed Baghdad Central Prison—in January 2009, providing much needed holding capacity. Five new USG-funded prisons are scheduled to open over the next
six months, increasing prison capacity by more than 6,500 beds, bringing the total capacity to 43,119 beds by April 2009. Further, the GoI is in the preliminary stages of planning four new prisons for an additional 12,500 beds. These new prisons should help alleviate post-trial over-crowding by the summer of 2009, accommodate additional convicted detainee growth, and facilitate the closure of the GoI’s most neglected facilities.\footnote{48. DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2009, 4–5.}

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the solution must lie in improving an Iraqi system that has considerable strengths, but which suffered decades of abuse under military dictators and Ba’athist leaders like Saddam Hussein. As the State Department reports, Iraq has a very different system of criminal justice from the United States:

…The constitution provides for the right to a fair trial, and judges--investigative, trial, and appellate--generally sought to enforce that right. An accused is considered innocent until proven guilty and has the right to privately-retained or court-appointed counsel. One of the significant challenges facing the criminal trial courts, however, was insufficient access to defense attorneys. Defense attorneys were theoretically provided, but detainees rarely had access to them before the initial judicial hearing, often for security reasons. Many detainees met their lawyers for the first time during the initial hearing. Most of the time defense attorneys were provided at public expense if needed.

The criminal justice system is based on a civil law regime similar to the Napoleonic Code. It is fundamentally inquisitorial--and not adversarial--in form and content. The system is focused centrally on the search for the truth, initiated and pursued almost exclusively by judges, whose role is to assemble evidence and adjudicate guilt or innocence.

Investigative judges, working collaboratively with judicial investigators, and in some cases police officers, are responsible for interviewing witnesses, assembling evidence, examining suspected criminals, and generating files on the results of the investigative work. Although prosecutors and defense attorneys frequently participated in these pretrial investigative hearings, their roles were for the most part limited to recommending the pursuit of certain lines of investigation, including posing suggested questions of witnesses and detainees. They rarely appealed decisions of judges about the manner and scope of their investigations.

Three-judge panels are responsible for trying the accused persons in trials open to the public, based largely on the results of judicial investigations. During those trials the presiding judges question the accused detainees; witnesses may testify at these proceedings. The prosecutor and the defense attorney can make brief closing statements.

After deliberation among the members of the panel, the presiding judge announces the verdict and, in the case of a conviction, the sentence. Criminal judgments of conviction and acquittal may be appealed to the Court of Cassation, a judicial panel that reviews the evidence assembled in the investigative and trial stages and renders a decision.

The constitution provides for the establishment of military courts, but only military crimes committed by the armed forces and the security forces may come before such courts.

…The legal framework exists, as well as an independent and impartial judiciary, for dealing with civil issues in lawsuits seeking damages for, or cessation of, human rights violations. Administrative remedies also exist. However, during the year the priorities of an understaffed
judiciary and government administration focused on issues more directly related to security, and these procedures and remedies were not effectively implemented.49

This description ignores the impact of tribal and local justice, as well as that of religion. It is all too clear, however, that past U.S. and other Western efforts to restructure the overall patterns of Iraqi civil and criminal justice will not succeed, and that Iraq must carry out reforms and improvements based on its existing system. The reality is that a HUMINT and confessions-based system of civil law has worked well in most of the Arab world. It can be improved through the use of “evidence-based” techniques, but it is far from clear that the United States should seek to replace most of the existing system.

Legal efforts to eliminate all corruption and the black economy, rather than restrict them to functional levels, will be equally pointless and impractical. The United States needs to focus on essentials, and not on trying to create a mirror image that largely ignores our own problems in dealing with evidence-based criminal justice and different forms of corruption. This does not mean that helping Iraq move toward evidence-based forensics and reducing corruption is not helpful, but again, the goal should be to improve and not change the system.

The pace of such reform and improvements will be as critical to the creation of an effective mix of Iraqi forces as the development of those forces. It remains a key priority for outside aid if that aid can be refocused to help Iraq rather than try to make unrealistic changes.

One of the ironies of developing effective Iraqi security forces is that part of the challenge consists of eliminating a force that played a critical role in weakening Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and other Sunni insurgent and terrorist groups. The regular Iraqi security forces have assumed most of the burden of dealing with security in Iraq. However, the Sons of Iraq (SoI), which were originally known as the Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) groups, played a key role in fighting the insurgency in 2007 and 2008 and in providing local stability in parts of Iraq.

These largely Sunni and tribal forces are now being absorbed into the regular components of the ISF and government jobs, but they still play an important de facto role in ensuring the stability and security of key Sunni areas. The political parties associated with the SoI also now play a major role in Sunni and national politics. At the same time, if the SoI personnel are not carefully converted into jobs and made part of Iraq’s efforts at political accommodation, they may present serious potential political and security problems in the future.

The Impact of the Sons of Iraq

The various groups that made up the Sons of Iraq were first formed in Anbar in September 2006 as part of an effort to meet the threat AQI posed to tribal leaders and members. They proved to be so effective in bringing security at the local level that the United States began to fund the movement and encourage its expansion into other tribal areas and key urban areas, including Baghdad city and province. The United States did not arm these local tribal forces, although it did provide pay and some training and intelligence. Instead, the SoI forces cooperated with the Iraqi Army and police forces—a cooperation that was particularly effective where both the SoI and ISF had a common objective and there were no ongoing sectarian clashes.

As Figure 12.1 shows, the SoI grew to some 90,000 men, and spread to 10 provinces, by the spring of 2008. They were reported to number between 100,000 and 130,000 by late July 2008, although these numbers were uncertain, and sometimes seem to have reflected funding levels rather than actual strength. In March 2009, DOD reported that the SoI had approximately 94,000 members. In most areas, they proved to be effective against Al Qaeda in Iraq and other hard-line insurgents despite the fact that many had fought for the insurgency before AQI had largely alienated the Sunni tribes, or had little or no loyalty to the central government.

Most of the Sons of Iraq performed well within the limits imposed by their statutes as a tribal militia. Members of the SoI and their leaders sometimes took heavy losses during the peak of

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**Table 12.1 Distribution and Manning Levels of the Sons of Iraq**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>SoI Members</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>SoI Members per 100,000 Population</th>
<th>Sunni Groups</th>
<th>Shi’a Groups</th>
<th>Mixed Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anbar</td>
<td>7,000+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salah ad-Din</td>
<td>4,000+</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diyala</td>
<td>10,000+</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>~20</td>
<td>~10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninewa</td>
<td>1,500+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-Tamim</td>
<td>8,000+</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>35,000+</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babil</td>
<td>5,000+</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasit</td>
<td>1,500–3,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qadisiyyah</td>
<td>1,500+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhi Qar</td>
<td>2,000+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: MND is Multi-National Division; MNF is Multi-National Force.

the fighting with AQI. In what appeared to be a targeted assassination campaign, at least 100 SoI members were killed in January 2008, mostly in and around Baghdad and Baqubah. At least six of the casualties were senior Awakening leaders. Osama bin Laden called the Awakening members “traitors” and “infidels,” and they have been targeted by AQI in an attempt to break the shaky alliances that underpin the movement. There have also been persistent accusations that Shi’ite militias, including JAM and the Badr organization, were involved in some of the attacks on the SoI.

One deadly example of the trend in attacks on Awakening leaders was a double car-bomb attack on February 11, 2008, that apparently was aimed at Sheik Ali Hatem Ali Suleiman, a major Awakening leader. At least 11 people were killed in the blasts, although Suleiman was only slightly injured.² Suleiman voiced displeasure at the United States’ inability to protect the Awakening: “Where is the support of the Americans for us? They put us in this dilemma and now they are doing nothing for us. If they don’t do something about this, then we may withdraw our forces from the streets.”³ U.S. officials were not unaware of this problem. One U.S. official stated, “There’s a recognition that sustained attacks [on the Awakening] cannot continue.”⁴

In a few cases SoI members were discovered to be loyal to AQI or its supporting groups, but most elements of the SoI have cooperated with both U.S. and Iraqi Army and police forces and there has been little evidence that significant numbers ever changed sides. All SoI members were also identified, background-checked, and fingerprinted. Neither the Coalition nor the Iraqi government has reported extensive cases of any large-scale infiltration of these forces during these checks, or cases where members of the SoI were found to be supporting the insurgency.⁵

If anything, problems arose in the other direction. U.S. troops have occasionally mistaken SoI members for insurgents.⁶ In one tragic case of mistaken identity, a U.S. helicopter attacked a building on February 4, 2008, where a group of SoI members were hiding. Nine civilians were killed, including at least one child.⁷ In another incident just two days later, U.S. soldiers accidentally killed two civilians and one SoI member in Dour.⁸ Five inadvertent killings of SoI members by U.S. forces occurred in the last three weeks of February alone.⁹ These incidents continued through 2008, and have sometimes strained the fragile underpinnings of the alliance between tribal leaders and the United States.¹⁰

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6. Ibid.
The Challenges Posed by the Sons of Iraq

The very success of the Sons of Iraq presents a number of challenges. The Sons were formed with U.S. support but with no initial support from the central government, and their anger at AQI did not mean they were loyal to the government or that they cooperated with U.S. forces out of any motive other than expediency.

The SoI also were never a cohesive force, even within a given province or large Iraqi cities like Baghdad. They differed in reliability and effectiveness, as well as in their willingness to cooperate with the local authorities, Iraqi Army, and Iraqi police—particularly in mixed areas. It was the United States that paid them. The Iraqi security forces they worked with were dominated by Shi’ite leaders while the Sons of the Iraq were largely or all Sunni. The SoI program was initially funded largely through the United States’ Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP). According to the Congressional Research Service, salary payments to the SoIs accounted for one-third of total FY2008 CERP obligations as of April 2008.11 The SoI’s dependence on U.S. funding at the time of their peak strength is shown in Figure 12.2.

Some 80 percent or more of the SoI were Sunni and had no clear loyalty to a Shi’ite-dominated government, meaning that the central government was very reluctant to give them places in the ISF or even provide some other form of employment. The United States sought to place roughly 20 percent of the SoI in various elements of the ISF early in 2008 and to create the equivalent of a civilian development corps or jobs for most of the rest, but the Maliki government was slow to react and had grave reservations about the program.

In most cases, this meant that the Sons’ main loyalty was to the tribal leader(s) that recruited them, and not to the central government or to Iraq’s weak Sunni political parties. Most SoI members were untrained, and substantial numbers were illiterate. In other cases, authority also was given to men with little accountability. According to Lt. Erick Kuylman, patrol commander in the First Battalion, 68t Armor Regiment operating in Adhamiya, “What you have are essentially armed factions, like mini-gangs, that operate in a certain set of checkpoints in certain territories.”12

Tension between the SoI, U.S. forces, and existing ISF forces also occurred in some areas because of problems with local authorities. In Diyala, 300 SoI members staged a walkout, abandoning their posts en masse on February 9, 2008. The walkout was held to demand the ouster of the Shi’ite provincial police chief, whom the SoI members accused of being a member of the JAM and of ordering the torture of a Sunni officer.13 Complaints of delayed pay were also common among SoI members. Their protests continued through the rest of February. According to Haider Mustafa al-Kaisy, a SoI commander in Baqubah, “We have stopped fighting Al Qa’ida.”14

Similar tensions existed between the SoI and the prime minister’s office, although many reports of these tensions seem exaggerated or taken out of context. There were growing reports beginning in the summer of 2008 that the Iraqi government was targeting some Sunni elements

of the Sons and arresting or killing them. The ISF’s operation in Diyala in summer 2008 featured the arrest of not only militants but a number of Awakening council leaders as well.

According to Major Tim Hunt, U.S. Army liaison to the provincial government, “I think what’s occurring here indicates there is a sectarian political bias in how the government is prosecuting security operations.” Some of the Awakening leaders arrested in Diyala had announced their intentions to run for spots on the provincial council, and many saw the arrests as an attempt by Shiite interests to prevent these Sunni leaders from gaining political power. The headquarters of the Sunni Islamic Party (allied with the Awakening councils in Diyala) was raided three times in six weeks in 2008, and many of the party’s leaders have been arrested or are wanted.

There were reports in late August 2008 that the Anbar Provincial Council had asked U.S. forces to delay the transfer of Anbar Province to the Iraqi central government by a year because Iraqi forces were not ready to keep order, and because of friction between the Awakening Councils that

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17. Ibid.
the Sons helped create and Sunni parties in the central government like the Iraqi Islamic Party.\textsuperscript{18} These same reports claimed that some 650 leaders and members of the Sons of Iraq were in hiding because the Iraqi military were seeking to arrest them.

There were cases in which the Awakening movement spread beyond the groups sanctioned by the Coalition, although most groups that formed on their own have come under some form of Coalition control, and most were eventually paid by the Coalition. More than a dozen armed Sunni neighborhood groups began forming outside of the formal SoI program in late March and April 2008. This was seen as a response to the poor performance of the regular ISF in the battle against the JAM in Basra. Ahmed Sattar Jamil, a Sunni leader in Baghdad, stated, “Right now, the Sahwa [or Awakening] is trying to spread and take control over more areas, because they are afraid of the Shi’ite militias, especially after the events in Basra and Baghdad, when many of the security forces handed over their weapons to the Mahdi Army [JAM].”\textsuperscript{19}

The economics of the SoI were another problem. The Sons of Iraq were a temporary force that were paid high salaries by Iraqi standards—some $300 a month—and were paid by the United States rather than by the Iraqi government. Although such payments proved to be far more cost-effective than trying to deploy more U.S. troops—even if this had been possible—there usually are no alternative jobs unless the Iraqi government creates them. Virtually all formal job creation in Iraq is still in the state sector, while unemployment and underemployment levels are often higher than 30 percent and sometimes 40–60 percent at local levels—particularly among younger Iraqi males.

### Transferring the Sons of Iraq to the ISF and to Regular Jobs, or...

These issues took on more urgency in late 2008. Progress in fighting AQI, other insurgent groups, and the Shi’ite militias had reached the point where Iraq could shift to development and begin to rely on the regular elements of the ISF. This led to plans to transfer the Sons of Iraq from U.S. to Iraqi government funding and control, beginning on October 1, 2008. SIGIRIR reporting summarized the planning for this process as follows:

In 2007, the United States began funding the Sons of Iraq (SoI) from [the Commander’s Emergency Response Program’s] CERP’s protective measures money, which has since become the largest CERP category. Nearly $368 million of the CERP has been spent on the SoI program. Although monthly funding for the SoI has increased since the program’s inception, the average monthly spending per person has fallen consistently since late 2007, reflecting the sharp rise in SoI membership.

As of October 1, 2008, the GOI agreed to assume payment responsibilities for the 51,000 SoI members operating in Baghdad. This is the first step in transitioning the SoI program from U.S. to Iraqi management. MNC-I reported that it plans to transfer the remaining 44,000 members across the country over the next six months. MNC-I also noted that the United

\begin{flushright}

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States will continue to support the rest of the SoI members until it can work with the GOI to transition them into meaningful permanent employment into civilian employment or to the ISF. Although Iraq’s Prime Minister has publicly said that he supports the transition, the MOI and some Iraqi leaders have been reticent to support the plan amid sectarian tension.

The United States hopes to transition about 20 percent of SoI members into the ISF, but transfers to the Iraqi Police over the last three months have shown “slow to no progress.” Additionally, DOD has reported that some SoI members are being targeted by the GOI.

In addition to coordinating SoI transfer and pay, the GOI and MNC-I must finalize a memorandum of understanding to reduce operational tensions between the Coalition and the IA while the responsibility for oversight of the SoI is transitioned.

MNC-I established a reconciliation cell to engage the Iraqi Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation, which conducts vetting of police recruits and works with provincial and local governments on reconciliation issues. The Prime Minister tasked the committee with overseeing the SoI program transition.

MNC-I has also conducted two new initiatives: setting up pay stations to begin acclimating the IA to the administration of the group by executing payroll for the SoI using U.S. funds, holding joint registration with the IA to help enroll SoI members for benefits under the transition program.\(^\text{20}\)

It was clear from the outset, however, that this transfer could be successful only if the United States could persuade the Iraqi central government to create programs that would transition the Sons of Iraq from acting as a militia to either the ISF or some government-supported civilian program. It was equally clear that this would be difficult. DOD reported that 19,000 SoI members had expressed a desire to join the ISF in March 2008, but it is far from clear that the Sons of Iraq or their leaders were ever polled on the subject.

Actual progress was erratic, in part because of the central government’s fears about what would happen in absorbing so many armed Sunnis and former insurgents, in part because of the slow process of Iraqi governance, and in part because funding had to come from the 2009 budget and be approved by the CoR. It also was difficult to track what was actually happening.

Brig. Gen. David Perkins stated in August 2008 that only 5,200 SoI members had been recruited into the ISF.\(^\text{21}\) A report by Capt. Charles G. Calio, a U.S. spokesman in Iraq, put the number at 936—although he stated that an additional 2,300 had been vetted for possible positions.\(^\text{22}\) Another report indicated that fewer than 600 of the Iraqis active in the Sons of Iraq had been absorbed into the ISF as of August 2008.\(^\text{23}\)

Coalition officials gave conflicting reports after October 2008 regarding the number of SoI members that successfully transitioned to the ISF. According to General Petraeus, nearly 20,000 SoI members had transitioned to the regular ISF as of late February 2008.\(^\text{24}\) The September 2008

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23. Ibid.
DOD quarterly report reported that more than 20,000 had transferred into full-time employment with the ISF. However, a footnote to this figure that that “this number includes the 8,206 members of the 2006 Anbar awakening movement that were transitioned before the current CLC/SoI initiative,” meaning that only around 13,000 SoIs had actually transferred since October 2008.

Progress did improve with time. DOD reported in March 2009:

Turnover of the SoI program to the GoI has proceeded smoothly thus far. On October 1, 2008, the GoI assumed responsibility for nearly 51,000 SoI in the Baghdad area. Since then, the GoI has taken control of SoI programs in Diyala, Babil, Wasit, Qadisiyah, and Anbar Provinces, marking an important step toward national reconciliation. As of January 31, 2009, 77 percent of Iraq’s SoI members have been transferred to GoI responsibility, and by April 1, 2009, SoI from Ninewa, Salah ad Din, and Tamim Provinces are scheduled to be transferred. Of the 94,000 SoI members remaining as of October 1, 2008, the GoI has pledged that 20 percent will be transitioned to the ISF, with the rest to be vetted for other civil servant positions or provided training or other support for transitioning into private-sector employment. Since October 2008, more than 5,000 of these have transitioned to the ISF, other ministries, or other non-security education, training, and support jobs programs. Long-term plans include increased education, training, and private sector employment opportunities. Although these steps have been encouraging, successfully transitioning SoI to permanent employment remains a long-term challenge for the GoI, particularly in light of recent budget concerns.25

The transition is still a work in progress, and DOD reported in March 2009 that “longstanding Sunni-Shi’a discord remains, with some Sunnis suspicious of the extent of the Shi’a political parties’ ties to Iran and doubtful of the GoI’s long-term commitment to the SoI transition program and the implementation of the Amnesty and Accountability and Justice Laws.”26 It also is unclear how well the jobs and positions provided to date meet the expectations of the young men involved or have contributed to the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of the ISF. Many of the Sons of Iraq lacked the education to be effective members of the regular Iraqi military, had trouble in qualifying for the police, and did have suspect backgrounds.

In spite of these problems, the Iraqi government took operational and administrative control over the SoIs/Awakening Councils on October 1, 2008.27 The SoIs had previously been controlled and paid entirely by the United States, and many observers were skeptical about the ability of the Iraqi government to control them. A Kurdish MP, Mahmud Othman, was quoted as saying that the future of the SoIs was a “challenging” problem: “The Shi’ite government looks at them as a political enemy. It sees them as Arab Sunni fighters who were former Al-Qaeda or insurgents fighting the government and they have to be punished…. Sahwas also will not be very satisfied... maybe some will go back against the government…. [The government] has been arguing (for the last year) that once the Americans leave, the Sahwas could turn into militias. It wants to handle them from right now.”28

The Iraqi government’s assumption of control of the Sons posed particular problems in mixed areas such as Baghdad. Baghdad remains a divided city where U.S.-constructed barriers and for-

26. Ibid., iv.
28. Ibid.
ward positions play a critical role in dividing the city into relative secure Shi’ite, Sunni, and mixed
neighborhoods. There was still considerable sectarian tension in many neighborhoods and con-
tinuing low-level violence and bombings. The various elements of the SoI are largely Sunni, and
there has been ongoing tension between some SoI groups and the Awakening Councils, on the one
hand, and the Iraqi Army and police, on the other. There have been SoI strikes and demonstra-
tions over police attempts to arrest Sunni leaders, and some Sunni leaders have fled the city.29

In response to SoI fears of arrest, U.S. officials extracted a promise from the Iraqi government
not to arrest SoIs without warrants and not to issue warrants for crimes committed more than six
months earlier (before many had joined the SoI).30 There still was serious tension in districts like
Adhamiya, however, and tension between the SoIs and the government appeared to be worsening
as the handover of control of the SoIs to the government took place. Capt. Parsana Deoki summed
up the problem if the SoIs are not paid by the government after the handover: “They have mili-
tary training and access to weapons—unemployed, with weapons, young men with an established
chain of command. You can fill in the blanks.”31

Despite these tensions and fears, however, most aspects of the transfer of control of the SoIs to
the Iraqi government went forward without incident. The first transfer, in October 2008 in Bagh-
dad, was carried out successfully. The SoI continued to receive their salaries, and the United States
has not had to step in. Some officers complained that their salaries had been reduced to the level
of a regular SoI member, but these concerns were relatively minor. By November 2008, 95 percent
of SoI salaries in Baghdad were paid by the Iraqi government No major violence or incidents have
been reported related to the handover, marking an important step forward for the government.32

On January 1, 2009, Diyala, Wasit, Qadisiya, and Babil transferred control of the SoI to the
Iraqi government.33 SoI Anbar transitioned in February, Ninewa and Tameen transitioned in
March, and Salah ah-Din transferred in April 2009, thus completing the transition process and
leaving all SoI units under government control.34 Substantial numbers of the SoI were incorpo-
rated in the ISF or hired for other government jobs. Iraq’s budget shortfall and the hiring freeze
announced in 2009 may negatively affect the SoIs along with the rest of the ISF; although as of June
2009 no major problems had arisen.

There were some incidents during the course of the spring of 2009. The government did ar-
rest some ex-leaders and members of the SoI, including some key figures in the SoI movement
in Baghdad. This may have reflected Shi’ite and Sunni political infighting and efforts to limit the
political influence of former SoI leaders. At the same time, at least some of the arrests were of ex-
tremists who continued to have ties to AQI or other extremist movements or who actively abused
their influence and power and/or had ties to criminal gangs. In short, the arrests were a problem
and a warning, but not a destabilizing trend.

2008.
12.
news/2008/12/31/15499-sons-of-iraq-transfer-new-years-day/.
34. SIGIR, Quarterly Report to Congress, April 30, 2009, 51.
Phasing Them Out? The Growing Role of the Awakening Movement in Iraqi Politics

The key to success will be more a matter of jobs than politics. It is far from clear that the employment problems raised by the phaseout of the Sons of Iraq can be eliminated unless more are incorporated into some local element of the ISF or are given lasting government jobs. In addition, much depends on creating civilian jobs as well as keeping elements of the SoI active until they clearly are no longer needed.

Success also depends on how much influence ex-members of the SoI will have in Iraqi politics. Sunnis are now systematically reasserting their role in Iraqi politics. Most Sunni parties, and many Sunni voters, boycotted provincial elections in 2005. However, Sunni parties ended their boycott and participated in the 2009 provincial elections, with many Sunni parties taking part. SoI-affiliated parties had considerable success in the 2009 provincial elections, and this will give them direct leverage over how the government treats them.

The January 2009 Anbar provincial elections saw the Awakening parties get a total of 17.1 percent, slightly behind secular Sunni politician Saleh al-Mutlaq's 17.6 percent. The Sunni Islamic Party received 15.9 percent, although accusations of fraud cast this number in doubt. It is likely that no single party will be able to dominate Sunni politics through 2009. Sunni parties also did not do well in other provinces, and this combined with likely Sunni infighting will weaken their role in the national government.

At the same time, the SoI fragmented politically. Until late 2008, most SoIs were politically united under the banner of the Al-Anbar Salvation Council, which had been created specifically to form a united party to run in the 2009 provincial elections. The Islamic Party, which was the only major Sunni party not to boycott the 2005 elections, controlled the Anbar provincial government after 2005 and was expected to lose a significant amount of power to the Al-Anbar Salvation Council. The Al-Anbar Salvation Council split in late 2008, with many tribes joining the Islamic Party or other groups. The Iraqi Accordance Front, the Sunni umbrella party in the parliament dominated by the Islamic Party, also split in late 2008.

The implications of these divisions within the Sunni parties are unclear. They may, however, become a positive trend. The politics of the SoI will be much more productive for Iraq's future if the various elements of the SoI form coalitions with other parties—particularly across sectarian and ethnic lines.

The Broader Challenge Posed by Iraq’s Young Men

It is also important to remember that creating jobs for the SoI is only a small part of a much broader challenge to Iraqi security and stability. The 120,000 young men in the Sons of Iraq are only a fraction of the more than 7.4 million Iraqis in the labor force of a country of some 28 million. Even if one only counts the 18–30 percent of the labor force that the CIA reported as directly unemployed in the summer of 2008, this amounts to 1.3 to 2.2 million Iraqis. Estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the number of young Iraqis between 18 and 30 years of age totals well more than 4.2 million and that this includes well more than 2.4 million young men.

The interaction between Iraqi force development, nationwide demographics, and Iraq’s stability and security goes far beyond the Sons of Iraq. The Iraqi government cannot compensate for a failure to offer employment and a future to millions of Iraqi young men and other unemployed or underemployed Iraqis simply by hiring members of the SoI. It also cannot compensate for a failure to deal with refugees and the displaced and to assure effective local government and police forces in mixed or troubled areas.

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Iraq and the United States face a critical transition through 2011 and beyond. The United States has not yet “won” in Iraq. There is still a war to finish, and this is only part of the challenge both countries face. Yet the awkward reality is that an Iraqi-U.S. failure to properly manage U.S. withdrawals and the creation of effective Iraqi forces is now at least as serious a threat to Iraq’s future stability and security as any internal or external threat.

One should not downplay the importance of the continuing struggle against extremists and the remaining insurgent elements. Ninewa and Mosul remain challenges. Terrorist attacks continue and Americans and Iraqis will continue to die. It seems clear that various violent elements of Al Qaeda in Iraq /ISI, Former Regime Elements (FREs), Special Groups, and other threats will continue to pose a challenge at some level even after U.S. forces have withdrawn in 2011.

It seems equally clear that Iraq will face challenges and pressure from its neighbors. Iran seeks to expand its influence, and Turkey will not tolerate a sanctuary for hostile Kurdish movements like the PKK. Arab support for Iraq remains weak, and Iraq’s Arab neighbors fear both Shi’ite dominance and what that could mean in terms of Iran’s role in Syria and Lebanon as well as in Iraq. Yet, any visitor to today’s Iraq can see that violence has been sharply reduced, that U.S. and Iraqi forces have done much to meet the mix of remaining threats, and that Iraqi forces are making real progress. What is most striking about today’s Iraq is that the major challenges to Iraqi security are becoming Iraq’s political divisions and ethnic and sectarian tensions. The problems the Iraqi Security Forces face in the future may be shaped more by the mix of Arab-Kurd tensions, problems in dealing with the Sons of Iraq and Sunni expectations, and Shi’ite-on-Shi’ite tensions between the Sadr faction and Maliki’s Al Dawa and the ISCI, than by the diminished threat posed by Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Yet even if Iraq moves forward toward stability and political accommodation, it will be extremely difficult for it to develop all the security capabilities it needs even to carry out the counterinsurgency mission before the full U.S. withdrawal scheduled to take place by the end of 2011. The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraqi cities on June 30, 2009, was an important milestone in the development of a sovereign and stable Iraq. This withdrawal may fuel an inflated view of the ISF’s capabilities, however, particularly in light of Iraq’s upcoming national elections.

Creating sustainable, effective, and affordable national defense capabilities remains a major challenge for both Iraq and the United States. Half a decade after the fall of Saddam, there still is no clear plan for the future structure of Iraqi military forces that defines the role the United States will play in making Iraq strong enough to defend its own sovereignty.

Iraq is only beginning to create the kind of armored, artillery, armed helicopter, and other “heavy” combat units it needs to fully defend itself. The Iraqi Air Force only began to order small
numbers of modern combat aircraft in mid-2008, and these will not be ready for years. Iraq has no modern surface-to-air missile defenses. It has only a token Navy. The Air Force and Navy still do not have clear procurement plans to acquire the combat systems they need. These shortfalls are compounded by serious problems in mobility forces, in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and battle management assets, and in the resources needed for combat logistics and sustainability.

A lack of governance, rule of law, essential and government services, and government spending helps create further sectarian and ethnic problems for the ISF, as well as forcing the ISF to deal with high levels of crime and corruption. It still is more dangerous to be a member of the Iraqi police than to be an Iraqi soldier, and police support and facilities are inadequate.

Finally, the massive Iraqi budget shortfall of 2009 revealed how dependant Iraq’s government is on the global price of oil. Although oil prices may rise in the future, the shortfall of 2009 has already put many of the ISF’s development and procurement plans in doubt.

These problems could force the United States to hand over responsibility to the Iraqi Security Forces before they are fully able to do the job. It could also force the United States to prematurely withdraw the U.S. trainers and partner units that the ISF needs to secure the country and defend it from any threats from its neighbors. If the divisive Iraqi internal political debate over U.S. withdrawals, the Strategic Framework Agreement, and the Status of Forces Agreement leads to earlier deadlines, this situation will become far worse. The ISF will need U.S. partner units, embedded advisers, financial support, help with logistics and sustainability, artillery and armor support, naval support, air combat and helicopter support, basic police and rule of law support, and support in ISR for at least several years to come.

The United States must resist the temptation to downsize its effort too quickly, to eliminate or reduce aid too much, or to focus solely on securing withdrawal. U.S. military advisory teams and aid are powerful tools in trying to prevent the ethnic and sectarian polarization of the ISF and in making it both a national and professional entity. Visits to Iraq have made clear that added CERP and other military aid could be used to reduce these tensions and to help keep ISF development on track in critical areas, as well as to help bridge the impact of Iraq’s current budget crisis and provide U.S. advisers with leverage to incentivize the ISF to use its own resources effectively. The U.S. military needs to use every possible intelligence asset in order to avoid clashes between elements of the ISF and other factions. The United States should seek to maintain as strong a military aid effort as possible through 2011 and to institutionalize such an effort in 2012 and beyond. It is clear from talking with members of the ISF that most senior Iraqi officers want such aid and recognize that it is needed. It is also clear that Iraqi officers see the need for a national, rather than polarized, ISF.

Arab-Kurdish tensions must be a central focus of both diplomatic and military attention. The United States is already making efforts to try to keep the ISF from becoming polarized along Arab-Kurd lines, but these efforts may need added assets and the United States may need to rethink past plans about supporting the expansion of the Iraqi Army. The plan to create largely Kurdish 15th and 16th Divisions may now be financially and politically impossible. Still, some form of this option seems highly desirable. Having largely Kurdish forces within the Iraqi Army still seems a good way to integrate a Peshmerga that now totals more than 100,000 men into a smaller, national force that offers the Kurds some degree of security. The United States might also consider making it clear that the level of U.S. military aid and assistance will vary with the degree to which Kurdish
officers are not pushed out of senior command positions and Kurds are integrated into all elements of the ISF.

More broadly, the key U.S. mission is not just responsible withdrawal or putting the Iraqis in the lead, important as those elements are. The key mission is to execute a transition up to 2011, and beyond, that will create as strong and independent an Iraq as possible, one that will be a strategic partner that serves its own interests as well as the need to bring security and stability to the Gulf region.

There will be nothing but “critical” periods for the U.S. military advisory effort between now and the end of 2011—and for several years beyond. Moreover, the United States cannot dodge this task by claiming premature success or shifting the burden to NATO or any other allies: Either the U.S. side of the effort will succeed, or the Iraqi side will fail. This makes it important to avoid focusing too much on managing the withdrawal of U.S. forces and the tasks involved if everything goes according to plan. The United States must have a good set of contingency plans and options for dealing with crises, particularly because its leverage and ability to intervene will steadily diminish as Coalition forces leave and Iraqi politics dominate events.

There are important areas of consensus for Iraq and the United States. The issue for both is not whether the United States should fully withdraw, but rather how it can do so while ensuring that the ISF can take over. Both the Iraqi and U.S. governments agree that U.S. forces should not remain a day longer in Iraq than necessary to develop effective Iraqi forces to help the country achieve stable political accommodation and secure itself from any threats by its neighbors. The United States wants to leave Iraq as soon as this is feasible. Deadlines like 2011 may prove practical—if all goes well in Iraq—particularly if such deadlines do not preclude keeping in place a large number of U.S. military advisers. The U.S. “occupation” is so controversial and unpopular that the cost of staying long enough to do every job right could be higher in terms of Iraqi resentment and political backlash than the security benefits would be worth. It is impossible to be certain that the risks of early withdrawal will be greater than the risks of trying to stay longer than Iraqi politics permit.

At the same time, both sides need to be realistic about the speed with which they can act. It is not a good idea to bet a country—and the outcome of a war—on the strategic equivalent of filling an inside straight. Setting flexible goals can help both Iraqi and U.S. leaders move forward toward their common goal of a fully sovereign and independent Iraq.

There are good reasons to extend the U.S. military and advisory presence at steadily diminishing levels until Iraq has achieved a greater degree of stability and has developed security forces that are fully ready to take over key missions without U.S. support. Iraqi and U.S. leaders need to be careful about exaggerating Iraqi capabilities and the speed with which the United States can safely withdraw its forces and advisory teams. U.S. forces still play a critical role in developing force effectiveness, providing stability in areas with deep sectarian and ethnic tensions, and helping Iraq achieve political accommodation and more effective governance. If at all possible, U.S. withdrawals need to be “conditions-based,” not tied to political timelines.

Creating effective Iraqi security forces that can defeat the insurgency, provide national defense, and serve the nation—not sectarian or ethnic interests—is critical to Iraq’s future. The success of this effort will depend on realistic and fully resourced plans for the development of the ISF, realistic measures of their capabilities, and careful review of the U.S. withdrawal plans to ensure they
reflect the actual progress of various ISF elements and the level of overall security, stability, and political accommodation in Iraq.

Unfortunately, the political and media debates since the summer of 2008 over the Status of Forces Agreement, Strategic Framework Agreement, and U.S. withdrawals suggest that many Iraqi and U.S. politicians are still unaware of how much remains to be done. Both Iraqis and Americans need to understand the level of incremental progress that Iraqi forces have actually made and how far they still have to go.

The United States will be judged far more by the way it leaves Iraq than by how it entered it. After years of destructive conflict, Iraq now has the potential, however tenuous, to become a stable and prosperous country. A hasty or underresourced exit will squander the sacrifices of thousands of men and women—American allied, and Iraqi—and destroy the country’s chance for a brighter future.
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