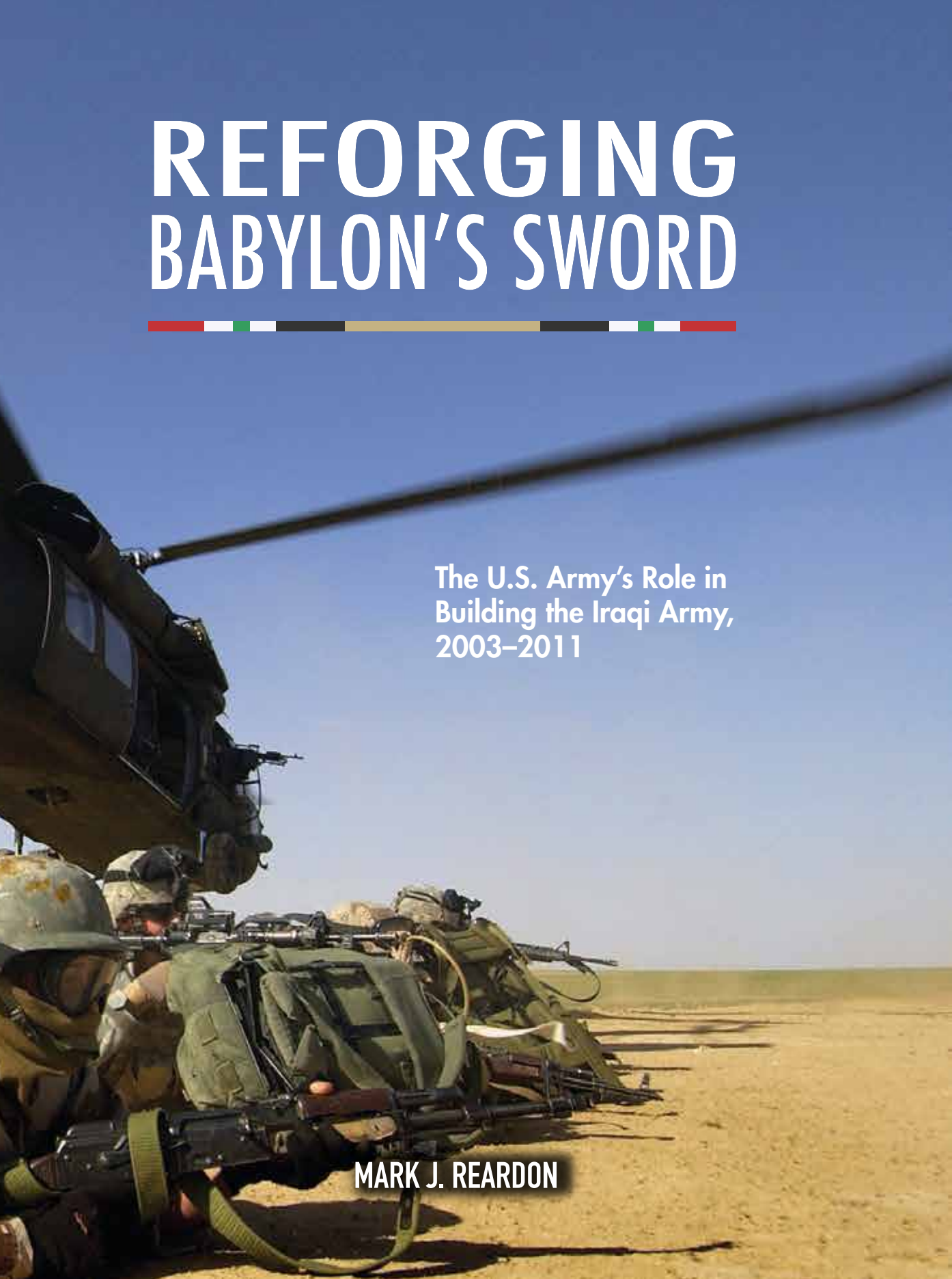
REFORGING BABYLON'S SWORD

The U.S. Army's Role in Building the Iraqi Army, 2003–2011



MARK J. REARDON

U.S. Army After 11 September 2001

Reforging Babylon's Sword

The U.S. Army's Role in Building the Iraqi Army, 2003–2011

by

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For those who served—Americans and Iraqis alike.

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Cover image (paperback): Iraqi and U.S. soldiers secure a landing zone after exiting from a UH–60 Black Hawk helicopter near Tall' Afar. (*S. Sgt. Aaron Allmon, U.S. Air Force*)

Note: Quoted material retains original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

FOREWORD

The U.S. Army's historical record is rich in accounts of battles, campaigns, and commanders. Far less frequently do we capture, with equal depth, the processes by which the Army adapts its institutions while still engaged in conflict. This volume fills in one part of that missing element. It documents, with unusual clarity and fidelity, how the Army undertook the complex task of helping to rebuild a foreign military during an active and evolving war.

The history of Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn is dispersed across multiple commands, international partners, and successive Iraqi governments. Decisions affecting the development of the post-2003 Iraqi security forces were made at many echelons, often without awareness of similar decisions being made elsewhere, and under shifting legal and policy authorities. Bringing coherence to that vast and fragmented documentary record is an important achievement. This study offers future historians and practitioners of history a consolidated foundation from which to understand not only what was decided, but also how and why those decisions took the shape they did.

Equally important, this volume provides a rare contemporaneous view of institutional adaptation. It shows how long-standing advisory concepts interacted with new political realities, operational demands, and resource constraints; how the Army tested and revised the assumptions inherited from past missions; and how Army senior leaders reconciled strategic objectives—sometimes uneasily—with the day-to-day requirements of fielding, equipping, and mentoring a new army. These frictions are not treated as anomalies. They are presented as essential elements of understanding how modern militaries operate when organizational change and active operations unfold simultaneously.

This work enables meaningful comparison across eras and theaters. As partner-force development remains a recurring requirement of U.S. policy—whether in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, or the Indo-Pacific—this history provides valuable insight into the practical limits of rapid force generation, the challenges of integrating disparate advisory efforts, and the consequences of mismatched political and military timelines. These lessons resonate far beyond the Iraq of the early twenty-first century.

Finally, this volume strengthens the Army's permanent historical record. By preserving decision-making processes, documenting the evolution of advisory structures, and capturing firsthand perspectives from

both American and Iraqi participants, it ensures that future scholars and military professionals will not have to reconstruct this period from partial or secondhand accounts. It stands as a durable contribution to the institutional understanding of a formative chapter in recent Army history.

It is in that spirit—of sustaining an accurate and comprehensive record of how the Army meets complex demands—that I commend this work.

Washington, D.C.
7 August 2026

CHARLES R. BOWERY JR.
Executive Director

PREFACE

The U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) has published only a handful of books dedicated to the topic of building foreign armies.[1] The first, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War*, chronicles the individual and collective experiences of the Korean Military Assistance Group. The first Vietnam volume on the topic, *Advice and Support: The Early Years*, focuses on the period of 1941 to 1960 while the second, *Advice and Support: The Final Years*, covers the timeframe of 1965 through the departure of U.S. combat troops in March 1973. These three publications appeared in print between 1962 and 1988, well before developments from late 2001 onward provided ample opportunity to reexamine the training and equipping of foreign armies.[2] As a result, this preface is lengthier than the norm for CMH books because it approaches a familiar topic from a twenty-first-century perspective.

This contribution to CMH's U.S. Army After 11 September 2001 series describes how American soldiers trained, equipped, and advised the Iraqi security forces during Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn. The main focus of the account is on the Iraqi Army, but collateral coverage of various Iraqi police entities, the Department of Border Enforcement, and the Facilities Protection Service is also necessary given that Iraqi military training and equipping programs frequently competed for resources and attention with those organizations. From 2006 onward, when post-Saddam Iraq rejoined the international community of sovereign nations, that effort is better described as security force assistance: unified action to generate, employ, and sustain host-nation or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority. Although the training, equipping, and advising aspects of security force assistance are the focal point of this narrative, it does not overlook other aspects of that mission.

1. The U.S. Army Center of Military History did not produce a volume detailing the American military's attempts to train and equip significant portions of the Nationalist Chinese Army during World War II. However, it did publish a full-length account of U.S. efforts to provide modern equipment to the French military after the invasion of North Africa in November 1942. See Marcel Vigneras, *Rearming the French*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1957).
2. *Advice and Support: The Middle Years*, covering January 1964 to June 1965, was published in December 2024. The final volume in the series, covering 1961 to 1963, is forthcoming.

Reforging Babylon's Sword: The U.S. Army's Role in Building the Iraqi Army, 2003–2011 examines Iraqi involvement, both on the battlefield and in the realm of political decision making, in order to provide much-needed context to American actions. Although this volume does not include the period when U.S. Army personnel assisted in the reconstitution of the Iraqi Army following its initial defeat by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria extremists in summer 2014, the events that took place before American troops departed Iraq in December 2011 offer significant insight into how a relatively weak offensive effort by extremist irregulars succeeded in overrunning northern and western Iraq within a few short weeks. In fact, the conclusion of this volume recounts how influences that emerged well before 2014 affected the Iraqi Army's subsequent development and performance.

This book provides a detailed study of how collateral factors influenced the train, equip, and advise mission and are essential to interpreting events. In this case, analysis of White House, secretary of defense, Coalition Provisional Authority, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I), and Multi-National Corps–Iraq decisions is vital to understanding how they affected U.S. advisers working with the Iraqis. Decisions by the Iraqi prime minister, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Interior had an equally significant impact on American training and equipping programs.

The narrative also looks at collateral influences—those not associated with a particular institution or individual but rather reflective of societies in general or the conflict itself. The broad charter assigned to the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I), for example, produced friction in the form of competition between police and army training programs for personnel, funding, and equipment. The inability of the U.S. Army's active component to support predeployment training of advisers in the midst of a major internal reorganization process led to that task being assigned to reserve component soldiers familiar with premobilization training but not the nuanced aspects of combat advising. Other collateral influences include, but are not limited to, enemy battlefield actions, the impact of civil wars on military performance, sectarian views within a society, political favoritism, institutional nepotism, and widespread government corruption.

This study does not examine every aspect of the mission in detail. First and foremost, it is not an institutional history of the multiservice organizations dedicated to training and equipping the Iraqi Army. Training and advisory tasks performed by multinational partners during Operation Iraqi Freedom, with the exception of British military personnel in Al Baṣrah during early 2008, are not described at length. Contributions by

U.S. marines and U.S. special operations forces are noteworthy in many instances, but in-depth treatment of their activities has been left for others to recount. Although every attempt has been made to examine major Iraqi-led operations in detail, available documentation did not support a comprehensive analysis of all such activities.

The idea of writing a book on U.S. Army efforts to rebuild the Iraqi military first emerged in 2009. I just had completed a year-long temporary assignment with CMH's Field Programs Division evaluating electronic and hard-copy materials collected by military history detachments (MHDs) deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Upon completion of that effort, I provided the Contemporary History Branch of the Histories Division (since renamed the Historical Studies Directorate) with recommendations on how the MHD material on hand could be leveraged to produce either a standalone monograph or a chapter in a collection of Global War on Terrorism essays. As a result of that report, the chief of the Contemporary Studies Branch directed me to produce a monograph on training and equipping indigenous forces in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Thereafter, as I provided training to deploying MHDs, I asked them to make a special effort to collect more material on training and equipping allied armies. Other individuals deployed to Iraq also volunteered to help gather relevant information. Lt. Col. Robert O. Kirkland made it a point to acquire documents for me after he assumed the responsibilities of MNF-I historian in 2009. An active duty officer formerly assigned to the Histories Division, Lt. Col. William S. "Shane" Story, visited MNSTC-I in his official capacity as MNF-I historian for the express purpose of obtaining command group records from the period between 2004 and 2007. The U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, sent Thomas L. Hendrix to Iraq to augment Colonel Story's efforts. Maj. Jeanne H. Godfroy collected documents while assigned to the MNSTC-I command group in 2004–2005 that she later provided.

The decision to prioritize operations in Iraq following the bombing of the Sāmarrāʾ mosque in February 2006 resulted in far fewer MHDs being sent to Afghanistan while the number of detachments deployed to Iraq increased. The shift in emphasis to the most active theater, coupled with targeted collection efforts, resulted in a staggering imbalance of available materials by 2011. As a result, the chief of the Histories Division directed me to cease efforts to collect material from Afghanistan in order to concentrate on a full-length account of train-and-equip efforts in Iraq.

Although it may seem as if MHDs and command historians obtained a surfeit of documentation, gaining access to all available information

proved problematic on several levels. Some organizations took a dim view of outsiders—even those with command sponsorship—collecting classified electronic records in the midst of a combat situation. As a result, MHDs frequently ran into battalion- and brigade-level roadblocks when attempting to perform their duties. The nonlinear nature of the conflict also constrained collection efforts. MHDs and command historians normally were billeted in Camp Taji or Camp Victory on the outskirts of Baghdād. To acquire materials from outlying organizations, MHDs attached themselves to a scheduled convoy or hitchhiked via rotary-wing aircraft. Though that method was somewhat effective, the tempo of operations grew so frenetic over a sustained period during the height of the surge that usual collection methods proved woefully inadequate. Finally, in some instances, the sheer volume of available electronic records overwhelmed MHD attempts to collect, store, and transmit them.

The systemic issues bedeviling MHD collection efforts resulted in numerous gaps in unit-level records. As a result, I approached individuals mentioned in the records delivered to CMH for amplifying information on key events. Invaluable firsthand accounts include, but are not limited to, those given by the personnel listed below in alphabetical order and according to their rank at the time they were involved in the preparation of this book: Col. Philip F. Battaglia, Lt. Col. Daniel R. Barnett; M. Sgt. (Ret.) Wesley J. Bryant, U.S. Air Force; Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell; Capt. William D. Chesher; Col. (Ret.) Edmund "E. J." Degen; Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. Dubik; Maj. Jeanne H. Godfroy; Lt. Col. (Ret.) Oscar J. Hall IV; Col. Casey P. Haskins; Col. Bart Howard; Col. John H. Hort; Lt. Col. Stuart M. James; Lt. Col. Joseph S. McLamb; Maj. Scott C. Nauman; Col. Peter A. Newell; Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Robert L. Ochsner II; Capt. Jeffrey A. Oster; Lt. Col. Michael F. Pappal; Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Dana J. H. Pittard; and Col. (Ret.) Thomas F. Thaler, U.S. Marine Corps. Special thanks are due to the former commander of both MNSTC-I and MNF-I, General (Ret.) David H. Petraeus, for reviewing an early draft of the manuscript.

The prefaces of other publications by the Center refer to historical offices and archival repositories within the federal government and Department of Defense that assisted in the development of a book. In this case, writing about a conflict even as it is taking place is a process that is simultaneously frustrating and rewarding. With great hesitancy, security managers dusted off procedures for declassifying and disseminating records fresh from a war, resulting in a trickle rather than a flood of material being released until senior Army leaders intervened to accelerate a few key projects. In the case of *Reforging Babylon's Sword*, the Center was fortunate that General

George W. Casey and General Raymond T. Odierno stepped in to do just that. The latter also reached out to U.S. Central Command's General Lloyd J. Austin III, who assisted efforts to document U.S. Army activities during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom by declassifying records held at his headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. Future historians will be tremendously indebted to these general officers, given that the bureaucratic struggle to declassify records from both conflicts continues even today.

The research and writing of this book took place over a fifteen-year period punctuated by changes of mission for the author and turnover within the Center's leadership. The CMH executive directors associated with this project include Dr. Jeffrey C. Clarke, Robert J. Dalessandro, and Charles R. Bowery Jr. Incoming directors are not rigidly bound by the agenda of their predecessors, but none saw fit to consign *Reforging Babylon's Sword* to the back burner. The consistent support afforded to this project by the CMH command group paid off in that it will be one of the first publications in the "Tan Book" series of CMH histories covering the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In retrospect, it is fortunate this project required considerable time to complete—publication before the collapse of the Iraqi Army in 2014 would have produced an incomplete assessment of the post-Saddam Iraqi Army by omitting the postscript of its struggle against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.[3]

All CMH books slated for publication must pass through a multiyear revision and vetting process that includes an editorial board internal to the Historical Studies Directorate and an external review panel consisting of subject matter experts from outside CMH. Thanks go to the historians in the Center who participated in the internal reviews of the draft manuscript: Jon T. Hoffman, Dr. David W. Hogan Jr., Dr. William S. "Shane" Story, Dr. Nicholas J. Schlosser, and Dr. Julie I. Prieto.

The members of the official external review board, whose deep familiarity with various aspects of the manuscript spurred a number of necessary changes, included Dr. Conrad C. Crane, currently serving as senior historian of the Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press at Carlisle Barracks; Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. Dubik, former commanding general of MNSTC-I; Dr. Carter A. Malkasian, Defense Analysis Department chair at the Naval Postgraduate School; Col. (Ret.) John R. Martin, whose firsthand knowledge of the inner workings of MNSTC-I and MNF-I was

3. For a scholarly examination of the dynasties of Arab leaders during the Islamic Golden Age and how their quest for power contributed to the rise of sectarian divisions within the Muslim faith, see Hugh Kennedy, *Caliphate: The History of An Idea* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

uniquely valuable; Dr. Kenneth M. Pollack, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and author of the incomparable *Armies of Sand: The Past, Present, and Future of Arab Military Effectiveness*; and Dr. Donald P. Wright, deputy director of the Army University Press at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I owe each of them an immense debt of gratitude for their excellent insight.

My contemporaries at CMH also influenced this book during its development, albeit in some instances they were unaware of having done so. They include Dr. Bianka J. Adams, Dale Andrade, Edward N. Bedessem, Dr. Andrew J. Birtle, Dr. Thomas Boghardt, Dr. Mark L. Bradley, Dr. Donald A. Carter, Dr. William M. Donnelly, Sherry L. Dowdy, William W. Epley, Stephen E. Everett, Kenneth R. Foulks, Dr. William M. Hammond, Dr. Brian F. Neumann, Jennifer A. Nichols, Joseph A. Seymour, Frank R. Shirer, and Dr. Mason W. Watson. All helped in both direct and indirect ways, whether by discussing their own projects, offering clear-eyed advice on reorganizing the draft narrative, or simply listening to the author voice his frustrations.

Although authors invest considerable time toward researching and writing a book, they anxiously stand on the sidelines while others bring it into existence. The final production of this work would not have been possible without the support of CMH's Production Division. Margaret J. B. McGarry edited this volume, Matthew T. Boan created the maps, and Kristina A. Hernandez designed the layout.

Washington, D.C.
12 July 2026

MARK J. REARDON

Reforging Babylon's Sword

The U.S. Army's Role in Building the Iraqi Army, 2003–2011

1
One Mission, Competing Agendas: May–October 2003

The core principles that guided how the United States military would train and equip the post-Saddam Iraqi Army had been employed on many occasions before coalition troops toppled Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein from power in April 2003. Prospective successors to President William J. Clinton (1993–2001) indirectly touched upon these ideas on the national stage during their 2000 presidential campaigns, turning U.S. military participation in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions into hotly debated issues. The campaigns revealed that some segments of the American political spectrum felt the armed forces could not maintain adequate combat readiness while training for and carrying out peacekeeping missions. Albert A. Gore, who served as Clinton's vice president, supported continued use of the military for such assignments.[1] The Republican challenger, Texas governor George W. Bush, stated unequivocally, "I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation building. I think our troops ought to be used to fight and win wars. I think our troops ought to be used to help overthrow the dictator when it's in our best interests."[2]

1. "Humanitarian interventions, to include peace enforcement and peacekeeping, and shows of force, accounted for the majority of American military operations during the 1990s." Col. (Ret.) David A. Gray, "The Military as Peacekeepers and Enforcers: Military Operations Other Than War," Foreign Policy Research Institute, 23 Apr 2018, https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/04/the-military-as-peacemakers-and-enforcers-military-operations-other-than-war-in-the-1990s/, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).

2. George W. Bush, "The Second Gore-Bush Presidential Debate" (debate, Winston-Salem, NC, 11 Oct 2001), Commission on Presidential Debates, http://www.debates.org/?page=october-11-2000-debate-transcript, Hist Files, CMH.

After defeating Gore in November 2000, Bush entered office pledging to give the men and women in uniform "clear missions with attainable goals."[3] However, the situation changed after terrorists flew airliners into New York City's World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, on 11 September 2001. The intelligence pointed to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, then based in the "failed state" of Afghanistan, as the responsible party.[4] While such attacks on U.S. soil were not unprecedented, the scale of the assault led President Bush to view it as an act of war rather than a crime requiring a response from law enforcement agencies.[5]

The United States retaliated by targeting al-Qaeda and its Taliban allies in the Afghan government in early October 2001. American special operations and conventional units, aided by opposition militia forces, toppled the Taliban leadership and expelled al-Qaeda from Afghanistan. The United States sought to fill the resultant political vacuum with a representative government made up of the Taliban's opponents. Although allied paramilitary forces led by warlords played a large role in delivering victory, the Pentagon recognized that codifying such an arrangement would undercut the democratization process. The international community agreed, authorizing the creation of a 70,000-strong national army for Afghanistan in December 2002.[6] The Pentagon's concerns about the long-term impact of the United States' involvement in post-Taliban Afghanistan grew during this period, but that effort soon would pale in comparison to the U.S. role in Iraq.

THE WAR ON TERRORISM MOVES TO THE GLOBAL STAGE

The overall strategic equation had become more complex in the wake of an incomplete American victory in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda leader

3. "The President Elect's News Conference Announcing the Nomination of Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense," The American Presidency Project, 28 Dec 2000, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-president-elects-news-conference-announcing-the-nomination-donald-rumsfeld-secretary, Hist Files, CMH.

4. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), 326, http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf (accessed 15 Jun 2019), Hist Files, CMH.

5. George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown, 2010), 128. On 11 September 2001, President George W. Bush opened the first National Security Council meeting after the attacks with the statement, "We're at war." National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *9/11 Commission Report*, 326.

6. U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Afghanistan Security: Further Congressional Action May Be Needed to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable Afghan National Security Forces*, Rpt to Congressional Committees, GAO-08-661, Jun 2008, 11, https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-08-661.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

Osama bin Laden escaped from Afghan irregulars and U.S. troops in December 2001 following a prolonged engagement at Tora Bora near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Although al-Qaeda's numbers had been reduced significantly, volunteers still flocked to its ranks in the wake of the 11 September attacks. Officials in Washington, D.C., believed that bin Laden wanted to launch a follow-on strike against the United States using chemical or biological agents. Saddam Hussein's Iraq topped the short list of unfriendly nation-states capable of supplying a reconstituted al-Qaeda with those types of weapons.[7]

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld initially had directed General Tommy R. Franks, commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), to reevaluate existing plans for invading Iraq in late November 2001.[8] On 28 December 2001, President Bush confirmed to Franks that if diplomacy failed, the United States would invade Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power.[9] Planning for a ground invasion designed to topple Saddam proceeded apace throughout 2002.

On 16 October, the U.S. Congress gave President Bush authorization to eliminate weapons of mass destruction (WMD) from Iraq by force if necessary.[10] On 8 November, the United Nations passed a resolution giving the Iraqis thirty days to disclose all aspects of their WMD-related programs.[11] Just as the deadline expired, Saddam Hussein submitted a report that satisfied neither the United Nations nor the United States. The White House reasoned that if Saddam did not want to disprove claims that he possessed WMD, then he must be hiding the fact that Iraq did have such weapons.[12]

As CENTCOM refined its plans for deposing Saddam Hussein, the State Department's Future of Iraq Project examined how the United States could transform post-Saddam Iraq into a democratic nation. Consisting of U.S. officials and Iraqi expatriates, the group served not only as a planning body but also as an incubator for potential members of a post-Saddam

7. Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 112, 270; Dick Cheney with Liz Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2011), 368.
8. General Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 331.
9. Franks, *American Soldier*, 346–56; Cheney, *In My Time*, 369.
10. Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002, PL 107–243, 16 Oct 2002, 116 Stat. 1498, https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-107publ243, Hist Files, CMH.
11. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1441, The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait, S/RES/1441 (8 Nov 2002), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/478123?v=pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
12. Bush, *Decision Points*, 240–42.



President George W. Bush (*center*) meets with his cabinet, including Secretary of State Colin Powell (*left*) and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld (*right*). (*National Archives*)

government.[13] Secretary Rumsfeld eventually warmed to the concept of preparing moderate Iraqi expatriates to assume the reins of government, but only because they offered a way to turn power over to Iraqis who were untainted by Saddam sooner rather than later. Transitioning the governance of Iraq to either international or Iraqi authorities would allow the United States to withdraw its troops from Iraq for use elsewhere, rather than getting them bogged down in a lengthy nation-building project.[14]

CENTCOM had explored posthostilities planning throughout summer 2002, although it spent much less time and effort on that topic than it did determining how to employ military force to achieve the desired end-state.[15] CENTCOM's subordinate elements responsible for carrying out the invasion and posthostilities tasks operated in something of a policy

13. Eric Schmitt and Joel Brinkley, "The Struggle for Iraq: Planning; State Dept. Study Foresaw Trouble Now Plaguing Iraq," *New York Times*, 19 Oct 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/19/world/struggle-for-iraq-planning-state-dept-study-foresaw-trouble-now-plaguing-iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH; Nora Bensahel et al., *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 31–32.
14. Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 485–91; Douglas J. Feith, *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 315–17.
15. Franks, *American Soldier*, 364.

vacuum despite consulting documents from the Future of Iraq Project.[16] Faced with the daunting task of taking over all the responsibilities of the Saddam-era government, while at the same time establishing a democratic administration to replace a formerly authoritarian regime, Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) planners working for Lt. Gen. David D. McKiernan sought options that made their task easier. Unlike senior Pentagon officials, the CFLCC staff accepted the possibility that occupying Iraq—which included restoring basic services, restarting the economy, and reestablishing the rule of law—could demand more troops than taking down Saddam's regime had required.[17]

As a result, McKiernan's planners came to favor a posthostilities scenario in which U.S. occupation authorities maintained a number of Iraqi regular army units on duty rather than forcibly demobilizing all of them along with the state security apparatus loyal to Saddam Hussein. That option not only ensured adequate personnel would be available, but also offered a means of undercutting potential resistance to the occupation by putting "an Iraqi face on the reconstruction of the country."[18] However, this plan to recall former Iraqi troops to service rested on two major assumptions: the dismantling of Saddam's political power base would be limited to the upper echelons of the Ba'th Party, and CFLCC could draw upon several divisions of regular Iraqi troops soon after hostilities concluded.[19]

By this time, President Bush realized that forming an office dedicated to posthostilities planning would not undermine ongoing diplomatic initiatives. On 20 January 2003, the White House issued National Security Presidential Directive 24, setting out key points of postwar planning for Iraq.[20] The document explained:

16. The Future of Iraq Project proposed the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of *paramilitary forces* while expressing support for recalling regular Iraqi units. Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, Def Policy and Institutions Working Gp, 24 May 2002, The Future of Iraq Project, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB198/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
17. Eric Schmitt, "Pentagon Contradicts General on Iraq Occupation Force's Size," *New York Times*, 28 Feb 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/28/us/threats-responses-military-spending-pentagon-contradicts-general-iraq-occupation.html, Hist Files, CMH.
18. Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) also envisioned the Iraqis performing internal security duties in areas where the United States did not have sufficient forces. Interv, John H. McCool, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI), with Col. Kevin C. M. Benson, former CFLCC J–5, 10 Oct 2008, 10, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI (hereinafter OLE).
19. Col. Kevin C. M. Benson, "OIF Phase IV: A Planner's Reply to Brigadier Aylwin-Foster," *Military Review* 86, no. 2 (Mar-Apr 2006): 62.
20. Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 283.

> The Planning Office shall be deployed to Iraq to form the nucleus of the administrative apparatus that will assist in administering Iraq for a limited period of time. This administrative apparatus will seek to involve the Iraqis themselves, initially in an advisory role, and to maximize contributions from other governments, non-government organizations, international organizations, and other members of the international community, as appropriate.[21]

The White House gave the Defense Department the responsibility for getting the new planning office up and running because the military would be providing the lion's share of resources needed to stabilize post-Saddam Iraq. Secretary Rumsfeld persuaded Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jay M. Garner, who had headed the Kurdish relief effort in northern Iraq after Operation Desert Storm a little over a decade earlier, to take charge of the newly created Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA).[22] ORHA assumed the ambitious array of responsibilities stipulated by National Security Presidential Directive 24, which included reestablishing essential services, protecting resources and infrastructure, and overseeing the creation of "reformed, civilian-controlled armed forces."[23]

DETERMINING WHOSE BOOTS WILL BE ON THE GROUND

The Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, produced an eerily prescient paper on the likely posthostilities environment in Iraq. It predicted that, once sizable numbers of U.S. troops departed, law and order would break down, owing to the rise of sectarian tensions fed by systemic economic problems. The sobering picture it painted did not match the administration's anticipated outcomes, as President Bush originally had campaigned on avoiding the lengthy nation-building entanglements that had characterized the Clinton presidency's peacekeeping struggles in Somalia and the Balkans.[24] Pentagon policymakers and ORHA representatives also

21. National Security Presidential Dir (NSPD) 24, George W. Bush, 20 Jan 2003, Iraq Post War Planning Office, https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nspd/nspd-24.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
22. Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 149; Robert Draper, *Dead Certain: The Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 198.
23. NSPD 24, Bush, 20 Jan 2003.
24. W. Andrew Terrill and Conrad C. Crane, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post Conflict Scenario* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 1 Feb 2003), https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/807, Hist Files, CMH.

shied away from the report's uncompromising analysis, gravitating toward the burden-sharing scenario proposed by CFLCC.[25] To lend more credibility, as well as official sanction, to the notion of recalling some Iraqi troops, the Department of Defense developed a draft concept calling for the dissolution of the Ba'th Party as well as those elements of the armed forces dedicated to maintaining internal security, but retaining the regular army.[26]

On 7 March 2003, thirteen days before President Bush would inform the world that coalition troops had attacked targets in Iraq, the Joint Staff had briefed Secretary Rumsfeld on "Reshaping the Iraqi Military," a brief which was based on a modified version of a 21 January presentation entitled "Rebuilding the Iraqi Military."[27] The original document had proposed preserving the regular army and some formations of the elite Republican Guard while disbanding elements of the armed forces and security apparatus dedicated to preserving Saddam's rule. The updated concept advocated having the regular army return to permanent garrisons upon the conclusion of hostilities, where it would turn in all weapons to U.S. troops before reconstituting as a purely defensive organization with no internal security responsibilities. Although some personnel from the Republican Guard would be allowed to transfer to the regular army, that organization would be eliminated along with other politically active Iraqi military and paramilitary units.[28]

The January briefing also estimated that rebuilding the Iraqi military would require an upfront investment totaling $1.5 to $2.5 billion.[29] The March presentation focused on cutting costs after Rumsfeld's office demonstrated some ambivalence toward the original expenditure estimates.[30] To shift more of the financial burden to a notional post-Saddam government, the Joint Staff briefers pushed into the future the transformation of the Iraqi Navy into a coastal patrol force, limited the air

25. Conrad C. Crane, *Cassandra in Oz: Counterinsurgency and Future War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 33–36.
26. Memo, Peter W. Rodman, Asst Sec Def, for Donald Rumsfeld, Sec Def, 24 May 2006, sub: Disbanding the Iraqi Army (hereinafter Rodman Memo), tab B, 1–3, http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/339/2006-05-24%20from%20Rodman%20re%20Disbanding%20the%20iraqi% 20Army%20.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
27. Rodman Memo, tabs A and C.
28. Rodman Memo, tab C, slide 6.
29. Bfg, Joint Staff, n.d., sub: Reshaping the Iraqi Military, slides 7, 11, 12, Lt. Col. William S. Story CFLCC Papers, CMH.
30. Memo, Donald Rumsfeld, Sec Def, for Gen. Tommy Franks, 28 Jan 2002, sub: Afghan National Army, attachment, 2–6, http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/436/To%20General%20Franks%20re%20Afghan%20National%20Army-%20Memo%20Attachment%2001-28-2002.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

force to a few short-range fighters, and permitted retention of some early warning and air defense assets.[31]

As the Joint Staff sought to reduce funding requirements, the White House began scrutinizing more closely the issue of removing senior supporters of the Iraqi dictator from positions of authority. On 10 March, the national security adviser's office presented suggested de-Ba'thification measures to senior cabinet officials and the president. The proposal suggested that 1 percent of the estimated 2 million Ba'th Party members—corresponding to the upper echelons of the party—should be dismissed. Central Intelligence Agency representatives agreed, noting that the policy needed to include Iraqi military units, Saddam loyalists in most ministries, and individuals working in political oversight agencies within the Iraqi government. Most attendees supported such an arrangement, but others wanted the figure to be much higher. Until senior U.S. leaders achieved some sort of consensus, the Bush administration would not make a formal announcement of its policy on de-Ba'thification.[32]

NO PLAN SURVIVES ENEMY CONTACT

By late February 2003, the United States had assembled both major components of its ground invasion force in Kuwait without interference from the Iraqis.[33] Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace's V Corps included the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), a brigade from the 1st Armored Division, a portion of the 82d Airborne Division including its headquarters and one maneuver brigade, and the bulk of the 101st Airborne Division. The second element consisted of Lt. Gen. James T. Conway's I Marine Expeditionary Force, a combined force composed of the 1st Marine Division, Britain's 1st Armoured Division, and the 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade (also known as Task Force Tarawa).[34]

At 0400 on 21 March, coalition ground troops surged across the sand berm separating Kuwait from Iraq. Anticipating that the coalition would mount several weeks of bombing attacks before starting the ground war, the

31. Rodman Memo, tab C, slides 13–18.
32. Feith, *War and Decision*, 427–31.
33. The only serious disruption resulted from the Pentagon reexamining the force flow in response to President George W. Bush's concerns about popular backlash against political leaders in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Spain for voicing their support of U.S. actions. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 319.
34. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, *Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War, 2003–2006* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, Jan 2019), 38.

Iraqis were surprised by the rapid advance of U.S. tanks and infantry fighting vehicles. Most Iraqi soldiers along the border fled as soon as they heard the engines of approaching armored vehicles. The first coalition units to encounter sustained resistance were British troops who, in conjunction with U.S. marines, wrested control of the Port of Umm Qaṣr and nearby bridges over the Shatt al Arab from the Iraqi Army's *51st Mechanized Division*.[35]

The start of the invasion sparked renewed interest in the fate of Saddam's military. By mid-April, CFLCC would record that its battlefield opponents had suffered 16,960 dead, wounded, and captured (out of more than 400,000 potential combatants), indicating that huge numbers of Iraqis were deserting rather than surrendering.[36] Vice President Richard B. Cheney recalled that some officials wanted to vet Iraqis thoroughly before dismissing them from government, whereas others favored stripping power from most if not all Ba'th Party members simply because they might undermine the posthostilities democratization process. After images of dead and wounded Americans began to appear on televised news programs, the prevailing sentiment shifted in favor of starting afresh rather than retaining some Ba'thists and a portion of the regular army.[37]

The National Security Council (NSC) settled the question. After receiving presidential approval on 27 March 2003, the NSC directed the disbandment of the Special Republican Guard, which formed Saddam's personal security unit; the Republican Guard; and all paramilitary units. The regular army would be downsized gradually through a combination of demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration efforts until only three to five infantry divisions remained.[38] Although the NSC directive did not single out the air force, naval, and air defense units for immediate attention, it signaled the White House's intention to eliminate 80 to 90 percent of Saddam's uniformed military.[39] The Defense Department did not object because the regular army's incremental demobilization facilitated its wishes to avoid a substantial posthostilities commitment. At the same time, the dissolution of the Special

35. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 85.
36. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Saddam's forces suffered 3,160 killed and 13,800 captured by mid-April. Sharon Otterman, "IRAQ: Iraq's Prewar Military Capabilities," Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder, 3 Feb 2005, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/iraq-iraqs-prewar-military-capabilities, Hist Files, CMH.
37. Timothy Andrews Sayle et al., *The Last Card, Inside George W. Bush's Decision to Surge in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), 27.
38. Andrew Rathmell et al., *Developing Iraq's Security Sector: The Coalition Provisional Authority's Experience* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), 10.
39. The range in percentages reflects the fact that posthostilities downsizing would shrink twenty-five regular, Republican Guard, and Special Republican Guard divisions or division equivalents down to three to five infantry divisions.

Republican Guard and Republican Guard, along with paramilitary units, fulfilled the State Department's desire to expunge Ba'thist influence as a precursor to Iraq's democratization.

The NSC guidance proved ill-timed given the immediate demands of ongoing combat operations. Distracted by paramilitary attacks on lines of communications and bad weather, CENTCOM and CFLCC remained focused on the current fight rather than transitioning to a posthostilities occupation. Every staff officer reoriented toward the latter task meant one less overseeing the war. Although CFLCC initiated work in late March on an updated posthostilities plan entitled Eclipse II, that effort crept along at a snail's pace before the capture of Baghdād and did not produce a complete initial draft until 22 April 2003.[40]

General Garner recognized the ground invasion's impact on priorities. "A lot of focus was not so much on what I was doing," he later remembered, "but more on what Tommy Franks was doing, and probably rightfully so."[41] Garner, who had the time to analyze the latest White House offering, provided his subordinates with a distillation of the NSC guidance on 2 April:

> Given the historical role of the Army in Iraqi society, the reformation of the military is a key aspect of achieving the End-state. The military must embrace change, principally a recognition that its role is to support, not dominate, the civil authority; it must become apolitical. Organizational change restructuring and re-equipping will be a relatively straightforward process, but it must be underpinned, from the outset, by a significant adjustment in Iraqi military ethos. Of critical importance to the generation of a new ethos is the creation of a professional and representative military leadership that recognizes and accepts its role in safeguarding civil society. Minimizing the psychological and physical gap between the surrender of the Iraqi Armed Forces and the beginning of [the] reformation process is of central importance.[42]

40. Donald P. Wright and Col. Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign, The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom, May 2003–January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 72–76.
41. Interv, PBS *Frontline* with Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jay Garner, 11 Aug 2006, "The Lost Year in Iraq," http://www-tcpbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/interviews/garner.html, Hist Files, CMH.
42. Plan, Jay Garner, Ofc of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), 3 Apr 2003, A Unified Mission Plan for Post-Hostilities Iraq, draft ver. 2, PBS *Frontline*, http://www-tcpbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/documents/orha.html, Hist Files, CMH.

As American spearheads managed to press on despite sandstorms and opposition from irregular fighters, the NSC directive likewise gained bureaucratic momentum within Washington circles. Having adopted a firmer approach to administering Iraq after Saddam's downfall, the White House approved the creation of another new agency, which was charged with implementing the NSC directive. Only three months earlier, ORHA had been designed to work alongside the post-Saddam Iraqi bureaucracy, but the NSC approach required a more powerful entity capable of reshaping Iraq into a democracy within two years. Although some believed ORHA could be folded into the new group, others were less sure about Garner and his subordinates welcoming a far broader and substantially different mandate.[43]

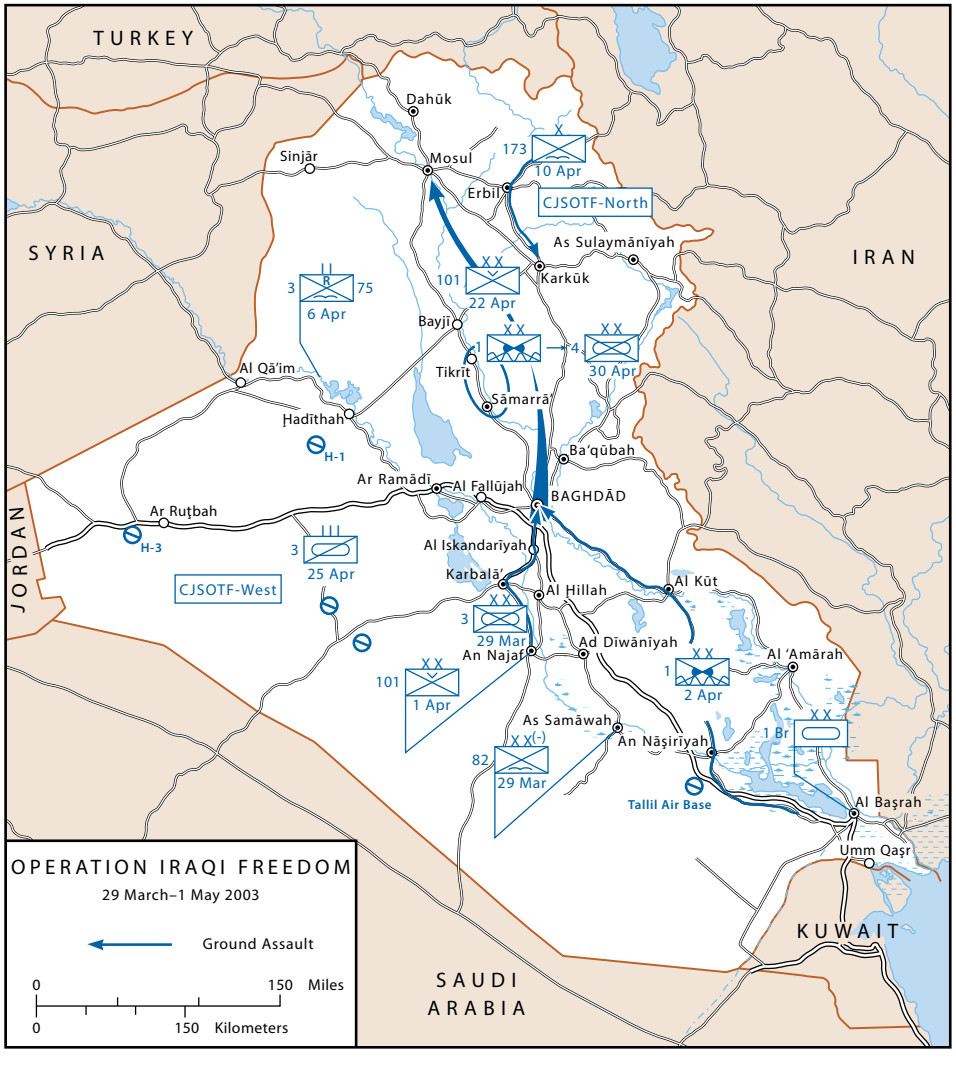
The new agency, which would become known as the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), would have even less time to figure out how to perform its mission than the three months allotted to ORHA. In fact, the White House, Department of State, and Pentagon still had not agreed upon whether the CPA would supplant or absorb Garner's organization. Nor, for that matter, had the relationship between the CPA and the Iraqis been ironed out, nor how the CPA would work with the coalition military headquarters in Iraq.

Events on the battlefield, rather than in the halls of Washington, D.C., accelerated the need to merge the military and diplomatic aspects of the impending American occupation of Iraq. The appearance of Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles in the western outskirts of Baghdād on 4 April 2003 triggered panic and despondency among Saddam's most ardent supporters. On 9 April, U.S. forces helped Iraqi civilians topple the massive statue of the dictator in Al Firdos square, symbolizing the end of Ba'thist rule (*Map 1.1*).

The Iraqi nation's near-term fate now rested in the hands of L. Paul Bremer III, former U.S. Ambassador at Large for Counterterrorism, who had retired from government service in 1989. Irve L. "Scooter" Libby, Vice President Cheney's chief of staff, and Paul D. Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defense, offered Bremer the job after explaining that the White House wanted someone with more diplomatic experience than Garner possessed.[44] That rationale reflected the shift in priorities from the Department of Defense's preference for a brief occupation involving as few military units as possible to a course of action reflecting many of the proposals contained in

43. The looting and violence that spread following Saddam's ouster also cast doubts on ORHA's original mandate. Bush, *Decision Points*, 257; Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 502–3; Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown, 2011), 211.

44. L. Paul Bremer with Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2006), 6–7.



Map 1.1

the Department of State's Future of Iraq Project. As a result, the White House opted to create the CPA—a completely new and much larger agency (with 2,000 to 3,000 personnel) that would maintain a direct link to the national command authorities—rather than stick with Garner's 200-person ORHA staff, which operated in support of CFLCC.[45]

During the second week of April, Bremer agreed to assume the complementary but separate responsibilities of both the leader of the CPA and the U.S. presidential envoy charged with overseeing the occupation

45. Interv, Terry Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Gordon W. Rudd, former Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) historian, 9 Jun 2006, 9, OLE.

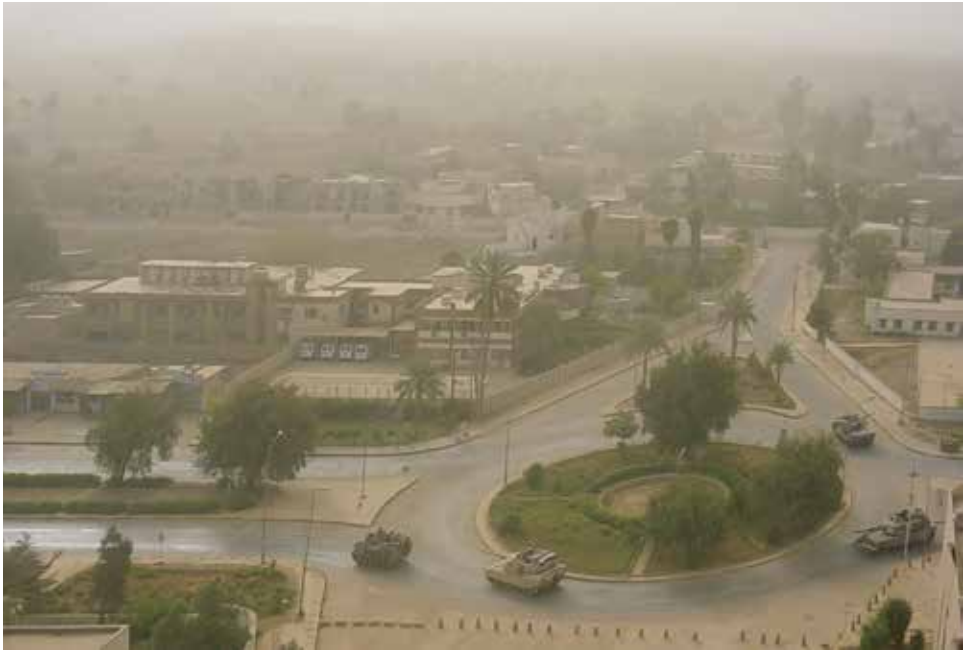


V Corps' Capt. Tom R. Bryant battles his way through a sandstorm during a fuel stop, as the corps command post and the units under its command travel toward Baghdād, 25 March 2003. (*U.S. Army*)

of Iraq. The origins of Bremer's appointment are mired in ex post facto controversy, as noted by journalist Robert Draper: "Rumsfeld told Bremer that he was Bush's handpicked envoy to Iraq. Bush later told Jay Garner that it was Rumsfeld who had picked Garner's replacement. Rumsfeld would insist to *Washington Post* journalist Bob Woodward that former Secretary of State George P. Schultz had offered up Bremer's name, while Schultz would assert to Woodward that this was not so."[46]

The original plan, however, continued to unfold even as developments in the United States were setting the stage for a significant change in American policy. On 15 April, General McKiernan announced that the ground invasion had entered the posthostilities phase.[47] McKiernan chose a suitable site at Saddam International Airport where ORHA and CFLCC could colocate. The following day, he notified Garner that "it's time to come to Baghdad."[48] McKiernan took special care to squelch speculation that ORHA would

46. Draper, *Dead Certain*, 199.
47. Email, Sec Staff Col. Edelman to CFLCC-CMD-GRP staff sections, 15 Apr 2003, sub: CFLCC Update, 15 April 2003, Story CFLCC Papers, CMH.
48. Email, Sec Staff Col. Edelman to CFLCC-CMD-GRP staff sections, 16 Apr 2003, sub: CFLCC Update, 16 April 2003, Story CFLCC Papers, CMH.



M1A2 Abrams main battle tanks from the 2d Battalion, 70th Armored Regiment, of the 1st Armored Division, make their way through a traffic circle in Al Ḩillah. (*U.S. Army*)

answer to CFLCC following its arrival from Kuwait. He explained that the relationship between the two organizations would evolve over time until they grew to become more like coequals responsible for different aspects of reconstruction.

At this point, discussion about revising ORHA's original intentions belatedly made its way into military channels. During a video teleconference on 17 April, Lt. Gen. John P. Abizaid, Franks's deputy commander, informed participants that the entire Iraqi Army had collapsed following the U.S. ground invasion. When attendees were solicited for their views on whether to recall the Iraqi Army or build a new force, Abizaid expressed support for the latter. His response validated recent guidance from the NSC, but it would take some time for that viewpoint to trickle down to CFLCC.[49] Neither Abizaid nor McKiernan realized that the White House's decision to create the CPA would render ORHA's original agenda moot.[50]

Although the CPA had been created to replace Garner's organization, ORHA had no choice but to continue operating as if its original mandate

49. L. Paul Bremer III, "How I Did Not Dismantle Iraq's Army," *New York Times*, 6 Sep 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/06/opinion/06bremer.html, Hist Files, CMH.
50. Franks, *American Soldier*, 531–32.

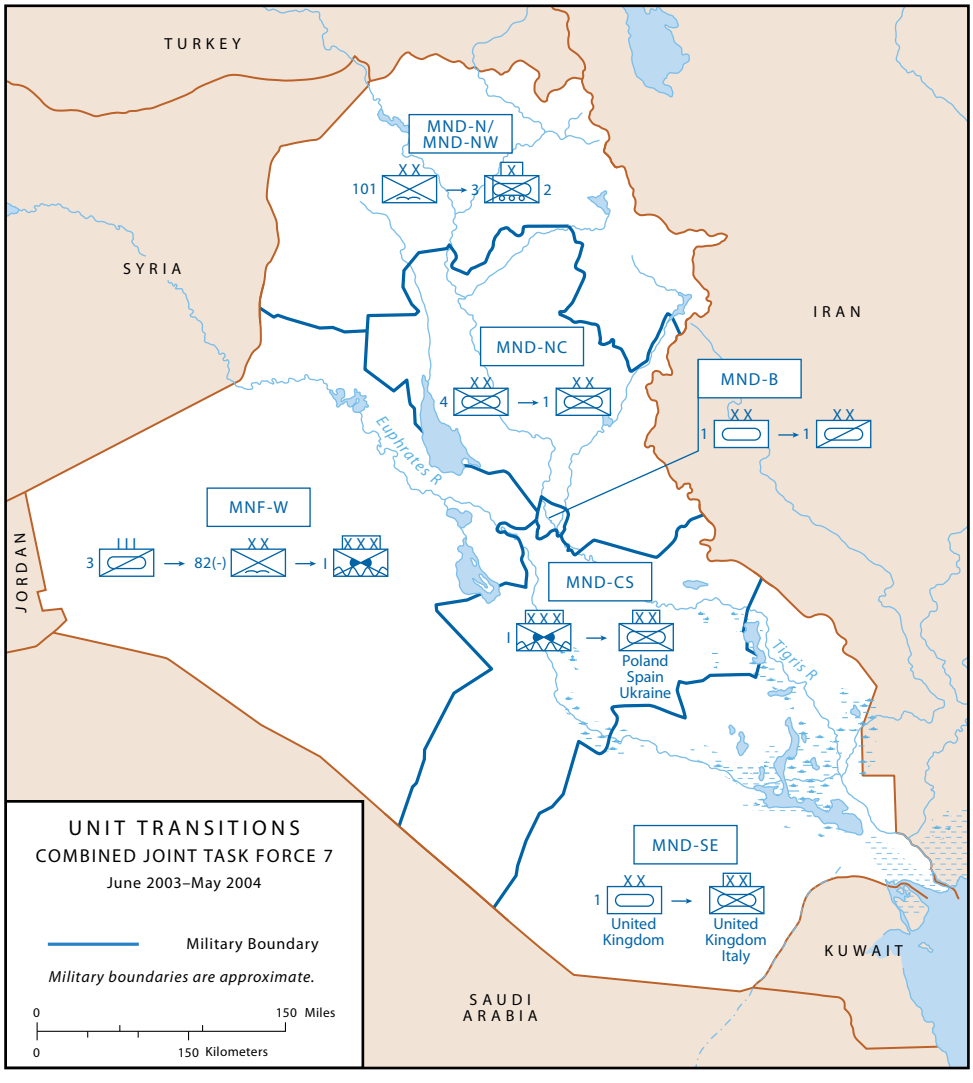
remained in force. Garner's staff departed from Kuwait, arriving at the Iraqi capital on 21 April.[51] En route to Baghdād, Garner noticed that the Iraqi Army and police, along with vast numbers of government officials, had deserted their posts. Looters, disaffected elements, and local tribal leaders were settling old scores, stealing everything not nailed down, and jockeying to gain more influence. With the entire country in disarray, Garner set about meeting with Iraqi notables to determine what critical actions to take. Within forty-eight hours of Garner's arrival, CFLCC issued a proclamation encouraging the Iraqi people to return to work and reminding them that only the coalition could reappoint people to various civil service positions.[52]

In addition to helping ORHA settle in, CFLCC prepared to turn over the postconflict administration of Iraq to a follow-on military headquarters. The personnel who planned out the posthostilities phase would not be staying behind to work with their replacements. Those individuals started departing for the United States soon after CENTCOM redesignated CFLCC as Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) on 1 May.[53] The outgoing staff turned over office space, files, and plans to the V Corps rear headquarters as it arrived in Baghdād (*Map 1.2*).

As the incoming and outgoing staffs were immersed in a multiweek transition period that normally accompanied a formal handover of responsibilities, efforts to revive the Iraqi Army gained impetus. Indications that the recall effort might experience a major shift in emphasis emerged after word of the NSC guidance percolated through the CENTCOM chain of command in early May. On 9 May, General Abizaid formally tasked CJTF-7 with developing a concept for the New Iraqi Corps, which would consist of three infantry divisions.[54]

ORHA barely had settled down in Baghdād before it experienced a similar upheaval. Secretary Rumsfeld had informed Garner in late April that Ambassador Bremer would be taking charge of posthostilities reconstruction.[55] Rather than immediately assume his new post, Bremer had spent three weeks in meetings absorbing the latest White House thoughts on Iraq. While Bremer used that period to acquire as much information

51. Kenneth Katzman, *Iraq: U.S. Regime Change Efforts and Post-Saddam Governance*, RL31339 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 18 Nov 2003), 22, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA474703, Hist Files, CMH.
52. Email, Sec Staff Col. Edelman to CFLCC-CMD-GRP staff sections, 23 Apr 2003, sub: CFLCC Update, 23 Apr 2003, Story CFLCC Papers, CMH.
53. Ricardo S. Sanchez with Donald T. Phillips, *Wiser in Battle: A Soldier's Story* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 180.
54. Email, Sec Staff Col. Edelman to CFLCC-CMD-GRP staff sections, 9 May 2003, sub: CJTF-7 Update, 9 May 2003, Story CFLCC Papers, CMH.
55. Interv, PBS *Frontline* with Garner, 11 Aug 2006.



Map 1.2

as possible about his new job, the Pentagon and State Department remained busy recruiting his staff. Bremer could not count on inheriting Garner's organization intact because ORHA had been formed with a far different mission in mind. During that same period, he gained a measure of independence from the Defense Department by persuading Bush to appoint him on 9 May as a presidential envoy with full authority over all U.S. government personnel, activities, and funds related to the Iraq occupation.[56]

56. Bush, *Decision Points*, 258; Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 15.

This represented a major shift from Washington officialdom's previous view of ORHA as primarily an extension of the Office of the Secretary of Defense.[57]

Bremer's sudden emergence injected an unknown factor into the equation just as posthostilities efforts got underway. Before departing Washington, Bremer updated the Pentagon on how he intended to reshape the Iraqi military. The ambassador's defense adviser, Walter B. Slocombe, provided Rumsfeld's policy chief, Douglas J. Feith, with a draft of the proposed order.[58] The memorandum mirrored NSC thought by calling for the dissolution of Saddam-affiliated military organizations and paramilitary organizations, but not the regular army, air force, navy, or air defense command. The proposal took NSC guidance one step further, however, by suspending pension payments to personnel in dissolved organizations.[59]



Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III (*Robert R. Ward, U.S. Department of Defense*)

WITH THE STROKE OF A PEN

On 10 May, Ambassador Bremer arrived in Kuwait, where Garner agreed to brief him before the CPA chief headed north to Baghdād. Bremer later recalled, "I wanted a smooth transition between ORHA and the new Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). . . . So Sunday night, over lamb and stuffed grapes, I had emphasized how eager I was to have him aboard. Nonetheless, I was acutely aware of the fact that I was indeed replacing him, not for his management failings, but because the president and Rumsfeld

57. Interv, Beckenbaugh with Rudd, 9 Jun 2006, 11.
58. Memo, Paul Bremer for Jim Haynes, 10 May 2003, sub: Proclamation on Dissolved Institutions, PBS *Frontline*, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/documents/bremermemo.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
59. Feith, *War and Decision*, 428–29.

wanted someone with more political experience in charge."[60] Bremer left Kuwait aboard a C–130 transport bound for Baghdād on the following day, leaving Garner behind to make his own way back to the Iraqi capital.[61]

During his stopover in Kuwait, Bremer had pondered the best method to show Iraqis that the days of Saddam Hussein were over. He decided to reinforce de-Ba'thification, which already had been mandated by the White House, by dissolving all institutions and organizations that the former dictator relied on for support. Eliminating the Ba'th Party as well as all Saddam-era institutions would not only demonstrate his power to Iraqis but also reaffirm his status as a presidential envoy. With a draft de-Ba'thification edict already in hand, the ambassador dispatched the outline of a follow-on order dissolving existing government entities in Iraq to the Defense Department's General Counsel. Bremer intimated that rapid feedback from the counsel would be appreciated because he wanted to issue both decrees within days of assuming his new responsibilities.[62] He departed for Baghdād without receiving a dissenting opinion from the Pentagon.

Following the Defense Department's 13 May announcement that the CPA would supersede ORHA, Bremer initiated his strategy by issuing CPA Order No. 1 dissolving the Ba'th Party of Iraq on 16 May.[63] Garner later recounted that he had expressed dismay over the breadth of the decree, only to have Ambassador Bremer reply, "I understand what you're saying. I understand that's your opinion, but I have my directions. I have directions [to execute] these orders."[64] Shortly afterward, Bremer informed the White House that he would "parallel [de-Ba'thification] with an even more robust measure dissolving Saddam's military and intelligence structures to emphasize that we mean business."[65]

The draft order dissolving Saddam-era institutions, which would become CPA Order No. 2, began circulating among Bremer's staff for comment within twenty-four hours of the proclamation that the Ba'th Party had been dissolved. The document held few surprises, given that it mirrored not only the memo passed to the Pentagon earlier but also the Joint Staff

60. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 15.
61. Interv, Beckenbaugh with Rudd, 9 Jun 2006, 14.
62. Memo, Bremer for Haynes, 10 May 2003, sub: Proclamation on Dissolved Institutions.
63. Secretary Donald Rumsfeld formally designated L. Paul Bremer III as Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) chief on 13 May 2003. L. Elaine Halchin, *The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA): Origin, Characteristics, and Institutional Authorities*, RL32370 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 6 Jun 2005), 3, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA458968, Hist Files, CMH.
64. Interv, PBS *Frontline* with Garner, 11 Aug 2006.
65. "US Row over Iraq Army Dismantling," BBC News, 4 Sep 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6977642.stm, Hist Files, CMH.

briefing from 7 March and the NSC's guidance promulgated later that same month.[66] Slocombe then provided the ambassador with a second draft that incorporated comments from Garner as well as from senior members of the CPA, noting that McKiernan also had discussed it but had not provided formal comment.[67]

At some point over the next several days, Bremer added the "Army, Air Force, Navy, the Air Defense Force, and other regular military services" to the original list of entities to be dissolved.[68] In his memoir, Bremer states that he informed the president of this addition via video teleconference on 22 May, after receiving Rumsfeld's permission to proceed.[69] It is not known if the discussion included a review of the last-minute change, but as one journalist pointed out, "no one—[National Security Advisor Condoleezza] Rice, [Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen J.] Hadley, Cheney, Rumsfeld, or [Secretary of State Colin] Powell—contacted the president and said, *Maybe we should consider calling the Iraqi soldiers back*."[70]

The unanticipated policy change provoked mixed reactions within the Pentagon, prompting one official to observe that "Bremer's decision to dissolve the Iraqi Army rendered irrelevant Garner's plan for restructuring it."[71] General Garner later recalled, "We had a large number of Iraqi army located that were ready to come back, and the Treasury guys were ready to pay them. When the order came out to disband, [it] shocked me, because I didn't know we were going to do that. All along I thought we were bringing back the Iraqi army. . . . Why we didn't do that, I don't know."[72]

General Wallace's staff learned of CPA Order No. 2 during an interagency conference on recalling the Iraqi Army. After hearing the news, the V Corps commanding general remarked, "I guess there isn't any reason for us to have this meeting."[73] Then he left the room. The unexpected development provided McKiernan with a powerful incentive to consider unilaterally

66. Memo, Walter Slocombe for Coalition Provisional Administrator, 17 May 2003, sub: Recommendations Concerning Dissolution of Entities and Payment Policies, Tab A, http://www-tcpbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/documents/Slocombe.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
67. Memo, Slocombe for Coalition Provisional Administrator, 17 May 2003, sub: Recommendations Concerning Dissolution of Entities and Payment Policies, Tab A.
68. Rodman Memo, tabs E and F.
69. The authors of a RAND Corporation study of the CPA present an extensive argument in favor of Bremer's decision to include regular military units in CPA Order No. 2. James Dobbins et al., *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 52–58.
70. Draper, *Dead Certain*, 211–12.
71. Feith, *War and Decision*, 434.
72. Interv, PBS *Frontline* with Garner, 11 Aug 2006.
73. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, CMH, with Col. (Ret.) Edmund J. Degen, former V Corps plans ofcr, 21 Jan 2018, Hist Files, CMH.

sponsoring a post-Saddam military force. Preinvasion plans had postulated that Iraqi forces would be able to assume some internal security functions from coalition troops. When that development had not materialized, CFLCC had performed that mission without assistance from the handful of Saddam-era Iraqi Army divisions it had contemplated retaining. Committing troop contingents from allied nations would not make up for the lack of Iraqi troops, in large part because of their limited numbers and caveats placed on what missions they could perform.

The unexpected announcement also proved disruptive in unanticipated ways. Traditionally, there had been few employment alternatives to military service for many young men in Iraq. In addition to terminating current military employment, the CPA also suspended retirement pay and other types of compensation until its staff could investigate the past service of recipients for irregularities.[74] Over the next several weeks, the vanquished Iraqi Army coalesced into the most visible group opposed to the new CPA policies.[75] The CPA announced on 23 June that pensions would be paid to career soldiers, ex–Ministry of Defense employees, military cadets, and the families of soldiers listed as captive or missing from the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, but that move created as much ill will as it did satisfaction by limiting payment sites to nine locations.[76] Although the CPA eventually authorized 159 banks to disburse stipends, that process consumed time and effort that occupation authorities could ill afford in the face of building resentment among unemployed Iraqi military personnel.[77]

Bremer clearly achieved the shock value that he sought, but the Ba'th Party's unilateral elimination and wholesale dissolution of entities transformed what had been a military demobilization and recall effort into a much larger project of building government institutions and security forces from scratch—a task far beyond the capability of the U.S. military's occupation force in Iraq. The cost of implementing such an exponentially expanded mission, which affected the police just as dramatically as it did

74. The order suspended compensation and pensions for 11,000 generals and 14,000 colonels. See Foreign Press Center Bfg, U.S. Dept. Def (DoD), 17 Sep 2003, sub: Status of Rebuilding and Retraining the Iraqi Army, http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=3164, Hist Files, CMH.

75. Nassar Al-Nahr and Asharq Al-Awsat, "Iraqi Ex-Soldiers to Be Paid Salaries," *Arab News*, 24 Jun 2003, http://www.arabnews.com/category/tags/iraq; Arthur Max, "US Troops Wound 2 Iraqis During Protest," *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, 17 Jun 2003, https://www.theintelligencer.com/news/article/U-S-Troops-Wound-2-Iraqis-During-Protest-10551109.php; both in Hist Files, CMH.

76. Bensahel et al., *After Saddam*, 140.

77. Bruce MacQuarrie, "US Stipend Seen as Paying Little Respect to Former Iraqi Soldiers," *Boston Globe*, 17 Jul 2003, https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/443068670/, Hist Files, CMH.

the Iraqi military, demanded an immediate infusion of resources and personnel to avoid losing considerable momentum from the onset. However, congressional oversight procedures governing the training and equipping of foreign forces, embedded in law in the wake of the Vietnam conflict, prevented the Department of Defense from reacting decisively when the situation required speedier action.

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

When Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez assumed command of CJTF-7 from General McKiernan on 14 June, he inherited the responsibilities of his predecessor, but not the resources.[78] There had been considerable turnover already, with I Marine Expeditionary Force and the V Corps main headquarters departing Iraq along with the 3d Infantry Division and the 1st Marine Division. Secretary Rumsfeld also had canceled the 1st Cavalry Division's pending deployment to Iraq. In return, CJTF-7 had received the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), some coalition units, and the remainder of the 82d Airborne Division. The subsequent arrival of a U.S. Stryker-equipped brigade also increased the number of forces on the ground, but this did not redress the disparity between needs and available resources.

CFLCC planners had calculated that a minimum of twenty brigades (125,000 combat troops) would be required to secure Iraq's estimated population of 25.5 million. They nominally assigned the bulk of these units to major cities, with six brigades tabbed for Baghdād, three in Arbīl Province, two for Al Başrah, and one in Mosul. The remaining eight were divided up between Tikrīt, An Najaf, Karbalā', Al Anbār, Nīnawā, Dhī Qār, As Sulaymānīyah, and other key areas. In addition to protecting population centers, oil fields, and border crossings, coalition forces had the mission of preventing sectarian violence, which CFLCC planners had described as "score settling."[79] However, the twenty-brigade planning figure had not envisioned the emergence of a full-blown insurgency, which would drive up

78. Maj. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez turned over command of the 1st Armored Division to accept the new position and promotion to three-star rank. Jon R. Anderson, "Sanchez Tapped to Replace Wallace as V Corps Commander," *Stars and Stripes*, 6 May 2003, https://www.stripes.com/news/sanchez-tapped-to-replace-wallace-as-v-corps-commander-1.5205, Hist Files, CMH.
79. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 74.

troop requirements even higher. Making matters worse, the changeover had left CJTF-7 with just fifteen brigades, some of which were understrength.[80]

The challenges now facing General Sanchez included something else that CFLCC had not planned for: rebuilding the Iraqi military from scratch. In anticipation of recalling three to five Iraqi regular divisions, the outgoing V Corps staff had surveyed billeting areas, armories, ammunition storage areas, vehicle parks, and equipment warehouses under coalition control. The deficiencies highlighted by that effort far outweighed the bright spots. Although Iraq had acquired vast stocks of equipment over the past four decades, most of it had been expended in past wars, deteriorated through lack of maintenance and spare parts, or destroyed by coalition forces. Numerous prewar bases were vandalized beyond use, command and control facilities had been bombed, and the Ministry of Defense had been ransacked.[81]

The fact that Americans had just defeated Iraq, coupled with the profound differences between Arab and Western concepts of military professionalism, required a degree of patience and empathy that CJTF-7 could not afford. Inadvertent missteps stemming from cultural ignorance did not help matters. The working title for the revived Iraqi military—New Iraqi Corps—turned into a major embarrassment because the acronym "NIC" sounded like an Arabic expletive.[82] It took several weeks for CENTCOM and CJTF-7 to discover the problem, which they corrected by changing the name to New Iraqi Army (NIA).

Rather than draw personnel from his already inadequate troop strength to build the post-Saddam Iraqi military, General Sanchez bluntly informed his superiors that, "if CJTF-7 is told to stand up the NIC, it will be at the cost of security as the NIC mission will require significant amounts of combat power now being applied to the security mission."[83] Fortunately for Sanchez, the NSC guidance promulgated in late March had spurred the Department of Defense to hire RONCO Consulting Corporation on 22 April 2003 to provide "technical assistance, analytical support, systems integration, and program management to assist in the planning for the disarmament,

80. The 2d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, and the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, required augmentation from outside sources because they did not have their full complements, leaving Combined Joint Task Force 7 with fourteen full-strength brigade equivalents. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 607–15.

81. Email, Sec Staff Col. Edelman to CFLCC-CMD-GRP staff sections, 8 Jun 2003, sub: CJTF-7 Update, 8 June 2003, Story CFLCC Papers, CMH.

82. Scott Peterson, "US Decides to Pay Iraqi Soldiers and Form New Army," *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 Jun 2003, https://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0624/p01s04-woiq.html, Hist Files, CMH.

83. Email, Sec Staff Col. Edelman to CFLCC-CMD-GRP staff sections, 13 May 2003, sub: CJTF-7 Update, 13 May 2003, Story CFLCC Papers, CMH.

demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of the Iraqi Armed forces, and national and regional militias."[84]

CPA Order No. 2 required significant modification to the original contract proposal. With the disbandment of the Iraqi Army now a fait accompli, the contract changed from overseeing a deliberate demobilization effort to training and equipping a brand-new force. Because of the mission shift, RONCO dropped out entirely as the modified contract had to be open to new bidders. In early June, the U.S. Army's Southern Region Contracting Activity advertised a solicitation packet inviting bids for the expanded task.[85] It emphasized the urgency of the task: "The training program is to commence within six days of contract execution at a Garrison Training Center located in central Iraq."[86] The Department of Defense awarded the NIA training contract on 25 June to Vinnell Corporation, which had submitted a $48 million bid.[87] The subsidiary of Northrop Grumman had twenty-eight years of experience training and equipping the Saudi Arabian National Guard.[88] Vinnell's insight proved invaluable, at least from an administrative perspective, given the solicitation's aggressive milestones. Rather than create a training team from scratch, Vinnell assembled a group of subcontractors drawn from Military Professional Resources International, Eagle Group International Corporations, Science Applications International Corporation, Omega Training Group, and Worldwide Language Resources Incorporated.[89]

The subcontractors included the supervisors, recruiters, personnel records specialists, psychologists, physicians, drill instructors, site security personnel, and interpreters needed to conduct the actual training.[90] Although Vinnell assembled a team with generic skills within the specified timeline, the program's accelerated pace did not permit modifying the training curriculum to accommodate unique aspects of Iraqi culture. As a result, civilian trainers would encounter considerable friction until mutual experience surmounted professional, educational, and societal differences. Fortunately for Vinnell, the Pentagon solicitation required NIA units to

84. Contract DASW01-03-P-0366, between DoD and RONCO Consulting Corporation, 22 Apr 2003, sub: ORHA, Iraqi Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Program, Hist Files, CMH.
85. Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, Army Contracting Agency Southern Region Contracting Center, 9 Jun 2003, sub: Training in Support of New Iraqi Army, http://projects.publicintegrity.org/docs/wow/Vinnell.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
86. Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, 9 Jun 2003, sec. C.
87. Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, 9 Jun 2003, encl 3.
88. Ian Urbina, "Saudi Arabia: Vinnell and the House of Saud," *Asia Times*, 17 May 2003, https://corpwatch.org/article/saudi-arabia-vinnell-and-house-saud, Hist Files, CMH.
89. Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, 9 Jun 2003.
90. Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, 9 Jun 2003, sec. C.

learn a limited number of tasks, including fixed-site and convoy protection, patrolling, and other security-related missions, rather than the full gamut of infantry skills.[91]

In addition to contracted trainers, the Department of Defense had put together the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) to oversee the NIA's development. The Army had assigned Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton, who had been the commanding general of the U.S. Army Infantry Center and School at Fort Benning, Georgia, to run the new organization.[92] He had arrived in Baghdād on 13 June after hitching a ride aboard a 101st Airborne Division UH–60 helicopter bound from Kuwait to Mosul.[93] He soon learned that his new command consisted of only five individuals: Col. Roland J. Tiso Jr. and four other soldiers. The following day, Eaton sat down with Tiso to begin turning the post-Saddam Iraqi Army into a reality.[94]

New members of the CMATT staff had trickled in beginning on 20 June, but the additional personnel did not resolve a glaring problem noted by Eaton as he had prepared to carry out his new mission. "My chain of command rose up from me through the senior U.S. advisor for security and defense, Walter Slocombe, through ambassador to Iraq [*sic*] L. Paul Bremer to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld," he observed. "The chain of command left me with no four-star general who could interact directly with the Pentagon for me or run interference at the top."[95] Eaton, a two-star general, thus found himself working with the Pentagon bureaucracy on issues that normally had the backing of more senior general officers.

On 26 June, CPA staff met with Eaton to outline their expectations and solicit his views. Draft plans for the NIA reflected a hurried effort to implement NSC guidance rather than a deliberate assessment of security needs. Bremer's staff envisioned fielding three divisions, each consisting of nine motorized infantry battalions, over a thirty-six-month period. Although Eaton and CPA representatives discussed in some detail the composition and armament of the motorized battalions, the blueprint made no provision

91. Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, 9 Jun 2003, secs. C.4.3, C.4.4, C.4.5, C.4.6, C.4.7.
92. Patrecia S. Hollis, "Indirect Fires First: The American Way of War, An Interview with Major General Paul D. Eaton," *Infantry Magazine* 92, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 39–41, https://www.moore.army.mil/infantry/magazine/issues/2003/FALL/pdfs/FALL2003.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
93. Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton received the news on 11 May, one day after Bremer sent his memo from Kuwait to the Defense Department's General Counsel. Michael Zacchea and Ted Kemp, *The Ragged Edge: A US Marine's Account of Leading the Iraqi Army Fifth Battalion* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2017), ix–xi.
94. *Planning and Conduct of the War in Iraq Oversight Hearing Before the Senate Democratic Policy Committee*, 109th Cong. (25 Sep 2006), 8–9, https://www.c-span.org/video/?194439-1/planning-conduct-iraq-war, Hist Files, CMH.
95. Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, x.

for basic weapons such as mortars, antitank missiles, artillery, and armored vehicles.[96] Just as worrisome, the CPA focused solely on producing tactical units to the exclusion of ministerial oversight, logistical support, installation management, and professional education—all of which are necessary to a fully functioning military.

Eaton did not hesitate to point out these shortcomings when he discussed the initiative with Bremer and Sanchez. In addition to the Iraqi infantry battalions lacking heavier weapons, he explained, they also were training to conduct only a limited range of tasks, such as patrolling, demining, and providing security. Budget limitations precluded the near-term acquisition of body armor, radios, crew-served weapons, and logistical items, forcing Iraqi units to rely on coalition handouts. To compensate, Sanchez agreed to attach NIA battalions to CJTF-7 units upon completion of their training.[97] The compromise provided the Iraqis with support from American tanks, artillery, and logistics, albeit only when U.S. commanders could spare it.

Eaton emphasized the need to furnish the government support promised to Vinnell as soon as possible. This included living accommodations, firing ranges, classrooms, and designated areas suitable for field training exercises.[98] Armed with the list of Saddam-era installations compiled by CFLCC, General Eaton used a borrowed helicopter to survey potential facilities. An abandoned military base near Kir Kush, located 19.3 kilometers from the Iran-Iraq border, was the most promising candidate.[99] Although some roads and structures were intact, the partially completed facility lacked water, sewage, and electricity. Working through CPA contracting officers, Eaton hired an Iraqi construction firm, with oversight provided by the 937th Engineer Group, to renovate the base.[100]

Once efforts to refurbish the newly acquired installation in Kir Kush were underway, CMATT turned its attention toward recruiting and processing volunteers for the NIA. The initial effort focused on filling nine motorized battalions, each with 1,000 soldiers, over the upcoming year. Contractors

96. Each battalion theoretically consisted of one 125-strong headquarters company organized with maintenance, transportation, medical, signal, support, and administrative platoons, plus four 154-strong rifle companies organized with a headquarters platoon, three infantry platoons, and a machine-gun platoon.

97. CPA Bfg, 26 Jun 2003, sub: New Iraqi Army (NIA) Coordination Meeting, IFCS-51-0027 Folder, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.

98. Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, 9 Jun 2003, sec. C.

99. Interv, Gordon Rudd, CPA historian, with Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton, Cmdg Gen, Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team (CMATT), 1 Jan 2004, 6, Hist Files, CMH.

100. Spc. Nate Jastrzemski, "West Point Grad Helps Rebuild Iraq," United States Military Academy Public Affairs Office, 12 Dec 2003, https://www.usma.edu/about/public-affairs/2003-press-releases, Hist Files, CMH.

supported by CJTF-7 personnel would recruit enlistees at a few preselected sites in Baghdād, Al Başrah, and Mosul to meet the CPA-mandated goals of proportional ethnic representation. The recruiters solicited information on previous military service from the enlistees in order to identify those with leadership potential.[101]

Eaton intended to begin training the first NIA division on 15 July with a pilot course for sixty personnel and finish up with the ninth battalion's graduation on 3 June 2004. However, the first contingent of Vinnell trainers would not arrive until after 4 July 2003, which would set back the start of training to early August.[102] All recruits, regardless of future assignment and rank, would attend a seven-day introductory and inprocessing session known as "zero week." Recruits then would split into separate groups to attend five weeks of basic infantry or leadership courses, before being brought back together for three weeks of platoon- and company-level instruction.[103] A quarter of the battalion's enlisted strength would attend maintenance, supply, medical, and administrative training in lieu of platoon- and company-level instruction.[104]

The quest for speed of execution obscured a multitude of unobtrusive issues, some of which CMATT discovered early in the program, while others remained undetected until a crisis arose. Unlike the all-volunteer army concept successfully implemented by the United States after the Vietnam conflict ended, a vast gulf between institutional and personal expectations existed within the post-Saddam Iraqi military. The U.S. Army version of voluntary enlistment rested on a solid foundation of mutually understood and legally binding obligations. Iraqi recruits, in contrast, had no contractual commitment and thus had the freedom to leave military service without fear of punishment whenever they chose to do so. CMATT could not rectify the problem without help from the CPA, which faced innumerable other concerns that received a higher priority for its limited attention and resources.

On 2 July, Eaton furnished General Sanchez with an update on the CPA's intentions and goals.[105] Although Eaton, as the director of CMATT, did not work for Sanchez, he endeavored to keep CJTF-7 informed in order to

101. CPA Bfg, Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton, 21 Jan 2004, sub: with Rebuilding Iraqi Forces, 1, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2004/01/mil-040121-dod01.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
102. Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, xii.
103. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 436.
104. Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, 9 Jun 2003, secs. C.4.7, C.4.8, 7–8.
105. CPA Bfg, 2 Jul 2003, sub: Planning and Support to the New Iraqi Army – LTG Sanchez, IFCS-51-0027 Folder, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.

facilitate cooperation between all three organizations (*Chart 1.1.*). Similarly, even though Sanchez did not report to Bremer, CJTF-7 had a vested interest in supporting Eaton's efforts.[106] To make the NIA program a success, Eaton explained to Sanchez, CJTF-7 would have to procure small arms, clothing, ammunition, and individual equipment for each NIA battalion before training began. Eaton also requested three ten-person teams to oversee the contractors while they trained Iraqi recruits. In addition, the base in Kir Kush would require installation staff, medics, construction engineers, and maintenance personnel from the U.S. military.[107] Although CJTF-7 could not fulfill many of those needs, Sanchez provided CMATT with twenty soldiers who had been held back from the departing 3d Infantry Division.[108]

Eaton also spent considerable time and energy soliciting personnel from international partners. Recognizing that the transformation of the Iraqi Army—which had been founded on a combination of homegrown, British, and Soviet principles—into a U.S. clone would encounter significant friction, Eaton sought officers from Eastern European nations and Great Britain to provide different perspectives on how to manage the overall program. Not only did coalition units taking part in the occupation of Iraq possess unique insights into doctrine and equipment previously employed by the Iraqis, but they also served as a potential alternate source of trainers and staff personnel, given CENTCOM's reluctance to reallocate American resources in an environment where evolving security needs exceeded the number of readily available U.S. soldiers.[109]

ADDRESSING THE SIX-BRIGADE SHORTFALL

The topic of internal security figured prominently in conversations between Sanchez and General Abizaid, who was the designated replacement for General Franks. Despite other issues competing for his attention while serving as Franks's deputy, Abizaid displayed a consistent interest in Iraqi affairs. When General Sanchez aired concerns about the CPA approach, Abizaid replied, "Yeah, it'll take [Bremer] forever at the rate he wants to

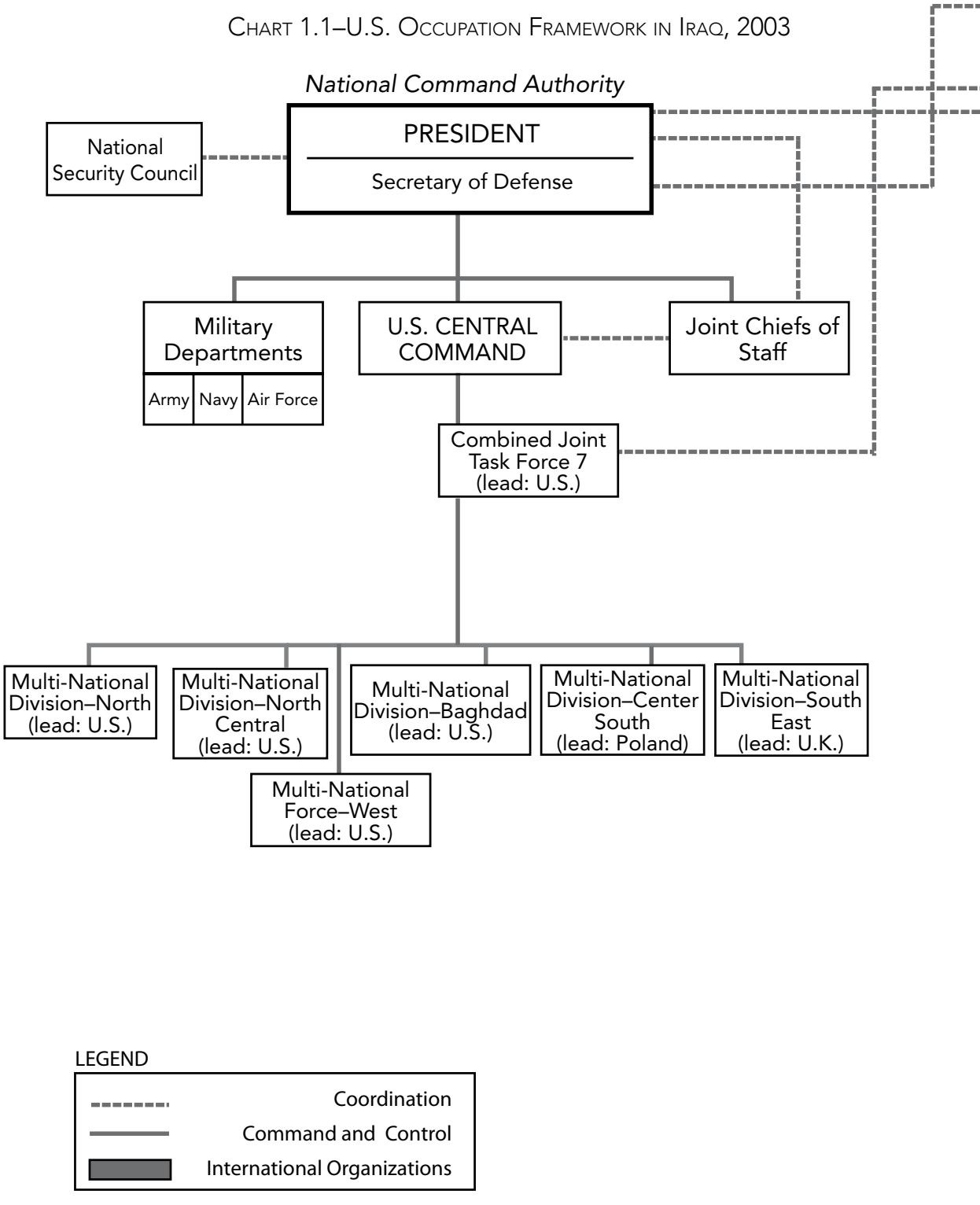
106. Interv, Terry Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Lt. Col. (Ret.) Blaise Cornell-d'Echert, former CMATT staff ofcr, 31 Oct 2006, 3, OLE; Interv, Beckenbaugh with Rudd, 9 Jun 2006, 8–9, 12–13.

107. Each team consisted of a lieutenant colonel as team chief, a major as assistant team leader, a senior noncommissioned officer, three sergeants, three enlisted soldiers, and a civilian interpreter. CPA Bfg, 2 Jul 2003, sub: Planning and Support to the New Iraqi Army – LTG Sanchez.

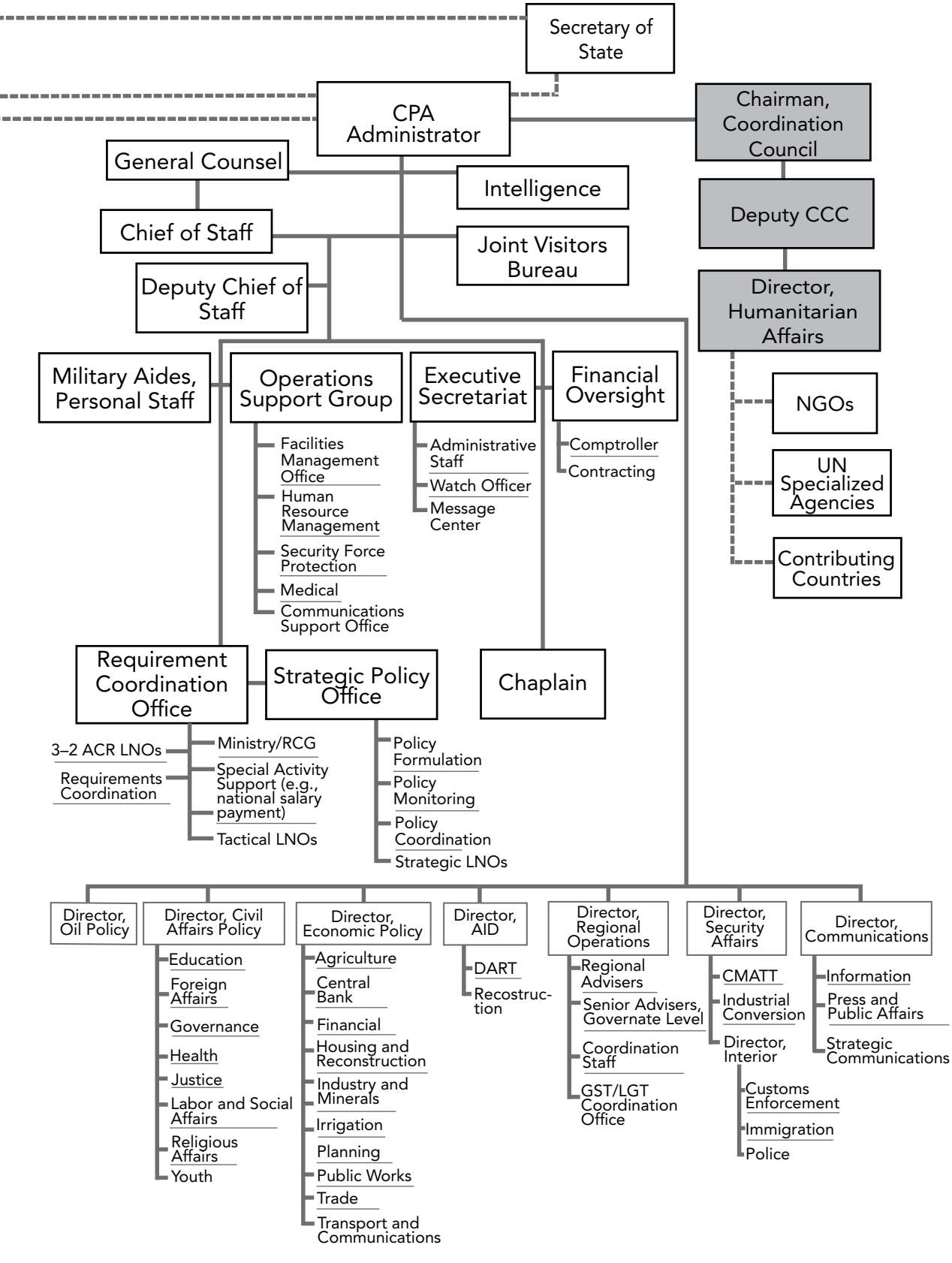
108. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 253.

109. Interv, Beckenbaugh with Cornell-d'Echert, 31 Oct 2006, 4, 6–7.

Chart 1.1–U.S. Occupation Framework in Iraq, 2003



Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.


Secretary of State
CPA Administrator
Chairman, Coordination Council
General Counsel
Intelligence
Deputy CCC
Chief of Staff
Joint Visitors Bureau
Deputy Chief of Staff
Director, Humanitarian Affairs
Military Aides, Personal Staff
Operations Support Group
Executive Secretariat
Financial Oversight
NGOs
UN Specialized Agencies
Contributing Countries
Facilities Management Office
Human Resource Management
Security Force Protection
Medical
Communications Support Office
Administrative Staff
Watch Officer
Message Center
Comptroller
Contracting
Requirement Coordination Office
Strategic Policy Office
Chaplain
3–2 ACR LNOs
Requirements Coordination
Ministry/RCG
Special Activity Support (e.g., national salary payment)
Tactical LNOs
Policy Formulation
Policy Monitoring
Policy Coordination
Strategic LNOs
Director, Oil Policy
Director, Civil Affairs Policy
Director, Economic Policy
Director, AID
Director, Regional Operations
Director, Security Affairs
Director, Communications
Education
Foreign Affairs
Governance
Health
Justice
Labor and Social Affairs
Religious Affairs
Youth
Agriculture
Central Bank
Financial
Housing and Reconstruction
Industry and Minerals
Irrigation
Planning
Public Works
Trade
Transport and Communications
DART
Recostruc-tion
Regional Advisers
Senior Advisers, Governate Level
Coordination Staff
GST/LGT Coordination Office
CMATT
Industrial Conversion
Director, Interior
Customs Enforcement
Immigration
Police
Information
Press and Public Affairs
Strategic Communications

go. He's talking about having only 45,000 Iraqis in uniform three to five years from now. That's bad. We need more people on patrol with us now. Maybe we should do what we did in Kosovo."[110] Abizaid was referring to the 5,000-person Kosovo Protection Corps created in the former Yugoslavian province in January 2000.[111] The U.S. military had provided funding, and American civilian contractors had conducted the training. Convinced that fielding more Iraqi units would satisfy near-term security needs, Abizaid and Sanchez opted to create a new security organization known as the Iraqi Civil Defense Force (ICDF).[112]

Although Sanchez worked for Abizaid, he had to obtain CPA permission to launch the new program. Sanchez justified the initiative to Bremer by pointing out that forming the ICDF would "expedite the establishment of a safe and secure environment in Iraq, facilitate the transition of a new Iraqi government, foster a sense of Iraqi national pride, and stimulate Iraqi economic recovery."[113] Bremer may have held misgivings over the creation of another Iraqi military force, but he could not afford to allow the security situation to spiral out of control. Following the departure of two American divisions, Bremer assented to the initial CJTF-7 request for five battalions, each sponsored by one of the coalition divisions remaining in Iraq. The five battalions represented the first step of a multiphase program ultimately designed to produce five ICDF divisions, each with 12,000 personnel.[114] The program envisioned forming twenty-one ICDF battalions by February 2004, which offered a near-term solution to the six-brigade shortfall facing CJTF-7.[115]

The ICDF program resembled the NIA in some respects while differing in others. ICDF soldiers lived at home and commuted to work, whereas NIA personnel worked and lived on a military installation located in a fairly remote area. Like NIA battalions, each ICDF battalion included four rifle companies and a headquarters company. Both the NIA and the ICDF were taught patrolling, as well as fixed, area, and convoy security, but the ICDF

110. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 213.
111. United Nations Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, S/2000/177, 7 (3 Mar 2000), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/408870?ln=en.
112. Bfg, 4th Inf Div, 11 Jul 2003, sub: New Iraqi Army – Iraqi Civil Defense Force, IFCS-51-0027 Folder, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.
113. Bfg, 4th Inf Div, 11 Jul 2003, sub: New Iraqi Army – Iraqi Civil Defense Force.
114. Memo, Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) for all CJTF-7 Major Subordinate Cmds, 21 Apr 2004, sub: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) Policy Letter, 1-1, IFCS-51-0027 Folder, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.
115. Info Paper, "The Future of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps," U.S. Central Command CC/J–3, 23 Sep 2003, Hist Files, CMH.

also would have crowd control, disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and search and rescue in its repertoire, at least theoretically.[116] Neither force learned offensive skills or how to work as part of a combined-arms team.[117]

The first six ICDF battalions began training in July 2003, well in advance of Bremer's public approval of the initiative.[118] Although CJTF-7 issued a standardized training syllabus, each coalition division sponsored ICDF battalions somewhat differently. Rather than delegate training responsibilities to subordinate units, the 4th Infantry Division created a centralized office consisting of a field grade officer with experience as a National Training Center observer/controller and nine soldiers with recruiting and drill instructor backgrounds.[119] In comparison, the 1st Armored Division tasked subordinate brigades to perform the mission. Col. Peter R. Mansoor's 1st Brigade apportioned responsibility for ICDF training to battalion-level mortar and scout platoons augmented by additional noncommissioned officers with drill instructor experience.[120]

General Sanchez envisioned employing ICDF battalions as soon as they were assembled. With time being of the essence, ICDF recruits received one-fifth of the basic training provided to their NIA counterparts. After acquiring squad-size fixed-site security and patrolling skills over the course of a week, ICDF units switched to learning how to employ rifle squads to staff checkpoints and provide route security. During their third and fourth weeks, soldiers concentrated on performing the same tasks at the platoon level. By the fifth week, the Iraqi units were expected to conduct company-level operations with coalition units. CJTF-7 anticipated that ICDF battalions and their assigned advisory teams would be operating alongside U.S. troops within six weeks of being formed.[121]

Creating the ICDF offered a potential solution to meeting near-term requirements, but fielding a force tailored to perform a limited range of missions carried some risk if tactical needs changed. The fact that ICDF soldiers did not receive instruction on the full range of infantry skills was a manageable shortcoming as long as U.S. commanders did not employ them for tasks beyond what they had been taught. The compressed training

116. Info Paper, "The Future of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps."
117. Info Paper, "The Future of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps," 6-1.
118. The Iraqi Civil Defense Force (ICDF) chain of command bypassed both Eaton and Bremer. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction, *Hard Lessons: The Iraqi Reconstruction Experience* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009), 129, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA493696.
119. Interv, Rudd with Eaton, 1 Jan 2004, 20.
120. Peter R. Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 192.
121. Bfg, 4th Inf Div, 11 Jul 2003, sub: New Iraqi Army – Iraqi Civil Defense Force.

regimen therefore reflected General Sanchez's acceptance of a "qualitative risk in order to expedite [the] stand up of [the] ICDF" (*Table 1.1*).[122]

COPING WITH THE UNEXPECTED

On 8 July 2003, General John P. Abizaid formally assumed command of CENTCOM from General Franks. Within three days, the newly promoted four-star halted the drawdown of forces and established 12 months as the standard tour length for personnel serving in Iraq.[123] The latter decision produced a requirement for five divisions—half of the active divisions—to rotate into Iraq by the spring of 2004 to replace troops already in country.[124] Although the U.S. Marine Corps and the Army National Guard would contribute a portion of the total force, deploying more than 125,000 soldiers to Iraq each year would place unparalleled pressure not only on the Active Army's personnel managers, but also on the volunteer enlistment program, where soldiers virtually were guaranteed to return repeatedly if the campaign lasted longer than a couple of years.

Meanwhile, the political situation in Iraq was evolving, albeit without direct impact on security matters. Ambassador Bremer, intent on providing all major groups in Iraq with a legislative voice, convened a twenty-five-member deliberative body known as the Iraqi Governing Council on 13 July. Its responsibilities included laying the foundation for writing a constitution and charting a path toward popular elections for a parliamentary government. Bremer initially had championed a smaller group of seven members, but Iraqi expatriates had argued that provincial elections were needed to select political leaders. Both sides were unwilling to concede until local Iraqi leaders convinced Bremer and the expatriates to accept a twenty-five-member council until elections could be held.[125]

Bremer sought out Iraqis who genuinely were committed to transforming their nation into a democratic state while CMATT searched for former military officers willing to accept civilian control of their nation's armed forces. As one American officer commented, "The expectations of an officer in the old Iraqi army and our expectations . . . were dramatically different."[126] General Eaton hosted a group of former majors and colonels

122. Bfg, 4th Inf Div, 11 Jul 2003, sub: New Iraqi Army – Iraqi Civil Defense Force.
123. The year-long tour of duty policy did not include months of predeployment training and movement into theater. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 165.
124. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 227–28.
125. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 87–98.
126. Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise*, 194.

Table 1.1—Comparison of ICDF and NIA Individual and Collective Training Programs

Type	In-Processing	Individual/ Squad Skills	Platoon/ Company Skills	Logistic Skills	NCO Skills	Officer Skills
ICDF	N/A	2 weeks	3 weeks	N/A	N/A	N/A
NIA	1 week	5 weeks	3 weeks[a]	3 weeks[a]	5 weeks	5 weeks

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Note: *a*. 774 NIA soldiers in each battalion attended infantry training while 226 concurrently attended logistics training.

Source: Bfg, 4th Inf Div, 11 Jul 2003, sub: New Iraqi Army – Iraqi Civil Defense Force; Memo, Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) for all CJTF-7 Major Subordinate Cmds, 21 Apr 2004, sub: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) Policy Letter, 1-1; both in IFCS-51-0027 Folder, 51st MHD Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

in Kir Kush in an attempt to discover how he could attract experienced individuals. When he explained that fewer colonels were authorized for the new force compared to the Saddam-era army, the attendees told him they would not join if required to do so at a lower rank. From then on, Eaton sought out younger Saddam-era officers for senior NIA positions. These individuals, after proving themselves in their initial assignment, would earn promotions.[127]

Recruitment pitches aimed at junior officers and enlisted personnel encountered fewer hurdles. There were often more applicants, except in Sunni-dominated regions, than available positions. As General Eaton confirmed, "We have many more who would like to join than we have immediate training [spaces] and battalion [spaces] available for them."[128] General Sanchez also noted that CJTF-7's initial recruiting effort had attracted "more people than [they] knew what to do with, as all across the country, Iraqis waited in long lines to get back in uniform and start receiving regular paychecks."[129] In many cases, the individual motivation of recruits proved to be practical rather than patriotic. As one former Iraqi officer admitted, "We volunteered because we had to work, and not with much enthusiasm. It was the only job I knew."[130]

127. Interv, Rudd with Eaton, 1 Jan 2004, 15.
128. CPA Bfg, Eaton, 21 Jan 2004, sub: with Rebuilding Iraqi Forces, 1.
129. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 254.
130. "Iraqi Police Fire on Protesting Ex-Soldiers," Associated Press, 7 Jan 2004, https://www.foxnews.com/story/iraqi-police-fire-on-protesting-ex-soldiers, Hist Files, CMH.

Initially tasked to generate twenty-seven battalions over a three-year period, CMATT faced far less immediate pressure than CJTF-7 faced in its effort to stand up the ICDF. While monitoring the first NIA battalion's training progress, General Eaton noticed that the Iraqis learned as much by watching U.S. troops interact as they absorbed during formal instruction by the civilian contractors. The Iraqis, he believed, were fascinated by the professionalism of American soldiers because it contrasted so strongly with their experiences in their own army. He concluded that civilian trainers could not provide the Iraqis with comparable role models and CMATT thus needed military trainers to improve the current program of instruction. [131]

Eaton's efforts to shift from civilian contractors to military instructors encountered resistance from a number of sources. Contributions made by coalition partners, coupled with the arrival of some American personnel from stateside units, allowed his staff to expand tenfold in only a few months, but CMATT still lacked dedicated infantry instructors. When Eaton attempted to procure more U.S. personnel possessing those skills, he found that CJTF-7, itself immersed in training the ICDF, did not have any infantry soldiers to spare. Additionally, Headquarters, Department of the Army, disapproved Eaton's requests for U.S. Army Reserve drill instructors to conduct basic and advanced training.[132] Even if military personnel had been available, the U.S. government's contractual obligations to Vinnell Corporation prevented an immediate turnover of responsibility.

Assistance from an unanticipated source emerged when General Eaton visited Jordan later that summer. After interacting with that nation's soldiers for several days, Eaton decided they were "probably the best Arab army man-for-man that's out there."[133] In a conversation with a senior Jordanian general, the CMATT commander mentioned the problems he faced training commissioned officers. When the Jordanian asked what his army could do to help, Eaton responded, "I'd like you to train our leaders . . . all of our [Iraqi] company commanders [and] battalion commanders."[134] The pair agreed on a plan to send Iraqi officers to Jordan for leadership classes. In subsequent talks, Eaton also convinced the Jordanians to send instructors to Camp Taji, a new base being developed for the Iraqi Army, to conduct training for noncommissioned officers.

The new arrangement would not be implemented overnight. First, the cost of training Iraqi officers in Jordan and establishing a cadre of Jordanian instructors at Camp Taji had to be settled. Eaton and the Jordanians agreed

131. Interv, Rudd with Eaton, 1 Jan 2004, 20.
132. Interv, Rudd with Eaton, 1 Jan 2004, 8.
133. Interv, Rudd with Eaton, 1 Jan 2004, 15.
134. Interv, Rudd with Eaton, 1 Jan 2004, 16.

on an initial figure of $5 million. Then, Eaton had to convince the members of the Iraqi Governing Council to accept the arrangement. Although several Shi'i representatives expressed strong skepticism at the prospect of the predominantly Sunni Jordanians teaching Iraqi soldiers, Eaton eventually won them over. The last step, which required revising the agreement with Vinnell, had to be deferred until the contract review period occurred in February 2004. The delay meant that four NIA battalions would complete their training before the implementation of the new program.

The Iraqi Army traditionally had placed all authority and responsibility in the hands of commissioned officers, and it had not cultivated a strong noncommissioned officer corps. The Americans knew they had an opportunity to increase the Iraqi Army's resiliency by building up a core of capable noncommissioned officers—the backbone of every effective Western army—but doing so, even when using Jordanian instructors, involved a degree of risk. First, there was no guarantee the Iraqis would respond favorably to such a program. Second, Jordanian capabilities were inadequate to address the current shortage of noncommissioned officers within the NIA. Finally, CJTF-7 lacked the means to implement a comparable program for the ICDF, which meant only the NIA would benefit from it.[135]

SHIFTING THE GOALPOSTS

During a brief visit to Iraq in August 2003, Secretary Rumsfeld informed Bremer of the U.S. Army's concerns about providing sufficient forces for the April 2004 troop rotation. He then asked the ambassador to execute "an accelerated training program that would 'stand up' twenty-seven battalions of the NIA in one year."[136] At the same time, Rumsfeld instructed his staff to schedule a return trip to Baghdād in early September. A belief that unemployed soldiers were responsible for rising violence in Iraq ensured that rebuilding the post-Saddam Iraqi Army would be discussed during the secretary's next visit.[137]

Rumsfeld's imminent return persuaded Ambassador Bremer and General Sanchez to compromise on the status of the ICDF, primarily in terms of the

135. Although the 101st Airborne Division devoted some effort to developing ICDF noncommissioned officers, only one hundred personnel completed that course before January 2004. Memo, Col. Mark E. Waring, Ch, C–3 Effects, CJTF-7, for Major Subordinate Cmd (MSC) Cdrs, 15 Jan 2004, sub: Policy for the ICDC, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.
136. Vinnell originally had been contracted to produce nine battalions in one year, with options for follow-on years. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*,150.
137. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 517–18.

number of units fielded by CJTF-7. Familiar with the State Department's Future of Iraq Project reports, which had stated that the regular Iraqi military willingly had assisted Saddam's efforts to oppress the populace, Bremer viewed the ICDF as a temporary adjunct to the civilian police.[138] In sharp contrast, General Sanchez saw the ICDF as a reconstituted military entity deserving of the CPA's full support.[139] Sanchez managed to allay CPA concerns by accepting cosmetic changes suggested by the CPA, carefully controlling force structure growth, and taking steps to avoid appointing Saddam-era officers as unit commanders. Bremer eventually dropped all formal opposition to the program, although he never exhibited any degree of enthusiasm for the initiative.

After lengthy negotiations with CJTF-7, the CPA published Order No. 28, "Establishment of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps," on 3 September 2003. The order placed a stamp of approval on the ICDF, changed its designation to the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC), and described it as "a temporary institution, subject to a decision by an internationally recognized, representative government, established by the people of Iraq, to continue or disband the Corps."[140] The order emphasized that the organization was more constabulary than military and would "complement the police force, but [would] be designed to perform operations that exceed the capacity of the police."[141] Finally, the document made it clear that the CPA delegated, but did not surrender, responsibility for ICDC recruiting, training, organizing, and controlling to CJTF-7.[142]

The follow-on meeting between Rumsfeld, Sanchez, and Eaton took place on 5 September. The CJTF-7 commander informed the secretary that he planned to create three additional ICDC battalions, for a revised total of twenty-one.[143] The coalition units involved in creating the ICDC, Sanchez explained, could allocate the resources needed to train a larger number of ICDC units without degrading their ability to fulfill other tactical requirements. When Sanchez suggested transferring CMATT assets to CJTF-7, Rumsfeld sidestepped the issue by telling him to "work it out" with Bremer.[144]

138. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 154.
139. Bfg, 4th Inf Div, 11 Jul 2003, sub: New Iraqi Army – Iraqi Civil Defense Force.
140. CPA Order 28, 3 Sep 2003, Establishment of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, www.cpa-iraq.org, Hist Files, CMH.
141. CPA Order 28, 3 Sep 2003.
142. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 214, 233, 254–55.
143. Memo, CJTF-7 for all CJTF-7 Major Subordinate Cmds, 21 Apr 2004, sub: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) Policy Letter.
144. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 315.



Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, the commander of Combined Joint Task Force 7, speaking during the relief-in-place ceremony as the I Marine Expeditionary Force relinquishes its area of operations to Polish-led coalition forces on 2 September 2003. (*L. Cpl. Andrew Williams, U.S. Marine Corps*)

General Eaton, like Rumsfeld, did not respond directly to Sanchez's suggestion. Instead, he reviewed how CMATT planned to generate twenty-seven NIA motorized battalions sooner than the original three-year timeline, which would require the accelerated fielding of logistical units and brigade headquarters. He explained that filling the junior enlisted ranks would not be a problem given the long waiting list of potential recruits. However, CMATT's ability to meet the secretary's accelerated training schedule goal depended on Jordanian willingness to commit more resources to the training of Iraqi officers and noncommissioned officers.[145] Eaton recognized that the accelerated training schedule would not produce NIA units able to perform effectively in combat, which would necessitate mentoring by American advisory teams for an indefinite period. Additional discussion resulted in consensus on substituting a mechanized force for one of the NIA motorized brigades, as well as adding some Iraqi Army aviation and creating a naval component organized along the lines of a coast guard. The participants also

145. Interv, Rudd with Eaton, 1 Jan 2004, 16.

agreed on the need for a civilian-run defense support agency to provide logistics and administrative support for Iraqi military units.[146]

The decision to create armored units, aviation elements, and a small coast guard telegraphed Bremer's desire to look beyond the day-to-day operations of the CPA. Bremer would publish his plan for transforming Iraq into a democracy in the *Washington Post* on 8 September, with that plan already in motion. The appointment of the Iraqi Governing Council in July, followed by the naming of a constitutional committee in August and the selection of directors for each of Iraq's twenty-five ministries on 1 September were its first three steps. The next four actions—writing a new constitution, monitoring its ratification, electing a permanent Iraqi government, and the dissolution of the CPA—remained to be completed.

Bremer's description of the CPA as "happily" yielding its authority following the seating of a freely elected permanent Iraqi government triggered major concerns in Washington, D.C.[147] Although President Bush did not disagree with the milestones outlined by Bremer, neither the White House nor the Pentagon were in favor of granting a multiyear tenure to the CPA. From a security sector perspective, the seven-step plan also left a lot to be desired. Bremer did not address how the CPA would foster continuity within the nascent Ministries of Defense and Interior, nor did he detail U.S. involvement in organizing NIA and ICDC battalions into larger units.

Rumsfeld had concluded the 5 September meeting by expressing interest in developing metrics to assess the status of Iraqi security forces. The secretary had made a similar suggestion to Ambassador Bremer during dinner that night. The Pentagon's growing interest in the Iraqi military's development resulted in Rumsfeld sending a note to Bremer on 12 September mandating the future use of quantitative assessment criteria. Rumsfeld's missive explained, "Our goal should be to ramp up the Iraqi numbers, get some additional international forces and find ways to put less stress on our forces, enabling us to reduce the U.S. role. The faster the Iraqi forces grow, the lower the percentage will be of U.S. forces out of the total forces."[148] Though that approach provided a useful macro-level snapshot, it overlooked important

146. DoD News Briefing, Walter Slocombe and Lawrence Di Rita, Status of the New Iraqi Army and Police Force, 17 Sep 2003, https://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030917-0683.html, Hist Files, CMH.
147. L. Paul Bremer III, "Iraq's Path to Sovereignty," *Washington Post*, 8 Sep 2003, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2003/09/08/iraqs-path-to-sovereignty/92ccd663-ab69-4a56-b85b-af5f8a5f0baf/, Hist Files, CMH.
148. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 162.



An American sergeant conducts physical fitness training for recruits at an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) training center outside of Baghdād. (*M. Sgt. Robert R. Hargreaves, U.S. Air Force*)

details such as unit proficiency, equipment serviceability, and present-for-duty strength.

One week later, Ambassador Bremer addressed the lack of Iraqi military logistical infrastructure with a directive creating the Iraqi Defense Support Agency, which would be responsible for NIA administration and logistics. It would assume some of the burden placed on Vinnell while serving as the nucleus of the future Ministry of Defense. The agency's duties included finance and accounting, personnel management, recruitment, procurement, medical support, legal affairs, real property management, and training support.[149] The CPA envisioned it as a civilian-led and controlled organization and decided to create it from scratch rather than trying to reform the Saddam-era Ministry of Defense. At the same time, control of the Department of Border Enforcement shifted to the nascent Ministry of Interior. Tellingly, the CPA order left open the matter of whether the Defense Support Agency would take care of the ICDC.

149. CPA Order 42, 19 Sep 2003, Creation of the Defense Support Agency, www.cpa-iraq.org, Hist Files, CMH.

A request for $2 billion for accelerating the NIA's growth went before Congress in mid-September 2003 as part of a larger package submitted by the White House. Ambassador Bremer, along with Secretary Rumsfeld and other Department of Defense representatives, appeared on Capitol Hill to defend the need for more money. During Senate Appropriations Committee hearings held on 22, 24, and 25 September, Bremer explained that the CPA required $2.141 billion for the Iraqi police and the Department of Border Enforcement and $2.076 billion for training and equipping the NIA. The latter amount, he elaborated, would fund eight motorized infantry brigades, an armored brigade, an army aviation branch, military academies and training facilities, plus a small coast guard. Almost as an afterthought, Bremer identified $76 million for the ICDC.[150]

Secretary Rumsfeld's testimony provided insight into the push to accelerate the fielding of Iraqi security forces. When clarifying the relationship between Bremer's request and Defense Department supplemental funding, Rumsfeld explained, "Helping the Iraqis provide for their own security is critical. The investments the President is requesting are, in a real sense, a critical element of the Coalition's exit strategy. The sooner Iraq can generate income and defend its own people, the sooner U.S. and Coalition forces can come home."[151] The Iraqis were no longer considered as an adjunct to coalition forces, but rather as the alternative to an indefinite American presence in Iraq.[152]

On 4 October 2003, less than ten days after Congress heard Bremer and Rumsfeld's testimony, the first NIA unit completed the Vinnell training course in Kir Kush. Attendees at the graduation ceremony included the Iraqi Governing Council president, Ayad Allawi, and Ambassador Bremer.[153] The soldiers who completed their training that day would not enter the fight for the foreseeable future. The terms of the June solicitation stipulated that the

150. Statement, L. Paul Bremer, *Fiscal Year 2004 Supplemental Request for Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, Hearings Before the Committee of Appropriations, United States Senate*, 108th Cong. (22, 24, 25 Sep 2003), 12, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-108shrg90309/html/CHRG-108shrg90309.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

151. Testimony, Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Fiscal Year 2004 Supplemental Request for Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, Hearings Before the Committee of Appropriations, United States Senate*, 108th Cong. (22, 24, 25 Sep 2003), 77, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-108shrg90309/html/CHRG-108shrg90309.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

152. Testimony, Rumsfeld, *Fiscal Year 2004 Supplemental Request for Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan* (22, 24, 25 Sep 2003), 77.

153. News Release, CPA, "First Battalion of New Iraqi Army Graduates," 7 Oct 2003, CyberCemetery, University of North Texas Libraries, https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/cpa-iraq/daily/archives/01October2003_index.html, Hist Files, CMH.



U.S. and Iraqi troops perform an "eyes right" during a pass-in-review march in front of Brig. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, an assistant division commander of the 1st Armored Division, at the graduation ceremony of a newly created ICDC battalion. (*M. Sgt. Robert R. Hargreaves, U.S. Air Force*)

first three NIA battalions to graduate would be converted into basic training cadre in preparation for assuming Vinnell's responsibilities.[154]

In a radio address broadcast that same day, President Bush remarked, "For decades, Iraq's army served the interest of a dictator. Today, a new army is serving the Iraqi people. And less than a year from now, Iraq will have a 40,000-member military force, trained and dedicated to protecting their fellow citizens."[155] His words confirmed that Rumsfeld's guidance to accelerate the NIA had White House backing. The speech also signaled ex post facto support, reluctant or otherwise, for Bremer's decision to abolish the Ba'th Party and disband the Saddam-era military.

154. CPA Bfg, Eaton, 21 Jan 2004, sub: with Rebuilding Iraqi Forces; Solicitation DABK01-03-R-0012, 9 Jun 2003, sec. C.4.2, 6.

155. George W. Bush, "The President's Radio Address" (radio address, Washington, DC, 4 Oct 2003), https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-radio-address-759, Hist Files, CMH.

CONCLUSION

The post-Saddam Iraqi Army emerged from a welter of confusion created by evolving situational dynamics, inadequate interagency coordination, and competing agendas rather than the absence of planning. An array of U.S. civilian and military agencies, from the NSC down through CFLCC, made and updated proposals to reorganize Iraq's internal defense structures without completely dismantling all of its existing components, but their work assumed that a semblance of bureaucratic cohesion would remain after coalition troops toppled Saddam Hussein from power. That did not prove to be the case, which meant that the pre-March 2003 planning assumptions fell far short of reality.

The dissolution of ORHA served as the first indicator of the Bush administration's willingness to adapt existing plans to unanticipated challenges emerging in Iraq. Preinvasion conceptualizing failed to predict what would occur in the wake of Saddam's fall from power, rendering moot not only most of the Future of Iraq Project assumptions, but also CENTCOM's, CFLCC's, and ORHA's posthostilities planning. Garner had been tasked to gain the cooperation of Iraqi officials who also would play a major role in rebuilding and restoring. When that scenario proved overly optimistic, the Bush administration decided that a more robust and directive approach was required.[156]

The White House's late April 2003 decision to revamp its initial occupation policy came with a high cost. The Pentagon allowed ORHA three short months to prepare, but the Bush administration allotted far less time for CPA officials to determine what policies would have the most positive impact in post-Saddam Iraq. As a result, near-term considerations outweighed the potential for negative long-term fallout. To compensate, U.S. officials quickly issued new policies and made changes to existing policies.

Tasked with transforming an entrenched dictatorship into a nation governed by the will of the people, Ambassador Bremer issued edicts that served a dual purpose: they promulgated the American vision of Iraq's future and served notice that Saddam-era institutions no longer played a part in the lives of ordinary Iraqis. Although Bremer's directive to disband the Iraqi Army has garnered legitimate criticism, focusing on that act alone prevents a more nuanced distillation of developments and potential lessons. Assertions

156. The Bush administration notified Jay M. Garner on 20 April that the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance would be absorbed by a larger organization with a much broader charter. Interv, Beckenbaugh with Rudd, 9 Jun 2006, 13.

that CPA Order No. 2 fueled the nascent insurgency tend to overshadow far more serious issues that arose from Bremer's first pair of directives.[157]

All of the various U.S. organizations interested in posthostilities Iraq agreed long before 23 May that a number of Iraqi military units—the Special Republican Guard, the Republican Guard, and most of the regular army's sixteen divisions—would be demobilized. The revised CPA Order No. 2 added the three to five regular army divisions that the Department of Defense originally considered retaining, plus the air force, navy, and air defense command, to the list of institutions to be dissolved. The additions numbered perhaps 125,000 service members—an impressive figure, but not when compared to the estimated 450,000 Saddam-era military personnel in uniform before the 2003 invasion.[158]

Yet, a year after Bremer issued CPA Order No. 2, the senior command in Iraq would estimate that only 10,000–12,000 Sunnis made up the bulk of the insurgency, augmented by perhaps 1,000 foreign extremists, compared to 33,042 individuals serving in the post-Saddam Iraqi military.[159] Forced demobilization of the Iraqi military may have had some impact on the insurgency's expansion, but the vast majority of soldiers let go from their positions did not join the rebellion.

CPA Orders No. 1 and 2 certainly delivered a crippling blow to the nascent post-Saddam Iraqi Army. The sweeping purge of Ba'th Party members cast out the ministerial-level bureaucracy, military industrial leadership, installation managers, depot overseers, and senior levels of command on a wholesale scale. De-Ba'thification, wielded with all the dexterity of a sledgehammer, transformed the train-and-equip effort from a tactically oriented initiative aimed at reconstituting a few infantry divisions into an enterprise-level challenge that required reconstruction, from scratch, of all facets of the Iraqi defense sector. Therefore, more accurately, CPA Order No. 2 made the costs associated with reshaping the Iraqi Army rise

157. James P. Pfiffner, "US Blunders in Iraq: De-Baathification and Disbanding the Iraqi Army," *Intelligence and National Security* 25, no. 1 (Feb 2010): 76–85; Garrett M. Graff, "Orders of Disorder: Who Disbanded Iraq's Army and De-Baathified its Bureaucracy," *Foreign Affairs*, 5 May 2023, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/middle-east/iraq-united-states-orders-disorder?check_logged_in=1&utm, Hist Files, CMH.

158. These included 350,000 regular army troops, 15,000 air defense personnel, and 85,000 Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard troops. Paramilitary and state security organizations added another 72,800. Rpt, Ministry of Defence, London, Jan 2003, Iraq: Its Infrastructure of Concealment, and Intimidation, https://irp.fas.org/world/iraq/uk0103.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

159. The total included 4,087 New Iraqi Army personnel and 29,055 Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldiers. Bfg, DoD, 17 May 2004, sub: Iraq Status (Draft Working Papers), slide 27, Hist Files, CMH.

exponentially from $500 million in March 2003 to $2.076 billion by September. The sole effort to tamp down these rising outlays paradoxically emerged only when the CPA asked Congress for a far lower amount of funding than warranted, thereby undermining CJTF-7's efforts to raise the ICDF.

The critical focus on Ambassador Bremer's actions has shielded from legitimate scrutiny a multitude of issues that resulted from the decision to replace ORHA, which had a clear relationship with CFLCC, with a civilian-led occupation authority that lacked clear links to the coalition military headquarters responsible for securing Iraq. Although Bremer's edicts may have persuaded some Iraqi soldiers to join the insurgency, his first two orders imposed a greater burden on an American military coming to grips with the reality of long-term involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. The dearth of formal channels of communication between the CPA and CJTF-7, coupled with the daunting but very different issues facing both organizations, resulted in diverging visions for the post-Saddam Iraqi military. The CPA viewed the NIA as a core component of a democratized government, whereas CJTF-7, struggling to cope with an insurgency that few had anticipated before the coalition invasion, created the ICDF to serve as combat auxiliaries supporting American combat troops.

The resultant friction siphoned momentum and efficiency from the opening training and equipping phase, ironically placing the attainment of desired goals further out of reach. The competing programs not only diluted limited on-hand resources but also eroded homogeneity within the post-Saddam Iraqi military by embracing dissimilar recruiting, training, equipping, and leadership selection standards. This development set up an immature force for additional turmoil in the form of a disruptive, but inevitable, force-wide amalgamation at some point in the future. The policies also produced different expectations. CJTF-7 viewed the ICDF as a means of reducing pressure on overextended coalition units. Meanwhile, the CPA delegated decision making to Eaton, except when opportunities arose for Iraqi troops to take part in high-profile combined operations.

Differing viewpoints regarding the use of Iraqi troops were driven by a desire to achieve quantifiable near-term goals rather than establish a foundation for long-term success. That mindset led to the creation of two very different forces and accounted for the decision to field light infantry battalions for immediate use rather than larger and more capable formations. It also bound the Iraqis to the Americans from the onset, given that the latter possessed the logistics, fire support, and communications capabilities that their allies lacked. Furthermore, concentrating on achieving

organizational-level goals defined by leaders immersed in the occupation itself, rather than policy established by the national command authorities back in Washington, added an avoidable degree of risk to future courses of action—such as setting conditions for disengaging coalition forces from Iraq—that would require the participation of the new Iraqi military.

2
The Changing Face of Security: November 2003–May 2004

American domestic politics, combined with rising insurgent violence, spurred the Bush administration to revisit its Iraq policies as summer ended in 2003. A major development occurred on 19 August when extremists exploded a truck bomb outside the United Nations (UN) compound in Baghdād, killing more than twenty people, including UN Special Representative Sérgio Vieira de Mello.[1] Following the bombing, the UN withdrew most of its staff from Iraq, effectively leaving the United States with the sole responsibility for reshaping the former dictatorship into a democracy. White House concerns about going it alone in Iraq grew in September after Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III, the U.S. presidential envoy to Iraq, penned a *New York Times* op-ed explaining that democratization in Iraq would require a multiyear commitment.[2]

Speculation about whether the invasion had been justified turned into a fierce debate on 2 October 2003 after David A. Kay, the lead weapons inspector of the Iraq Survey Group, reported that his team had made an extensive search of Iraqi facilities but had found no indication that Iraq had been producing or stockpiling weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Although

1. Dexter Filkins and Richard A. Oppel Jr., "After the War: Truck Bombing; Huge Suicide Blast Demolishes UN Headquarters in Baghdad, Top Aid Officials Among 17 Dead," *New York Times*, 20 Aug 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/20/world/after-war-truck-bombing-huge-suicide-blast-demolishes-un-headquarters-baghdad.html, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).

2. Interv, Michael Nelson, Mel Leffler, and Barbara Nelson, George W. Bush Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, with L. Paul Bremer III, former Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Administrator, n.d., 24–44, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/l-paul-bremer-iii-oral-history (accessed 23 Oct 2023), Hist Files, CMH.

this finding seemed to throw into question the Bush administration's original justification for the invasion, few if any of the administration's critics paid attention to Kay's statement that "the report does not represent a final reckoning of Iraq's WMD programs, nor are we at the point where we are prepared to close the file on any of these programs."[3] The U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence responded to the survey group's report by initiating an investigation into the White House's preinvasion claims that Saddam Hussein's regime had possessed chemical and nuclear materials.[4] President George W. Bush's approval rating dropped to 47 percent, a fact not lost on an incumbent administration eyeing reelection in the coming fall.[5]

The WMD controversy, coupled with the White House's request for $87 billion to support its missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, sparked dissatisfaction among the general public, President Bush's own party in Congress, and opposition Democrats.[6] The discussion led to further drops in Bush's approval rating by mid-October 2003, prompting the White House to implement a multiprong response. The president assumed a central role in presenting the administration's case while the National Security Council and the Pentagon convinced Bremer to hand over power to the Iraqis well in advance of the November 2004 U.S. congressional elections.[7]

In an effort to pave the way for that transition, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) actively sought opportunities to employ the New Iraqi Army (NIA) in order to undercut the insurgency's appeal and build public support for the incoming interim government. CENTCOM's commander, General John P. Abizaid, observed, "What [is] needed [is] an effort to encourage and enable the Iraqis to provide

3. "Text of David Kay's Unclassified Statement," Inside Politics, CNN Edition, 2 Oct 2003, https://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/10/02/kay.report/, Hist Files, CMH.

4. The bipartisan investigation exerted considerable influence during the November 2004 elections. Democrats pressed for early publication of both parts of the report, while Republicans delayed release of the part examining the White House's role until after the elections. "Iraq War 'Waged on False Intelligence,'" *Guardian*, 9 Jul 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/jul/09/usa.iraq2, Hist Files, CMH.

5. This represented a three-point drop in one week and a twenty-four-point drop since April 2003. Poll, "Presidential Approval Ratings—George W. Bush," Gallup, https://news.gallup.com/poll/116500/presidential-approval-ratings-george-bush.aspx (accessed 12 Oct 2023), Hist Files, CMH.

6. Robert Draper, *Dead Certain: The Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 221–23.

7. Douglas J. Feith, *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 457–68; Dana Bash, "White House Trying New Public Relations Approach on Iraq," Inside Politics, CNN Edition, 8 Oct 2003, https://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/10/08/sprj.irq.pr/index.html; Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction, *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009), 119–21.

security for themselves."[8] He believed American soldiers had a disruptive rather than stabilizing effect, so he opted to use whatever Iraqi soldiers were available when the situation permitted.[9] However, the CENTCOM commander's vision contrasted strongly with the conception many Iraqi soldiers had of their duty to their nation. A Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) official recorded an Iraqi officer's viewpoint: "The new Iraqi Army [is] not being set up in the right manner. How could it be expected to be loyal to the U.S.—and to fight against fellow Iraqis? The main mission of the army [is] to protect the homeland, not to combat terrorism."[10]

The ousting of Saddam Hussein, which swept away existing government institutions and political parties, paved the way for multiple conflicts to emerge within Iraq: Sunni versus Shi'i, secular Shi'i versus theocratic Shi'i, and Kurd against Arab.[11] The collapse of law and order brought on a wave of criminal activity that battered every entity and institution—including the reconstituting Iraqi military. There was no shortage of self-serving entities and individuals who viewed reconstituted governance as an obstacle to their ambitions. As a result, Iraqi soldiers, who never imagined they would be serving under the Americans, witnessed familiar ideals and traditions coming under assault from within. Although CENTCOM's views on the post-Saddam Iraqi Army's usefulness in this environment might have been off the mark, most American soldiers were willing to accept any form of help in the face of a burgeoning insurgency.[12] Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld blamed the violence on looters, criminals, Ba'th Party remnants, and foreign terrorists rather than an organized movement.[13] Subsequent developments revealed that the perceptions of the coalition commanders and those of the secretary of defense were both correct to a degree.

Al-Qaeda jihadists led by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Shi'i militia fighters (known as the Mahdi Army or *Jaysh al-Mahdi*) under Muqtada al-Sadr, son of a revered religious leader assassinated by Saddam, figured prominently among the groups promoting themselves and their own

8. Feith, *War and Decision*, 464–65.
9. Testimony, General John P. Abizaid, U.S. Central Cmd (CENTCOM) Cdr, *Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 108th Cong. (25 Sep 2003), 6, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2003_hr/abizaid.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
10. Emma Sky, *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015), 102.
11. Sky, *Unraveling*, 49, 56, 83, 98.
12. Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (London: C. Hurst, 2006), 90.
13. "Enemy Force Uses 'Guerrilla Tactics' in Iraq, Abizaid Says," *Washington Times*, 17 Jul 2003, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2003/jul/17/20030717-121015-6169r/, Hist Files, CMH.

agendas during this period. Zarqawi and Sadr were not agents of destruction and death as much as opportunists who took advantage of the chaos sowed by Saddam's fall. Splitting from Osama bin Laden's anti-Western agenda, Zarqawi's subordinates targeted Iraq's Shi'i population, whom he considered the greatest foes of Sunni Islam. Although Sadr's followers clashed with Americans on occasion, the cleric devoted his energies to pursuing the mantle of leadership within a Shi'i majority split into secularist and devout factions.[14] In addition to facing homegrown opportunists and foreign extremists, the Americans also faced a bewildering mix of nation-state-sponsored proxies seeking to undermine U.S. efforts in Iraq.[15]

During this period, the Pentagon remained fixed on disentangling itself from Iraq while bolstering White House efforts to legitimize the original decision to invade. With the American government's attention consumed by an unanticipated and complex situation that defied easy solution, CENTCOM and the National Security Council downplayed the Iraqis' concerns about an emerging civil war.[16] Consequently, senior U.S. civilian and military leaders did not direct either CJTF-7 or the CPA to adjust their policies to address a post-Saddam environment far different from what they first envisioned.

THRUST INTO THE BREACH

Given the unlikelihood that CJTF-7 would be able to obtain U.S. or coalition reinforcements, the task force's commander, Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, sought to free up American personnel for hotspots by transferring responsibility for less restive areas to Iraqi units. That approach risked the possibility that insurgents likewise would shift from areas controlled by U.S. troops to regions under the supervision of Iraqi military forces, but CJTF-7 hoped sufficient numbers of Iraqi troops would deter or overwhelm any rebels who tried to migrate elsewhere. In any case, Sanchez had no other viable option. On 18 November, he increased the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps

14. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, *Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War, 2003–2006* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, Jan 2019), 390, 410.

15. Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, From George W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 7.

16. Iraq has teetered on the brink of civil war several times since 2003. For the latest example, see Ranj Alaaldin, "Shiite Rivalries Could Break Iraq's Deceptive Calm in 2023," Brookings Institution, 1 Mar 2023, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/shiite-rivalries-could-break-iraqs-deceptive-calm-in-2023/, Hist Files, CMH; Barbara F. Walter, *How Civil Wars Start and How to Stop Them* (New York: Crown, 2022), 5–6, 29.

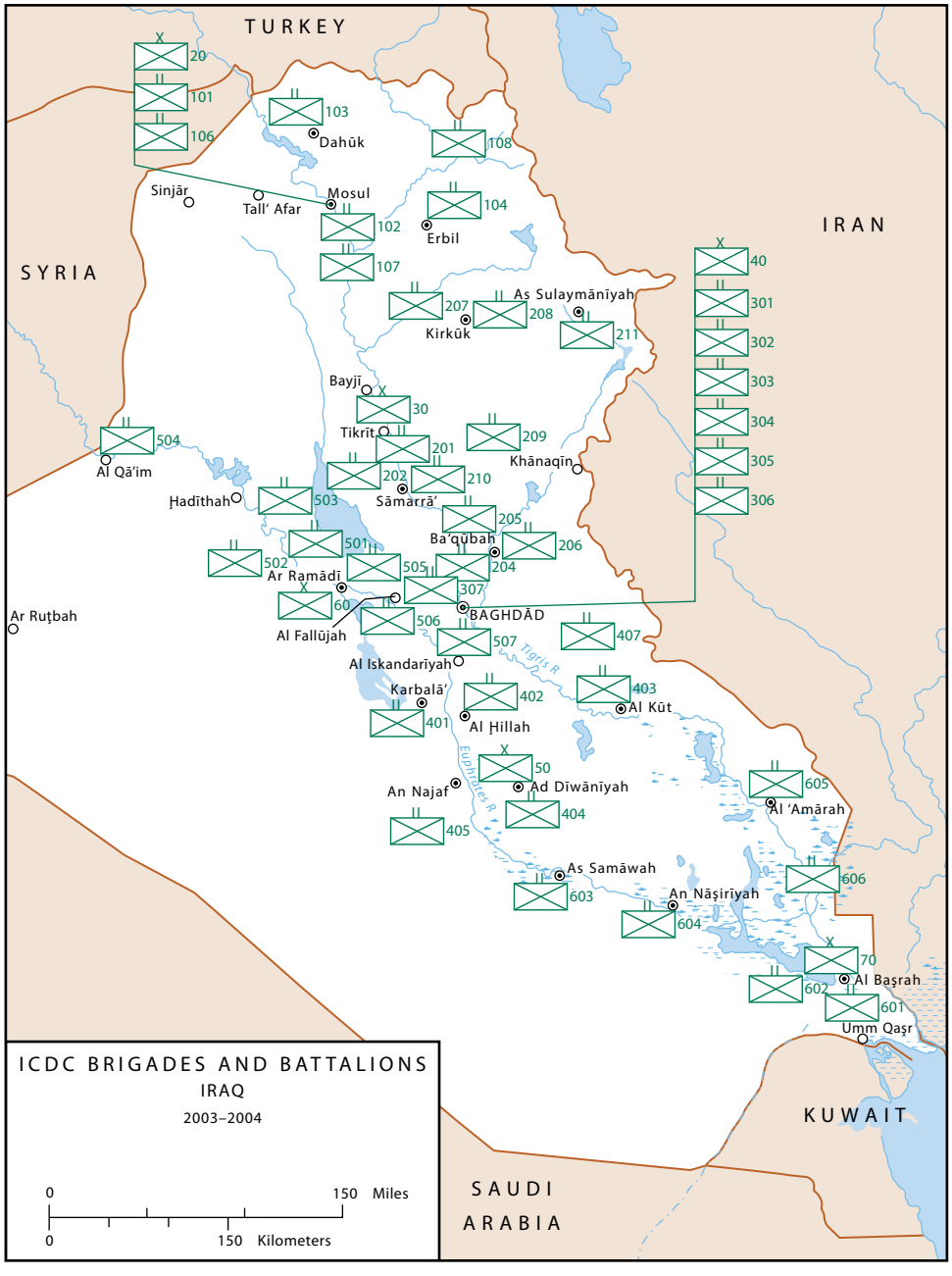
(ICDC) force structure target from twenty-one to thirty-six battalions. The revised figure provided sufficient infantry for four of the five projected ICDC divisions. CJTF-7 also mandated several internal changes. The Headquarters and Service Company grew to 17 officers and 184 enlisted personnel with the addition of a mortar platoon, antitank platoon, and a reconnaissance platoon. The revised program authorized the larger organization for both new and existing battalions.

The expansion effort turned into a competition—could CJTF-7 field new units fast enough to keep the growing insurgent numbers from overwhelming the cadre of ICDC battalions? The chances that CJTF-7 would prevail depended upon whether American units could buy enough time for ICDC reinforcements to appear on the scene. Eight of the original twenty-one battalions still were undergoing training when Sanchez ordered the creation of fifteen more. The additional units were scheduled to join the ranks in incremental fashion, with three entering service in January 2004, followed by two more the next month, and the remainder in March.[17]

That was not the end of the expansion. Sanchez had too few coalition divisions to support thirty-six ICDC battalions, so he decided to build ten ICDC brigade headquarters to fill in the glaring gap in command and control. In addition to staff elements for planning and administration, each headquarters included reconnaissance, medical, communications, maintenance, and ammunition platoons, plus an eighty-four-person motor transport company. The latter consisted of a headquarters section, a company transportation section, a maintenance platoon, and two transportation platoons equipped with forty medium trucks, three fuel trucks, and five recovery vehicles. Six of the new brigades were slated to be operational by January 2004, with the remainder by April (*Map 2.1*).[18]

The insurgents' growing reliance on improvised explosive devices led to the creation of six ICDC explosive ordnance disposal companies. CJTF-7 allocated two weeks to the 79th Ordnance Battalion (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) to draw up a draft table of organization and equipment for the Iraqi bomb disposal units. Each would have fifty soldiers, with preference given to recruiting Saddam-era explosives specialists who would require only refresher training before joining their unit. The latter statement reflected wishful thinking rather than a sober assessment of available Iraqi personnel.[19]

17. Warning Order (WARNO) to Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) Operation Order (OPORD) 03–036, 18 Nov 2003, ICDC Expansion to 36 Battalions and 10 Brigade Headquarters, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.
18. WARNO to CJTF-7 OPORD 03–036, 18 Nov 2003.
19. WARNO to CJTF-7 OPORD 03–036, 18 Nov 2003.


TURKEY
IRAN
SYRIA
KUWAIT
SAUDI ARABIA
Sinjār
Tall' Afar
Mosul
Dahūk
Erbil
Kirkūk
As Sulaymānīyah
Bayjī
Tikrīt
Khānaqīn
Al Qā'im
Ḥadīthah
Sāmarrā'
Ba'qūbah
Ar Ramādī
Al Fallūjah
BAGHDĀD
Ar Ruṭbah
Al Iskandarīyah
Karbalā'
Al Ḥillah
Al Kūt
An Najaf
Ad Dīwānīyah
Al 'Amārah
As Samāwah
An Nāṣirīyah
Al Baṣrah
Umm Qaṣr
Tigris R.
Euphrates R.
ICDC BRIGADES AND BATTALIONS
IRAQ
2003–2004
0
150 Miles
0
150 Kilometers

Map 2.1

Sanchez spread responsibility for generating the new units among his six major multinational commands. The 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), in the volatile "Sunni Triangle" region northwest of Baghdād, had the mission of recruiting, training, and employing eight ICDC battalions and two brigade headquarters. The 101st Airborne Division, holding the northern city of Mosul, fielded five ICDC battalions and one brigade. British, Italian, Polish, and Spanish contingents making up Multi-National Division–Center South and Multi-National Division–South East mentored a combined total of nine ICDC battalions and three brigade headquarters. The 1st Armored Division in Baghdād and the 82d Airborne Division, with the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment attached, in Al Anbār Province oversaw the remaining four brigades and fourteen battalions. Sanchez subsequently cut the number of ICDC brigades from ten to six, aligning each one with a multinational headquarters.[20]

Convinced that allowing ICDC personnel to commute from home to work limited their tactical flexibility while also exposing them to coercion, Sanchez tasked each multinational headquarters with selecting, occupying, and upgrading dedicated facilities for affiliated Iraqi units. CJTF-7 provided detailed guidance: "Funds for infrastructure are limited and expected to cover renovation only. Location must be close enough to coalition command post to effect joint operations with supported coalition commander. Recommend co-location with coalition command posts. Force protection is to be considered prior to battalion/brigade staff occupation of facilities. As ICDC become more effective, they are expected to be targeted by bad actors."[21]

The latest round of ICDC directives saddled Sanchez's subordinate elements with more responsibilities but gave them little in the way of additional resources. CJTF-7 units, confronted with insurgent violence on an unforeseen scale, struggled to provide sufficient training to ICDC battalions. Some newly formed ICDC battalions were trained to standard, but others received only partial training, and a few had, at most, minimal instruction. The same unevenness applied to equipping the units, with some receiving police uniforms instead of military fatigues when stocks of the latter ran out.[22] Building barracks and improving operational security understandably took a back seat to these fundamental issues.

20. Bfg, Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq (MNSTC-I) to Italian Delegation, 17 Jun 2004, sub: IT Delegation Brief, slide 19, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
21. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Italian Delegation, 17 Jun 2004, sub: IT Delegation Brief, slide 19.
22. Michael Zacchea and Ted Kemp, *The Ragged Edge: A US Marine's Account of Leading the Iraqi Army Fifth Battalion* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2017), 131–32.

Breaking from the reactive mode that had characterized ICDC planning up to this point, CJTF-7 next examined how to merge that force with the NIA's future command and control structure. Sanchez sought to reduce redundancy by placing some ICDC units under NIA command while complying with CPA wishes to demobilize a significant percentage of the ICDC. Although a few battalions would remain on active duty, the CPA wanted most of the corps placed on reserve status by 31 December 2005.[23] CJTF-7 signaled its willingness to merge both organizations by acquiring the same type of uniform worn by NIA soldiers and issuing them to ICDC personnel.[24]

The difficulties of recruiting senior military officers who would not be subject to CPA objections over their connections to the Saddam regime reemerged with the implementation of the expansion program. The Defense Department revealed its evolving views on CPA Order No. 1 on 25 November by withdrawing previous objections to employing Saddam-era military personnel. A shocked Bremer learned that "Rumsfeld told a Senate Committee that it might be possible 'to actually reach back in and see if units below some officer level' that hadn't been tainted by Baathism could be recalled."[25] The Pentagon's change of heart exposed the superficiality of the argument that disbanding the Iraqi Regular Army in May 2003 would prevent bad habits from being transferred to the post-Saddam force. Although Ambassador Bremer still sought to abide by the spirit of CPA Order No. 2, other key players within the Bush administration felt that the pressing need for professional military experience to help stabilize Iraq outweighed earlier concerns regarding former Iraqi service members' ideological leanings or past actions.

On 8 December, General Sanchez issued revised guidance: "Quality senior leadership is required to ensure an orderly transition of security responsibilities from CJTF-7 to the new Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi Governing Council. . . . Leadership selection by the Coalition and assignment to the New Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) will be a key element of this process."[26] CJTF-7 assumed responsibility for appointing personnel up to

23. Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez acknowledged that this plan could change if the Iraqis did not execute Coalition Provisional Authority–mandated programs following the restoration of sovereignty. Memo, Col. Mark E. Waring, Ch, C–3 Effects, CJTF-7, for Major Subordinate Cmd (MSC) Cdrs, 15 Jan 2004, sub: Policy for the ICDC, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.
24. Memo, Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, Cmdg Gen, CJTF-7, for MSC Cdrs, 21 Apr 2004, sub: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) Policy Letter, encl. 1, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.
25. L. Paul Bremer with Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2006), 235.
26. CJTF-7 Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) 1195 to CJTF-7 OPORD 03–036, 8 Dec 2003, Senior Iraqi ICDC Recruiting, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.

the battalion-commander level while Ambassador Bremer reserved the authority to select brigade commanders and their deputies.[27] CPA mandates regarding ethnic diversity remained in force. If a Kurd commanded a battalion or a brigade, the deputy commander or chief of staff had to be an Arab, and vice versa.[28]

Once the newest tranche of ICDC units were trained, equipped, and filled, they would require advisory teams. Lacking the personnel to oversee thirty-six battalions, ten brigades, and seven explosive ordnance disposal companies, CJTF-7 asked CENTCOM for additional people. The request did not mention the need for advisory training. General Sanchez also realized that it would take six to twelve months before those individuals appeared in country, a fact guaranteed to impact the ICDC fielding schedule even further.[29] The request highlighted the fact that every CJTF-7 initiative required the full support of the CPA, CENTCOM, and the Pentagon in order to meet its goals.

CHANGES AT THE TOP

A series of adjustments to both American and Iraqi organizational structure took place as year's end approached. In October 2003, the White House had addressed the yawning gap in CPA and Pentagon perspectives, along with enhancing the flow of information from Baghdād, by placing Ambassador Bremer's CPA under the National Security Council.[30] Changes also were taking place in Iraq as the looming transfer of sovereignty dictated new Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) priorities. Coupled with the deterioration of the security environment, the CPA decided to reestablish the Iraqi Ministry of Defense sooner rather than later. That process would be accelerated by using resources allocated for the Defense Support Agency to create the new ministry. CMATT would remain in Iraq to continue its train-and-equip mission after the CPA handed over the reins of power to an interim Iraqi government. As a result, Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton's CMATT staff started to develop procedures allowing them to interface with an Iraqi agency.

27. CJTF-7 FRAGO 1195 to CJTF-7 OPORD 03–036, 8 Dec 2003.
28. WARNO to CJTF-7 OPORD 03–036, 18 Nov 2003.
29. WARNO to CJTF-7 OPORD 03–036, 18 Nov 2003.
30. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 186–87. David E. Sanger, "White House to Overhaul Iraq and Afghan Missions," *New York Times*, 6 Oct 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/06/world/white-house-to-overhaul-iraq-and-afghan-missions.html, Hist Files, CMH.

Before Bremer could announce the existence of the yet-to-be-formed Ministry of Defense, its design had to be determined, and its military and civilian employees had to be vetted. Frederick C. Smith, the CPA's deputy senior adviser for national security affairs, later remembered, "We obviously had to create a new Ministry of Defense before 1 July 2004 so that it could play a role in the new national command structure we were also designing and establishing. Also, we needed a new Ministry of Defense so that we could perform the basic functions of providing support and logistics for the Iraqi armed forces."[31] In November 2003, the CPA formed a group of seven individuals—two American, one British, two Australian, one Czech, and one Estonian—to come up with an initial organizational design.

The entity took shape along lines more familiar to Europeans than Americans or Iraqis. The design team initiated its work by settling on the importance of three central principles: strong civilian control; a simple, functional organization; and physical consolidation of civilian and military leadership. The team's diversity, rather than hindering the overall effort, produced innovative suggestions and solutions. As one participant recalled, "If we had tried to design this organization before we went there, we would not have benefited from the input of our coalition partners."[32] In addition to bringing international viewpoints to the process, the team consulted with knowledgeable Iraqis to identify possible cultural and bureaucratic issues. That advice, however, did not touch upon larger issues that might result from transferring Department of Border Enforcement responsibilities wholesale to the Ministry of Interior. While CMATT designed the new ministry, the CPA consulted with members of the National Security Committee of the Iraqi Governing Council to ensure "their buy in, understanding, and acceptance. . . . If they didn't believe in it and didn't understand it, they could just dismiss it all and go back to the old ways."[33]

Identifying suitable Iraqi candidates for key positions within the Ministry of Defense posed a complicated challenge. Ensuring ethnic proportional representation became an informal but key factor in making hiring decisions. The ministry design team also made it clear that the new personnel system would be merit-based. In practice, this meant that senior officers in the Saddam-era military would not automatically enter the new Ministry of Defense at their former rank. CPA recruiting efforts, which relied on word of mouth and assistance from community leaders, yielded mixed success. Out

31. Interv, Phil Wilcox, U.S. Institute of Peace, with Frederick C. Smith, Coalition Provisional Authority Dep Sec National Security Affairs, 4 Aug 2004, 3, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/histories/iraq/smith.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
32. Interv, Wilcox with Smith, 4 Aug 2004, 4.
33. Interv, Wilcox with Smith, 4 Aug 2004, 8.

of the thousands of names gathered, a select group of several hundred were promising enough to warrant interviews. The CPA's inability to guarantee the personal safety of applicants also impeded the overall effort. As one American official recalled, "We couldn't advertise that we were looking for people, and that there would be a meeting someplace where applicants could go, because such locations would become targets for terrorists."[34] The CPA chose directorate managers for the new ministry from the pool of vetted candidates only after several grueling months of effort.

Despite the cumbersome hiring process, the Americans were able to assemble a cadre that was prepared to serve in the face of danger. However, most of the new civilian hires lacked hands-on experience because military personnel had filled those jobs before the coalition invasion. The CPA instituted a program to provide the new hires with some grounding in the skills they were expected to master. The first part involved introductory classes taught by CPA subject-matter experts in Baghdād. The follow-on phase, designed to "provide the future leadership of Iraq's MoD [Ministry of Defense] with a foundation of understanding of civilian control of the military, some basics in defense sector management and issues, and a look at a functional democratic country," included a two-week course at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., plus a third week of instruction at the United States Institute of Peace, also in Washington.[35]

After U.S. forces located and captured Saddam Hussein in an underground hiding spot outside of Tikrīt on 13 December, the news arrived at CPA headquarters during the early morning hours of the following day. The successful apprehension of the former Iraqi dictator prompted a wave of optimism that carried over into the CPA's ongoing discussions with Iraqi leaders. Within twenty-four hours of Saddam's incarceration, Bremer's counterparts on the Iraqi Governing Council issued a statement: "[Saddam's] disgraceful downfall has become the last act in the process of Iraq's liberation from the chains of oppression and fear. It is high time to turn a new page for building a unified and secure Iraq that provides hope for all of its children."[36] Although the governing council's message carried a note of confidence, few if any informed observers were bold enough to predict that popular resistance to the coalition presence in Iraq would diminish in the wake of Saddam's apprehension.

34. Interv, Wilcox with Smith, 4 Aug 2004, 14.
35. Andrew Rathmell et al., *Developing Iraq's Security Sector: The Coalition Provisional Authority's Experience* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), 30.
36. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 262.

TAILORED RESPONSE TO TERROR

Faced with growing acts of violence committed by foreign extremists like Zarqawi, CJTF-7 and the CPA laid the foundations for an Iraqi special operations capability—originally designated as the Iraqi Counter Terrorism team. In a nod toward Bremer's unshakable belief that Iraqi military personnel should not be used for internal security, the unit would be placed under the Ministry of Interior. Coalition planners estimated that an initial $5 million investment would cover the recruitment and specialized training of 200 personnel, loosely structured along the lines of an infantry company, and that the organization would be ready to undertake operations as early as May 2004.[37]

That concept evolved as Ambassador Bremer and General Sanchez—together with CENTCOM and the Iraqi Governing Council—decided in early November to form a 500-person special operations battalion capable of carrying out a wide range of missions, rather than a company-sized element focused on counterterrorism. The battalion drew recruits from militias sponsored by each of the five major political parties.[38] One American officer explained, "The concept was to bring these militias into a common unit under the tutelage of a U.S. Army Special Forces team to see whether they could successfully operate together and thereby overcome their diverse secular and sectarian agendas. If this trial succeeded, the concept could potentially be expanded nationwide."[39]

Placed under the Ministry of Defense (not the Ministry of Interior as originally planned) and redesignated as the 36th Iraqi Civil Defense Corps Battalion, the unit's two-digit designation distinguished it from the triple-digit numbers that identified other ICDC units. American personnel provided the commando recruits with six days of initial training at Jurf aş Şakhr, 60 kilometers south-southwest of Baghdād, before the unit moved to the capital in December. On 8 December, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula tasked two detachments from the 1st Special Forces Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st

37. Bfg, CPA and CENTCOM, 27 Oct 2003, sub: CPA/CENTCOM Combined Campaign Plan, slide 28, Hist Files, CMH.

38. These were the Iraqi National Accord, the Iraqi National Congress, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. The Americans factored in a 33 percent failure rate during training when calculating the size of each contingent.

39. Peter R. Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 245. See also James N. Jeffery, "Understanding Contemporary Foreign Internal Defense and Military Advisement: Not Just a Semantic Exercise" (monograph, Sch Advanced Mil Studies, 2008), 22–23.



A 1st Armored Division trainer instructs Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldiers on first aid techniques. (*S. Sgt. Reynaldo Ramon, U.S. Air Force*)

Special Forces, with instructing the commandos in tactics related to their expanded responsibilities. The special forces soldiers, facing an initial operating capability deadline of 26 December, devised a program consisting of six days of individual combat skills followed by ten days of mission-oriented collective instruction. Training for the 36th ICDC Battalion began on 10 December even though fewer than 75 percent of the billets had been filled.[40]

The special forces personnel instructing the unit spent a large proportion of their energy addressing issues other than training. These included acquiring and managing barracks, baths, dining facilities, gyms, and administrative buildings. Requests for U.S.-produced weapons and equipment went unanswered, which led to the battalion relying on AK47s and repainted civilian Land Rovers. Providing the Iraqi unit with a standard yet distinctive uniform, which should have been a simple task, likewise proved difficult. The 36th Battalion made do with a mix of Iraqi and early-style American desert uniforms before it received Lithuanian camouflage fatigues. In addition to

40. Interv, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) with Maj. Gen. Fadhil Jamil al-Barwari, 1st Bde Iraqi Special Ops Cmd, 3 Nov 2009, 1–2, Hist Files, CMH; Jeffery, "Understanding Contemporary Foreign Internal Defense and Military Advisement," 23; Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise*, 245.

these basic needs, caring for the battalion's sick and wounded soldiers took time away from training. Like all ICDC battalions, the 36th Battalion was supposed to receive medical care from Iraqi civilian facilities—a practice that proved to be such a risk to force protection and operational security that special operations advisers instead began soliciting support from U.S. military medical facilities.

American trainers assumed direct leadership of the 36th ICDC Battalion as it undertook small-scale missions upon completion of specialized instruction. The battalion's four companies initially held positions spread throughout Baghdād, with the headquarters and scout platoon residing on Camp Dakota in central Baghdād. One company fell under the tactical control of Col. Peter R. Mansoor's 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, holding the relatively peaceful Rusafa District east of the Euphrates River. Despite the 36th Battalion's abbreviated training, Mansoor later commented that the unit did a "reasonably good job" under his command.[41] The special forces advisers soon discovered that dispersed deployment placed excessive demands on the unit's communications and logistical resources, so the companies subsequently relocated to a single vacant building inside of the Iraqi Ministry of Oil complex.[42]

As the 36th ICDC Battalion conducted operations in Baghdād, General Abizaid and Secretary Rumsfeld authorized the creation of a second, completely separate, Iraqi counterterrorism unit, known as the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force (ICTF).[43] Like the 36th ICDC Battalion, the battalion-sized ICTF consisted of volunteers from different religious backgrounds and political affiliations. As sister battalions, the ICTF would focus on direct action strikes against extremist facilitators and leadership, as well as hostage rescue missions, and the 36th Battalion would conduct ambushes, raids, and the cordoning of targets in support of direct action strikes.[44] In January 2004, following initial selection and vetting at the Radwaniyah Palace Complex near Baghdad International Airport, the first ICTF cohort of about one hundred personnel departed Iraq to begin a ninety-eight-day training course in Jordan, cotaught by personnel from the Jordanian

41. Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise*, 245. See also David Witty, "The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service" (Washington, DC: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 2015), 6, Hist Files, CMH; and Interv, CALL with al-Barwari, 3 Nov 2009, 2.
42. Jeffery, "Understanding Contemporary Foreign Internal Defense and Military Advisement," 29; Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise*, 245.
43. Rpt, Joint Forces Special Ops Component Cmd–Iraq, Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 2, Hist Files, CMH.
44. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 6–7, 9.

special forces and elements of the U.S. 3d Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces.[45]

The 36th Battalion and ICTF personnel differed from run-of-the-mill NIA and ICDC soldiers in several important ways. Recruits were expected to maintain above-average marksmanship, display proficiency in advanced tactics and mission planning, and exhibit selfless service. Those requirements, when coupled with the prospect of joining an elite force, appealed to a small percentage of individuals in Iraqi society. Not only did American special forces personnel have a much freer hand than their CMATT counterparts, but they also possessed a deep well of useful experience working with foreign armies. The combination of motivated recruits, well-defined missions, superior small-unit leadership, and an advisory detachment numbering twice the size of advisory teams allocated to most conventional Iraqi units, produced measurably superior results.[46]

RETENTION AND MORALE

The 36th ICDC Battalion's advisers were fortunate not to find themselves confronted by issues experienced by other Americans. In late November, over half of the 1st New Iraqi Army Battalion walked off the job. The entire unit would have departed Kir Kush, except American soldiers physically restrained many from doing so.[47] After reviewing the incident, General Sanchez observed, "The cause of the problem that we are facing right now in that first battalion is based on pay. . . . We're working to review the pay scales at this point and I think we'll have some decisions in the coming weeks."[48] Sanchez felt that many of the Iraqi soldiers quit because they could not support their families financially.[49] Privates earned seventy dollars a month—about half of what Iraqi workers earned for building protective

45. In comparison, U.S. special forces candidates received fifty-six to ninety-five weeks of training. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 6; Kevin Wells, "Eight Years of Combat FID: A Retrospective on Special Forces in Iraq," *Special Warfare* 25, no. 1 (Jan-Mar 2012): 12–19.

46. Kenneth M. Pollack, *Armies of Sand: The Past, Present, and Future of Arab Military Effectiveness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 376–84, 389–91, 470–72, 487–92, 508.

47. M. Sgt. Rohan M. McDermott, "Rebirth of an Army: Training the New Iraqi Army, OIF I, Kirkush Iraq, 15 Oct 03 to 10 Mar 04" (personal experience paper, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, 21 Sep 2006), 9, Hist Files, CMH.

48. Naseer al-Nahr, "New Iraqi Army Pay Under Review After Mass Walkout," *Arab News*, 14 Dec 2003, https://www.arabnews.com/node/241534, Hist Files, CMH.

49. "As Recruits Desert in Droves, U.S. Rethinks Iraqi Army Pay," *USA Today*, 13 Dec 2003, https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2003-12-13-iraq_x.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

sandbag walls around CPA buildings in Baghdād's International Zone (later nicknamed "the Green Zone").[50] On 18 December, CJTF-7 recommended that all ICDC and NIA soldiers receive an additional eighty dollars per month in hazardous duty pay, backdated to the beginning of the month.[51]

Within a few days, the CPA authorized hazardous duty pay for all Iraqi security forces personnel. Ambassador Bremer informed media representatives, "It is only right that these brave security forces when faced with increased dangers should be compensated for the hazardous duties they perform."[52] The extra pay varied by type of unit, which reflected the CPA's concern about recruiting and retention issues unique to certain Iraqi security organizations. To supplement their basic salary, Iraqi police, firemen, and border and prison guards received an additional 130,000 dinars ($80), members of the new armed forces and civil defense corps 120,000 dinars ($75), and infrastructure security personnel 96,000 dinars ($60) per month.[53]

American military personnel in Kir Kush also believed that the 1st NIA Battalion's morale suffered from repeated exposure to untried methods and programs. "It was a new experience for everyone," said Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Johnny Matlock, "We had to learn by mistakes."[54] One of the problems afflicting the 1st NIA Battalion stemmed from the fact that the Iraqis viewed Vinnell Corporation instructors as technicians rather than authority figures. As a result, the civilian contractors competently executed the required training but lacked the ability to build cohesion and esprit de corps within NIA units. Belatedly acknowledging that Iraqi resistance to being instructed by civilians was an unforeseen and insoluble issue, the Pentagon accepted the fact that American troops would have to assume responsibility for training the NIA. Both Vinnell and the Defense Department agreed to a phased transition of NIA training responsibilities by mid-2004. Contractual obligations prevented the handover from occurring at once, permitting the Pentagon to set about identifying who would replace the departing contractors.

50. Ariana Eunjung Cha, "First Iraqi Battalion Arrives with Hundreds of Men Missing," *Washington Post*, 13 Dec 2003, reprinted by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/First-Iraqi-battalion-arrives-with-hundreds-of-2509209.php, Hist Files, CMH.
51. Memo, Sanchez for MSC Cdrs, 21 Apr 2004, sub: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) Policy Letter.
52. "Coalition to Pay Iraqi Security 'Hazard' Premium," *Middle East Online*, 23 Dec 2003, Hist Files, CMH.
53. "Coalition to Pay Iraqi Security 'Hazard' Premium," *Middle East Online*, 23 Dec 2003.
54. Cha, "First Iraqi Battalion Arrives."

Although CMATT originally intended to retain the services of some Vinnell cadre—such as warehouse operators, armorers, and equipment managers—General Eaton soon decided to replace civilian trainers with U.S. military personnel as soon as the latter became available. The shift to military trainers led to CMATT making several changes. First, the U.S. military personnel assigned to each Iraqi battalion now could accompany the unit as advisers when it completed training.[55] Units in Iraq would provide teams for the 1st through the 4th NIA Battalions while units in Germany and the United States supplied additional teams for the 5th, 6th, and 7th NIA Battalions.[56] Another pair of teams eventually would go to the 8th and 9th NIA Battalions once the Pentagon decided on a source for those personnel.[57] CMATT made no plans to assign trainer/advisers to the remaining eighteen NIA battalions, in large part because those units would not be joining the force anytime soon.

Although teams from the 4th Infantry Division, the 173d Airborne Brigade (which was attached to the 4th Infantry Division), the 1st Armored Division, and the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment (which was attached to the 1st Armored Division) joined up with the 1st and 2d NIA Battalions, respectively, in late 2003, it would take some time for additional CJTF-7 teams, let alone personnel from outside Iraq, to assume their new duties. The lengthy handover process allowed Vinnell to stand down its operation incrementally by terminating support activities not directly related to training. However, that meant American or Iraqi military personnel would have to take over the Vinnell support missions. That soon impacted the 1st NIA Battalion. CMATT had sought to motivate the unit by arranging for it to participate in combined operations with the 4th Infantry Division's cavalry squadron. The effort ended prematurely when Vinnell announced its intention to terminate the arrangement it had with civilian security contractors to protect the NIA training facility.[58] After reviewing the situation, General Eaton opted to temporarily retain the 1st NIA Battalion as the perimeter security force in Kir Kush rather than send it elsewhere.[59] The decision to use American military trainer/advisers altered plans for the 2d and 3d NIA Battalions, which now would serve as tactical units rather

55. Interv, Maj. Marty R. Deckard, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI), with Maj. Scott C. Nauman, former Advisory Team Leader, 2d New Iraqi Army (NIA) Bn, 9 May 2008, 3, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI (hereinafter OLE).
56. Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, 26.
57. Eric Navarro, *God Willing: My Wild Ride with the New Iraqi Army* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2008), 2.
58. McDermott, "Rebirth of an Army," 10; Interv, Deckard with Nauman, 9 May 2008, 3.
59. Interv, Deckard with Nauman, 9 May 2008, 4.

than instructor cadre organizations. An ad hoc element known as the Iraqi Training Battalion, which provided replacements for NIA battalions after they formed, continued to perform that mission for the time being.[60]

The handover began just as CMATT started examining how it could accelerate NIA training in accordance with Secretary Rumsfeld's guidance. After determining that the goal could not be met using only one training facility, Eaton initiated plans to open a second training base in At Tājī. However, that requirement meant that another NIA battalion soon would be needed to provide security there as well.[61] Although Eaton strove to limit the turmoil created by the early termination of the Vinnell contract, it soon became apparent that CMATT would not be able to field all twenty-seven NIA battalions in a year as requested by Rumsfeld. In fact, it seemed doubtful that the original goal of nine NIA battalions would be met.

Training for NIA officers who had been slated for future assignment to units got underway in Jordan in the final days of 2003. On 29 December, 560 officer candidates boarded ten American C–130 transport planes bound for Amman, Jordan, to attend an eleven-week training course starting on 4 January. While exposing Iraqis to Western-oriented military training seemed like a good idea, the program overlooked long-standing regional rivalries. The prospect of being trained by Jordanians did not generate much enthusiasm among the Iraqis. Most were combat veterans, whereas the Jordanians had not fought a war in several decades. Journalist Imad Sha'ban ridiculed the program in a commentary published on 3 January 2004: "So what has suddenly transpired that requires the officers of the fourth strongest army in the world to be trained by an army that was used only to suppress demonstrations and riots, crush the Palestinians, and protect the border with Israel?"[62] Iraqi hubris overlooked the fact that they had done poorly in battle against Western-trained forces since 1990.

THE EVOLVING ADVISORY EFFORT

The Iraqi Army's tainted past reemerged on 5 January 2004 in the form of a heated debate within the governing council about observing the founding of

60. Interv, John H. McCool, CSI, with Maj. Pete Fedak, former Advisory Team Leader, 6th NIA Bn, 15 Feb 2006, 6, OLE.

61. The Coalition Military Assistance Training Team chose the 5th New Iraqi Army Battalion for that mission in July 2004. Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, 128–29.

62. Imad Sha'ban, "Iraqi Writer Ridicules Decision to Train Iraqi Officers in Jordan," *al-Ittijah al-Akhar*, 3 Jan 2004, Open Source Center Document GMP20040106000180, 5, cited in Ibrahim Al-Marashi, "Disbanding and Rebuilding the Iraqi Army: The Historical

the old Iraqi Army. The spat reflected the split between Iraqis who associated their old army with Saddam's atrocities and those who viewed it as a symbol of national strength predating the Ba'thists. One councilman, Raja al-Khuzai, remarked, "It's still in our minds and hearts that the Iraqi Army was the best army in the Middle East. . . . When this dictatorship came, it forced the army not to protect Iraq but to invade other countries."[63] The final decision of the council, confirmed by an 11–7 vote, proclaimed January 6th as a national holiday, to be known as Army Day, with the caveat that the nation should not forget the past abuses of Saddam's army.

The 2d NIA Battalion graduated in Kir Kush on the same day as the Army Day announcement, during a ceremony attended by Ambassador Bremer, General Sanchez, and governing council representatives. CJTF-7 assigned the unit—the first NIA formation to partner with coalition forces—to the 1st Armored Division, which selected its chief civil affairs officer, a former member of the 7th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, to head the twenty-four-person advisory team assigned to the Iraqi unit. The division instructed each of its four brigade combat teams, including the attached 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment, to provide a four-person team for each Iraqi infantry company. Another eight or ten Americans supported the staff and headquarters company.[64]

Capt. Scott C. Nauman, reassigned from command of a mechanized infantry company in January 2004 to advise a company in the 2d NIA Battalion, discovered that the lack of a national banking system had a tremendous operational impact on Iraqi units. Unlike ICDC units, NIA units were not based near the soldiers' homes. As a result, most NIA personnel required a week or more to deliver pay to their families. Following a frustrating attempt to sort out leave requests after his company's first pay day, Nauman suggested the adoption of a rotating system, with one company going on leave, one company participating in training, and two companies conducting combat operations. When the soldiers assigned to the company on leave returned, the company in training would depart, and so forth, until all soldiers had an opportunity to take their earnings home. The battalion senior adviser agreed to give the system a try. After a trial run proved

Perspective," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 11, no. 3 (Sep 2007): 42–53, https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/meria/meria_200709/meria_200709_5_almarashi.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

63. Borzou Daragahi, "No Parades Will Mark Iraqi Army's Birthday; Council Debates Status of Military," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 Jan 2004, https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/no-parades-will-mark-iraqi-army-s-birthday-2832372.php, Hist Files, CMH.

64. Interv, Deckard with Nauman, 9 May 2008, 3–4.

successful, the advisory team adopted the practice of paying companies on staggered dates rather than the entire battalion at once.[65]

The unanticipated payroll issue stemmed in part from CMATT's rapidly expanding charter. By mid-January 2004, General Eaton's staff had grown to more than 200. In addition to U.S. Army personnel, the group included twenty-two marines, eleven sailors, twelve airmen, and nineteen international officers from Spain, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland. Although the mounting workload could be spread among new arrivals, personnel turbulence within the staff also increased. U.S. Marine Corps, Air Force, and Navy personnel served four to seven months, compared to twelve months for the Army. Most international officers also served shorter assignments than their U.S. Army counterparts. The disproportionally high turnover in non-Army personnel degraded institutional memory to such a degree that CMATT found it difficult to address some minor issues before they became major problems.

Eaton's command remained dependent on outside personnel obtained through Abizaid's staff. CENTCOM had processed Eaton's request for advisory teams in late November, making some adjustments before forwarding the amended packet to the Joint Staff a month later. The joint personnel specialists, after making additional changes based on their own assessments, filled the CMATT request for advisers with personnel from all four military services. However, that "share the pain" approach failed to meet the need for advisers with experience in small-unit infantry tactics. Very few Air Force and Navy personnel had that type of background. Lacking binding guidance to the contrary, each service settled on different tour lengths for CMATT staff and trainer/advisers it would provide. The U.S. Army opted to deploy advisory teams to Iraq for a twelve-month assignment, while the periods for Navy, Marine, and Air Force individuals were shorter. As a result, advisory teams assigned to NIA units fell victim to the same turnover being experienced by Eaton's staff.

Although the U.S. Army committed to year-long advisory tours, it did little to prepare its personnel for their new assignments. The experience of Lt. Col. David G. Sage, the officer in charge of an observer-controller group at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, is illustrative. He learned on 13 January 2004 that his command had to provide ten soldiers to serve as advisers with the NIA. Sage assembled the fifty soldiers in his unit to ask for volunteers. Capt. Michael D. Sullivan, a team leader, and five of his six noncommissioned officers volunteered. The remaining four soldiers transferred from other teams to the group, which

65. Interv, Deckard with Nauman, 9 May 2008, 3–4.

came under the command of Maj. Pete Fedak. Once Sage had assembled this first team, he put together a second team led by Maj. James O. Lechner.[66]

Captain Sullivan experienced difficulty obtaining information about his new assignment. Whenever he queried agencies outside Hohenfels, they adamantly maintained his role would be confined to providing basic training. He finally contacted Lt. Col. Paddy Devine, an Australian acquaintance from the Armor Officer Advanced Course at Fort Knox, Kentucky, serving with CMATT. Devine explained that Sullivan and his soldiers were slated to advise an Iraqi infantry battalion. Armed with that information, Captain Sullivan lobbied his chain of command for the equipment needed to participate in combat operations. The items appeared just before the team's departure from Germany.[67]

The impending arrival of U.S. advisers came as welcome news to CJTF-7 as more Iraqi units completed their training in Kir Kush. Although CMATT personnel authorizations expanded to 166 officers and enlisted soldiers, less than half were filled, and none had been reserved for advisers.[68] Although plans existed to create NIA brigades, deploying individual battalions directly into the fight took precedence. In mid-January, General Sanchez formally placed a higher priority on training Iraqi battalions over brigade headquarters.[69] Rather than join the 2d Battalion, its sister NIA unit serving with the 1st Armored Division, the 3d Battalion received orders on 24 January to report to the 101st Airborne Division in Mosul.[70] The 101st sent the Iraqi unit back soon afterward, explaining they could not spare the assets needed to shepherd an inexperienced Iraqi unit. The 3d NIA Battalion remained in limbo until it joined the 8th and 9th NIA Battalions to form the 2d New Iraqi Army Brigade.[71]

A set of fresh eyes arrived during early February in the form of a Department of Defense inspection team dispatched by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz. Headed by Maj. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, who

66. Interv, McCool with Fedak, 15 Feb 2006, 3–5.

67. Interv, John H. McCool, CSI, with Maj. Michael D. Sullivan, former Asst Advisory Team Leader for 6th NIA Bn, 5 May 2006, 4, OLE.

68. On-hand personnel included forty-two members of the Army, two Marine Corps members, thirteen from the Navy, and one from the Air Force, as well as four Department of Defense civilians and eighteen civilian contractors. Most rotated out of their position between March and August 2004. Slide, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, 28 Mar 2004, sub: Proposed OSC JMD IV 20040328, Hist Files, CMH.

69. Memo, Waring for MSC Cdrs, 15 Jan 2004, sub: Policy for the ICDC.

70. Sfc. Doug Sample, "New Iraqi Army First Brigade Nearly Complete," American Forces Press Service, 21 Jan 2004, http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=27461, Hist Files, CMH.

71. Interv, Steven E. Clay and John McGrath, CSI, with Lt. Col. (Ret.) Blaise Cornell-d'Echert, former CMATT staff ofcr, 31 Oct 2006, 11, OLE.

recently had been assigned as the senior American trainer and mentor for Afghan security forces, the group examined the ICDC and NIA programs.[72] After several weeks of tours, briefings, and presentations, General Eikenberry compiled a report for Rumsfeld, Bremer, Abizaid, and Sanchez. He offered several recommendations, including placing training for all Iraqi security forces under CJTF-7 rather than the CPA. Eikenberry also suggested extending the charter of the ICDC, which would expire in September 2004, for another year and further increasing its size. The billpayer would be the NIA, which would be reduced to one division. He closed with a gentle swipe at numerical metrics, pointing out that fixating on the quantity rather than the quality (that is, the combat readiness) of units and personnel would produce a brittle Iraqi security apparatus.[73]

General Eaton directed his staff to prepare their own analysis in anticipation of Eikenberry's final report. CMATT noted that overemphasis on the constabulary aspects of the ICDC mission resulted in that organization evolving into a rival, rather than a supporter, of the Iraqi civilian police. The NIA, in contrast, focused on traditional military tasks. Col. Paul F. Hughes, director of the CPA's Strategic Policy Office, opined, "Our concern is that increased funding for the ICDC would come at the expense of Iraq's New Army. . . . The longer we have to rely on the civil defense corps as our principal support unit for Iraqi police, the longer U.S. troops will have to remain in Iraq."[74]

When Eikenberry released his report, the CPA and CENTCOM joined forces to argue against several of its recommendations, especially the reduction in the size of the NIA. Ambassador Bremer submitted a nonconcurrence to Eikenberry stating, "I do not agree with the plan to reduce the Iraqi Armed Forces to a single division. Such a decision essentially overturns everything we have said to the Iraqi people about our intention to produce an army for Iraq's legitimate defensive needs."[75] Bremer also voiced strong opposition to shifting responsibility for training civilian police to CJTF-7. General Abizaid agreed, saying during congressional testimony on 5 March that he "opposed any plan to empower the civil defense corps and police force at the expense of the military."[76]

72. Statement, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Paul D. Eaton, *An Oversight Hearing on the Planning and Conduct of the War in Iraq Before the Senate Democratic Policy Committee*, 25 Sep 2006, 4, http://democrats.senate.gov/dpc/hearings/hearing38/eaton.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
73. James Dobbins et al., *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 69.
74. Stephen J. Glain, "Pentagon Said to Favor Prolonged Role for US Forces in Iraq," *Boston Globe*, 6 Mar 2004, Hist Files, CMH.
75. Dobbins et al., *Occupying Iraq*, 69.
76. Glain, "Pentagon Said to Favor Prolonged Role for US Forces in Iraq."

Rumsfeld, while acknowledging the objections to shrinking the NIA, approved most of Eikenberry's recommendations. The secretary of defense wanted to shift primary responsibility for managing the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces to Abizaid. On 8 March 2004, Rumsfeld tasked his staff to draft a memorandum for President's Bush's signature that "directed the Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), with policy guidance from the Chief of Mission, to manage all U.S. government efforts and coordinate international efforts in support of organizing, equipping, and training all [Iraqi] security forces."[77]

Although presidential approval would not be forthcoming for another two months, the secretary's ruling produced one immediate change. On 9 March 2004, General Eaton became the head of the Office of Security Transition–Iraq.[78] The responsibilities of this office included providing direction and guidance to both CMATT and the newly created Civilian Police Assistance Training Team. Under the revised organizational scheme, both of General Eaton's deputies were initially coalition officers. British Brig. Gen. Nigel R. F. Aylwin-Foster took command of CMATT, which assumed the mission of equipping and training the ICDC in addition to its existing responsibilities. British Brig. Gen. Andrew D. Mackay led the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, which had responsibility for staffing, equipping, and training the Iraqi Police Service, Department of Border Enforcement, Iraqi Highway Patrol, and Facilities Protection Service.[79]

INCREASING THE STAKES

While the Eikenberry mission reflected the Defense Department's acknowledgment of the importance of the NIA and ICDC, the challenges facing both organizations grew rather than diminished. Insurgents began to assassinate Iraqi officers, particularly those exhibiting above-average

77. Memo, Lawrence J. Lanzillotta, Acting Under Sec Def (Comptroller), for Senator Richard G. Lugar, Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, 24 Jun 2002, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

78. The new office had been designated the Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq for a brief period before it became the Office of Security Transition–Iraq.

79. Donald P. Wright and Col. Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign, The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom, May 2003–January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 450; Robert M. Perito, "The Iraq Federal Police: U.S. Police Building Under Fire," U.S. Institute of Peace Special Rpt 291, 18 Oct 2011, 2–3, https://www.usip.org/publications/2011/10/iraq-federal-police, Hist Files, CMH.

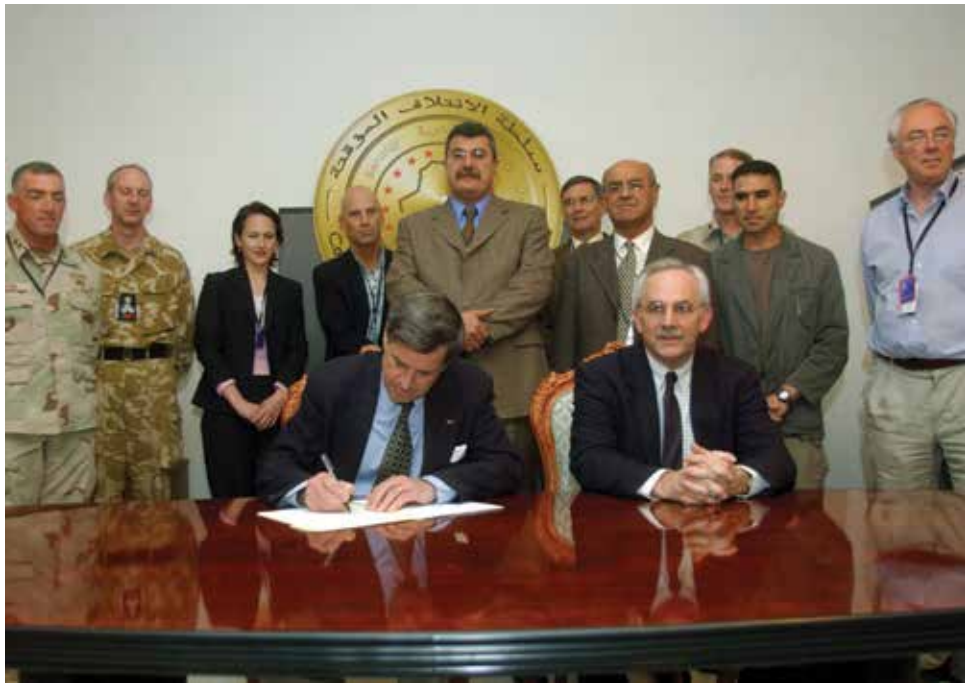
competence. In some cases, such as with Capt. Kameel Mahmood, coalition forces might have prevented the deaths if they had heeded Iraqi warnings.

Mahmood, who served as the chief intelligence officer of the ICDC's 302d Battalion, had warned his American counterpart that he feared insurgents would attempt to kill him. Although ICDC officers were permitted to carry their AK47 rifles home, most refused to do so to avoid being singled out as collaborators. Instead, the 302d Battalion's officers had asked their advisers to provide them with easily concealed pistols for self-protection. Because there were none in the supply system, the request went unfilled. Shortly after Mahmood had expressed his worries, a group of insurgents opened fire on his car, killing him and four other unarmed ICDC soldiers. Following their murder, the U.S. brigade tasked with supporting the 302d Battalion provided the Iraqi officers with pistols seized in raids. The Americans, however, could not furnish all ICDC units with additional protective gear such as ballistic vests. As one media account of Mahmood's murder noted, "The U.S. supply chain is already overburdened with the task of equipping its own forces with flak vests and Humvees for the counterinsurgency war in Iraq, let alone outfitting roughly 200,000 Iraqi security forces hired in just the past year."[80]

The appearance of the first group of U.S. military trainers in Kir Kush had had an unanticipated impact on NIA training. While Vinnell had implemented a uniform instructional regimen, trainers from military units taught methods in their own unique ways. The arrival of the second group of trainer/advisers from Germany and the United States reinforced that trend. Absent detailed guidance from CMATT, each of the second group of training/advisory teams modified or discarded the Vinnell curriculum. As Captain Sullivan later observed, "Kirkush [now] had the 5th, 6th, and 7th Battalions. [The] 5th Battalion was being trained by the Marines, 6th Battalion by us, and 7th Battalion by another team from Hohenfels. All three of us did things completely differently. . . . There was no standardization within what eventually became this brigade."[81]

The ICDC experienced a similar lack of consistency, which was compounded by the fact that it received far less training compared to the NIA. The Iraqis attempted to fill in that gap by imitating the Americans. A brigade sergeant major who worked with the 302d Battalion for some weeks recounted, "After seven months with us, the ICDC are beginning to take on the attitudes and mannerisms of the U.S. military. . . . You can see it in the way they snap to, whenever a U.S. sergeant walks by. These guys

80. James Kitfield, "Out of the Nest," *National Journal*, 9 Apr 2004, reprinted by James Joyner at https://www.outsidethebeltway.com/out_of_the_nest/, Hist Files, CMH.
81. Interv, McCool with Sullivan, 5 May 2006, 21.



Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III (*foreground, left*) signs the order establishing the Ministry of Defense in the Coalition Provisional Authority conference room. Coalition Military Assistance Training Team Commander Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton looks on (*background, left*). (*S. Sgt. Quinton Russ, U.S. Air Force*)

are like sponges, and they are very much modeling themselves after us."[82] Imitation might be a sincere form of flattery, but it proved to be a profoundly ill-suited means of instilling expertise. Although well intentioned, such statements raised Pentagon, CENTCOM, and CJTF-7 expectations to the point that Iraqi battlefield failures might be difficult for CMATT to explain and potentially could cast doubt on the abilities of U.S. advisers.

Changeover between incoming and outgoing units of Operation Iraqi Freedom during this period also disrupted ICDC training as newcomers accepted responsibility for an unfamiliar mission they had devoted little time to mastering during their predeployment preparations. The incoming III Corps possessed eighteen brigades, including five Army National Guard combat brigades and three U.S. Marine regimental combat teams, as well as a late-arriving Stryker unit. However, two brigades were designated as theater security elements and therefore not available for immediate commitment.

82. Kitfield, "Out of the Nest."

Coalition troop strength had improved somewhat, but not to the point at which the need to generate additional Iraqi units would become less urgent.[83]

On 21 March 2004, Ambassador Bremer issued CPA Order No. 67, formally announcing the creation of the Iraqi-led Ministry of Defense and authorizing the governing council to fill a ministerial position that had been abolished by CPA Order No. 2. Once the Iraqi group selected its candidate, CPA officials insisted on checking the individual's background to ensure he did not "hold financial interests that conflict[ed] with the employee's conscientious performance of duty."[84] Bremer invested significant effort in overseeing the vetting process because the new defense minister would have the authority to appoint a deputy minister, senior military adviser, general counsel, director general, and chief of staff of the Iraqi Armed Forces. In fact, CPA Order No. 67 introduced the term "Iraqi Armed Forces," which now encompassed the Army, Air Force, Coastal Defense Force, ICTF, and ICDC, all of which came under the new ministry.[85] The senior coalition commander in Iraq retained operational control over all trained elements of the Iraqi Armed Forces. With the publication of the new order, the ministry absorbed the Defense Support Agency established the previous fall.

WAR ON TWO FRONTS

The CPA soon found itself facing far more pressing worries than choosing an Iraqi minister of defense. Two unrelated chains of events stoked the simmering insurgency to a boil in the spring of 2004. The first began on 28 March when Ambassador Bremer ordered Muqtada al-Sadr's newspaper, *Hawza*, shut down as the initial step in a process designed to bring him to justice for the August 2003 murder of a rival cleric, Abdul Majid al-Khoei. Several days later, coalition forces in An Najaf detained Mustapha al-Yacoubi, one of Sadr's high-ranking deputies, in connection with the killing.[86] In response to the arrest, the cleric's followers held massive rallies, while armed militia seized public buildings and police stations in An Najaf, Al Kufah, Al Kūt, and Sadr City (a district in eastern Baghdād unofficially named for Sadr's father).

83. Six of the eighteen brigades were based in and around Baghdād. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 616–20.
84. Kitfield, "Out of the Nest."
85. CPA Order 67, 22 Mar 2004 and 22 Apr 2004, Ministry of Defence, http://www.cpa-iraq.org/regulations/, Hist Files, CMH.
86. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 318.

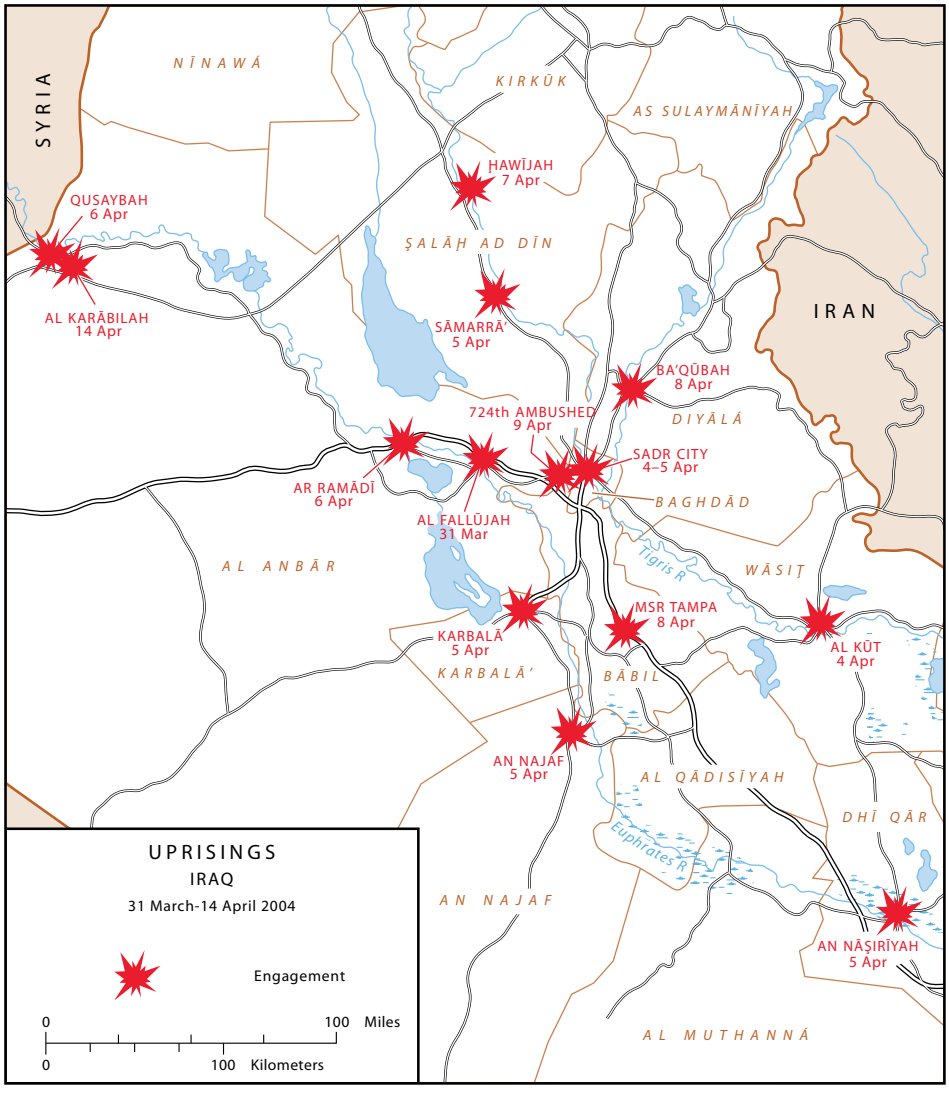
During the first week of April, as the coalition sought to maintain order in Baghdād, fighting between U.S. forces and Sadr's gunmen erupted first in the Iraqi capital, before spreading to other cities in southern Iraq (*Map 2.2*). In addition to seizing a number of police stations within Sadr City, the Mahdi Army swarmed CPA compounds in Al Ḥillah and An Najaf. The ICDC forces in An Najaf disintegrated, and coalition troops in the city performed little better, forcing CJTF-7 to send U.S. soldiers to restore order there. The 1st Armored Division, which had handed over Baghdād to the 1st Cavalry Division, found itself headed into combat instead of shipping back to Germany from Kuwait. Although the timing may have seemed inauspicious, the CPA confirmed Ali Abdul-Amir Allawi, a British- and American-educated expert on Middle Eastern affairs and longtime opponent of Ba'thist politics, as the new minister of defense. Mohammed Abdullah al-Shahwani, a former Iraqi general of mixed Kurdish and Turkmen descent, became the head of Iraq's National Intelligence Service on that same day.[87]

A second challenge to the CPA started a few days before the Sadrist uprising. On 31 March, seven days after the 82d Airborne Division passed responsibility for Al Anbār Province to the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), four Blackwater civilian security contractors were killed in Al Fallūjah. Media images of their bodies—mutilated, hung from a bridge, and set on fire—shocked television viewers worldwide. The murders served notice of Zarqawi's willingness to confront the coalition in Al Fallūjah. Violence flared as the insurgents launched several attacks against the marines and Iraqi security forces in the western city. The I MEF responded by cordoning off the city and asking for reinforcements. The majority of the 505th and 506th ICDC Battalions deserted or refused to report for duty. The marines were unsure of the loyalty of the remaining Iraqi military personnel and viewed them with suspicion.[88]

While ICDC and police units melted away rather than oppose the extremists, the CPA viewed Al Fallūjah as an opportunity to showcase the NIA's commitment to maintaining law and order in Iraq during its democratic transition. Given the problems experienced by the 1st Battalion in late November, the 2d and 3d NIA Battalions were the only available choices. The fact that the 2d Battalion had performed adequately alongside elements of the 82d Airborne Division during a series of routine operations

87. "New Iraqi Defense Minister, Intelligence Chief Announced," Voice of America News, 4 Apr 2004, https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2004-04-04-17-1-67344902/272556.html, Hist Files, CMH.

88. Darrin Mortenson, "U.S. to Give Iraqi Soldiers Another Try," *North County Times*, 29 Apr 2004, Hist Files, CMH.



Map 2.2

in Al Anbār Province, while the 3d Battalion had spent a brief time in Mosul with the 101st Airborne Division, quickly decided the matter.[89]

When the 1st Armored Division soldiers assigned to the 2d NIA Battalion learned of the proposed deployment, they expressed serious qualms about sending the Iraqi unit into a contested urban environment. The advisers, who were preparing to rotate out of Iraq, felt they had nothing to lose by being candid about the situation. Captain Nauman recalled, "At that point, we considered them operational at company level only. They had not done

89. Interv, Deckard with Nauman, 9 May 2008, 3–4.



A U.S. Air Force HH–60 Black Hawk provides overwatch for American troops in Baghdād during the April 2004 uprising. (*S. Sgt. Cherie A. Thurlby, U.S. Air Force*)

any battalion training exercises, nor had they trained at battalion level. Our assessment was that they were completely incapable of going in without the entire operation being run by American officers."[90] Although the NIA soldiers had worked well with U.S. paratroopers, the situation in Al Fallūjah involved far greater difficulties and risk.

The 1st Armored Division demanded the return of its advisory personnel before the NIA battalion's deployment to Al Fallūjah. In light of the fact that the Iraqi unit would now be working with I MEF, General Eaton assigned newly arrived marines to the unit.[91] The Marine advisers, who had reported over the past several weeks to CMATT, were still learning about their mission and operational environment. The outgoing team consisted of twenty-four soldiers, with eight personnel at battalion level and a quartet of advisers for each company. Their replacements numbered only ten personnel, which allowed one enlisted or junior officer for each of the four rifle companies, with the remainder at battalion level. A staff sergeant replaced

90. Interv, Deckard with Nauman, 9 May 2008, 5.
91. Email, Maj. Scott C. Nauman to Mark J. Reardon, 8 Jul 2009, sub: Center of Military History Official Account of Rebuilding/Training the Iraqi Army, Hist Files, CMH.



A Bradley infantry fighting vehicle from the 3d Infantry Division patrols a road in Baghdād near a presidential palace of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein during the April 2004 uprising. (*Sfc. David K. Dismukes, U.S. Army*)

Nauman, which his partnered Iraqi company commander perceived as a deliberate insult.[92]

Concerned about the potential impact of the contractor deaths on not only world opinion but also the upcoming transfer of sovereignty, the White House position gravitated toward employing overwhelming military force in Al Fallūjah.[93] In sharp contrast, CENTCOM recommended against mounting a major assault. Keenly aware I MEF had only two infantry battalions on hand, Abizaid preferred to address concerns related to Sadr in south-central Iraq before dealing with Al Fallūjah. The Marines wanted to move quietly into the city to arrest the perpetrators rather than launch a full-scale push.[94] Secretary Rumsfeld replied, "No. We've got to attack . . . [and] we need to make sure that Iraqis in other cities receive our message."[95]

92. Interv, Deckard with Nauman, 9 May 2008, 5.
93. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 326; Ricardo S. Sanchez with Donald T. Phillips, *Wiser in Battle: A Soldier's Story* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 348.
94. Gerald de Lira Jr., "The Anger of Great Nations: Operation Vigilant Resolve" (master's thesis, U.S. Marine Corps Cmd and Staff College, 4 May 2009), 8–10, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a509044.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
95. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 332–33.

Lt. Gen. James T. Conway, the I MEF commander, sought to avoid a violent confrontation by asking the civil authorities to hand over the individuals responsible for the Blackwater ambush. The Iraqis rebuffed his offer. As the marines prepared to launch their assault, Conway learned that two additional Marine infantry battalions, along with elements of the NIA, were coming to Al Fallūjah as reinforcements.[96] I MEF used both American battalions to strengthen the main attack while the additional ICDC and NIA battalions established a cordon to prevent insurgents from fleeing.[97]

On 5 April, two Marine infantry battalions, supported by aircraft and tanks, initiated Operation Vigilant Resolve by attacking from the northwest and southeast while a Marine reconnaissance battalion established positions along city's southern outskirts. The assault force sought to establish a permanent enclave within the city to prevent Zarqawi from using it as a base of operations. The marines encountered foreign fighters and homegrown insurgents employing small arms, improvised explosive devices, and rocket-propelled grenades. Sanchez recalled, "The fighting was house-to-house and door-to-door. It was fierce, bloody, and aggressive. Close air support was an integral part of the offensive, including Air Force AC–130 Spectre [*sic*] gunships and fighter aircraft."[98]

BAPTISM OF FIRE

Orders to send the NIA to Al Fallūjah were transmitted to U.S. advisers before the planned operation but were not shared with the Iraqis until the last minute. The 2d Battalion convoy departed At Tājī on 5 April 2004 escorted by a Humvee-equipped American scout platoon. Virtually the entire Iraqi unit went willingly, although a few expressed misgivings at fighting fellow Sunnis.[99] The brigade tasked to provide the scouts wanted to send a mechanized company instead, but its parent headquarters denied the request because of logistical concerns.[100] As a result, the U.S. scouts and Iraqi troops lacked the firepower necessary to fight through any determined effort to halt the convoy.

Shi'i fighters belonging to the Mahdi Army fired upon the convoy as it passed through crowds of onlookers in volatile northwest Baghdād. An

96. de Lira, "Anger of Great Nations," 14.
97. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 332.
98. Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 348.
99. Interv, Dennis Van Wey, CSI, with Col. Toby Hale, former Ch, Senior Adviser Team, 3d NIA Bde, 24 Jan 2006, 12, OLE.
100. Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise*, 284.

American officer recalled, "The [scout] platoon leader ordered the convoy to continue its movement out of the engagement area, but the ill-trained Iraqi troops and their leaders panicked."[101] The Iraqi drivers halted rather than drive through the ambush, and passengers dismounted, unsure how to respond to the throngs of angry residents lining the road. Heedless of their officer's pleas, some Shi'i enlisted personnel discarded their uniforms to blend in with the beckoning crowd. The Sunni soldiers remained with the convoy to avoid being killed by hostile Shi'a.[102] Focusing on the collapse of its plan to employ NIA troops in Al Fallūjah, CJTF-7 overlooked this development and thus forfeited a chance to understand how sectarianism exerted a dampening or clearly negative impact on the Iraqi military.

The scout platoon, with help from AH–64 helicopter gunships, made four trips into the ambush to extract Iraqi soldiers and vehicles. The Americans recovered sensitive items and weapons from vehicles that were too badly damaged to move and then abandoned the hulks. The U.S. soldiers then shepherded the 2d Battalion remnants, reduced to 70 percent strength by impromptu desertions, back to At Tājī. With tensions running high, the Iraqis and their advisers traded recriminations.

General Eaton arrived at the base several hours later. Talking to the 2d Battalion's officers, he learned the Iraqi soldiers had misunderstood their original mission, thinking they were being thrust into a high-intensity urban battle rather than deployed as part of the security cordon. The Americans then moved the 2d Battalion to the airfield in At Tājī where they were supposed to fly to Al Fallūjah aboard six CH–47 medium lift helicopters. When the time came to board the helicopters, however, the Iraqis refused to do so.[103] Several hundred more members of the unit deserted after returning to their barracks that night. General Eaton then withdrew what little was left of the battalion from the operation.[104]

Soon afterward, CJTF-7 issued orders to the 1st NIA Battalion to prepare for movement from Kir Kush to Al Fallūjah. The Iraqi battalion commander told his troops that they were going to Al Fallūjah and ordered his company commanders to observe the reactions to this news among their units. The enlisted soldiers appeared unsettled as they gathered outside their barracks

101. Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise*, 284.
102. Two accounts of the incident note that the Iraqi unit refused demands to turn its American advisers over to the Sadrist militia. See Interv, Van Wey with Hale, 24 Jan 2006, 12; Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, 59.
103. Interv, Van Wey with Hale, 24 Jan 2006, 13.
104. Thomas E. Ricks, "Iraqi Battalion Refuses American Orders to 'Fight Iraqis,'" *Washington Post*, 10 Apr 2007, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2004/04/11/iraqi-battalion-refuses-to-fight-iraqis/4117a9b0-14e7-488f-9a8e-9095ee204873/, Hist Files, CMH.

in small groups to discuss the unexpected development. After concluding that his agitated soldiers would refuse to deploy on such short notice, the Iraqi commander unilaterally informed his troops that they were not going to Al Fallūjah. Faced with the possibility that another Iraqi unit would refuse, publicly, to fight, the Americans rescinded the deployment orders.[105]

In response to the mass refusal of the 1st and 2d NIA Battalions, CJTF-7 dispatched the 36th ICDC Battalion to Al Fallūjah.[106] The unit's special forces advisory team received "an operations order from the headquarters element of the 1st Armored Division ordering [it] to serve in Fallujah. . . . Other than initial movement guidance and some unit coordination, the division provided little additional guidance."[107] Only a few members of the 36th Battalion refused to deploy as ordered. Seventeen U.S. advisers accompanied the commandos to the embattled city, where they linked up with the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines.[108] Although the commando battalion's subsequent performance brought some positive attention, its achievements were overshadowed by the well-publicized failure of other Iraqi units.[109]

By the morning of 8 April, Ambassador Bremer faced tremendous pushback from the governing council, following media reports of civilian casualties in Al Fallūjah.[110] Iraq's interior minister and its minister of human rights announced their resignations, while several members of the governing council threatened to do likewise. They denounced what they viewed as mass punishment of Al Fallūjah's citizens for the actions of a few. Bremer concluded that continued fighting in the city would undermine the June 2004 transition of sovereignty with "no clear way to get a credible political process revived and no idea of how long that would require."[111] The decision

105. Interv, Van Wey with Hale, 24 Jan 2006, 13.
106. The Combined Joint Task Force 7 commander described the 36th Battalion in his memoir as being composed of "mostly Kurds from the north." Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle*, 349.
107. Jeffery, "Understanding Contemporary Foreign Internal Defense and Military Advisement," 27.
108. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Kenneth W. Estes, "Operation Vigilant Resolve: The First Battle of Fallujah," *Leatherneck* 102, no. 4 (Apr 2019): 27.
109. Jeffery, "Understanding Contemporary Foreign Internal Defense and Military Advisement," 27–28; Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 449.
110. On 7 April, Al Jazeera satellite news claimed that U.S. shelling had killed fifty-two civilians and wounded a further one hundred, most of whom were women and children. The British Broadcasting Corporation reported that forty people were killed when U.S. forces bombed a mosque. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Chronology of Events in Iraq, April 2004," 28 Sep 2004, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4162b0a24.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
111. Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 333.

to send troops into Al Fallūjah against military advice had sent a message, but it did not turn out to be the one desired by the CPA and White House.

By the next day, Ambassador Bremer instructed General Sanchez to suspend offensive operations in Al Fallūjah. President Bush realized the negative implications of calling off the battle before it achieved U.S. objectives, but he deferred to the decisions made by his subordinates in Iraq.[112] Although coalition forces had begun to see success and were on course to accomplish their mission, none of the operation's objectives had been met when the assault ended. The erstwhile combatants continued to trade shots until Conway brokered a ceasefire. The marines relocated to a fortified camp near the city after turning over responsibility for the city's security to the hastily recruited Fallujah Brigade, a 1,600-strong Sunni militia unit led by Maj. Gen. Mohammed Mahmoud Latif.[113]

AFTER THE BATTLE

The hurried attempt to deploy NIA units to Al Fallūjah in order to score political points succeeded only in producing dismal results. Addressing the overall negative tone of news reports about the Iraqi military, Secretary Rumsfeld observed, "Some people report in the press as though they ran away, or they didn't engage the enemy or they wouldn't fight. Well, my goodness, why should they? If they have uneven equipment and uneven numbers, they shouldn't have."[114] Coalition spokesperson Brig. Gen. Mark T. Kimmitt provided a more upbeat but still critical assessment: "There have been numerous forces that . . . went forward where they were needed and performed brilliantly. But in truth, there were a number of troops . . . [and] a number of police, that didn't stand up when their country called."[115] Both statements indicated that neither the Pentagon nor CJTF-7 understood why Iraqi units collapsed the first time they came under pressure.

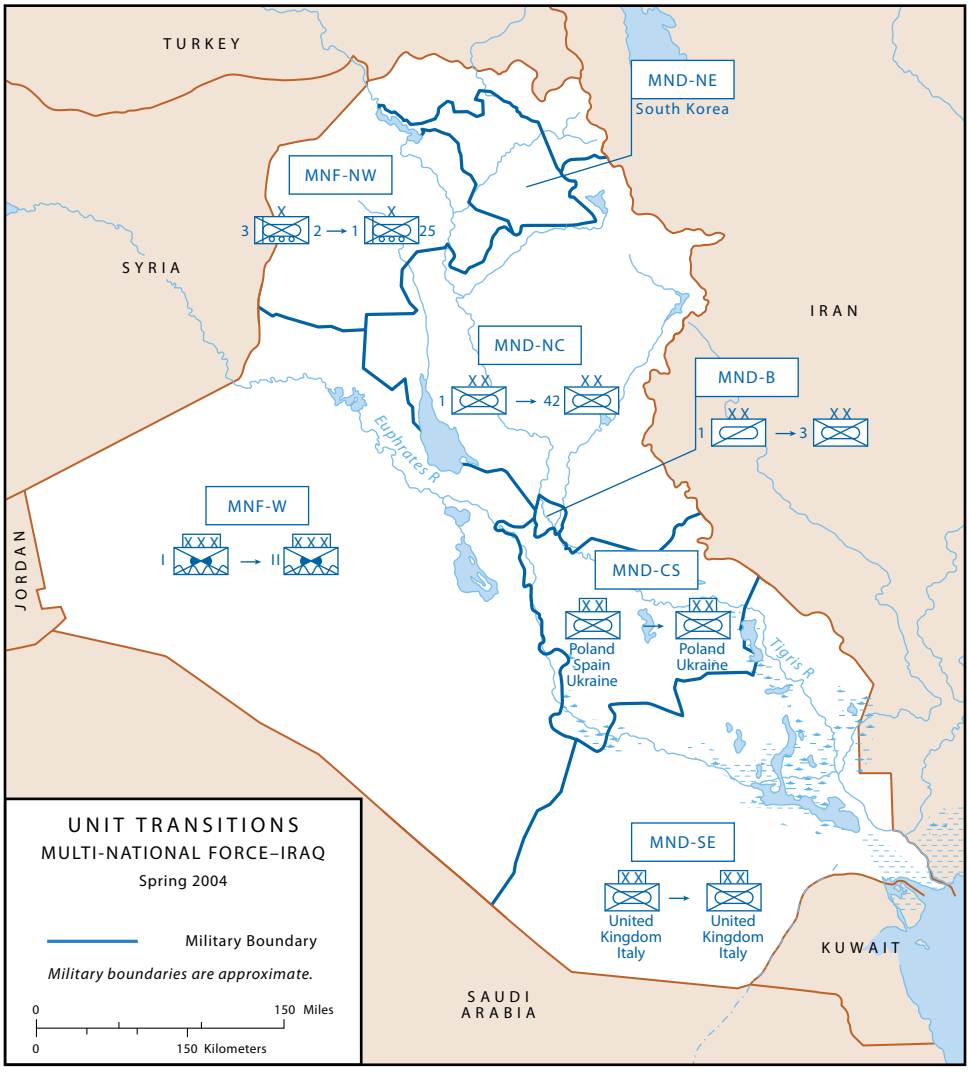
112. Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 534.
113. Command of the Fallujah Brigade reportedly passed to Maj. Gen. Mohammed Mahmoud from Maj. Gen. Jassim Mohammed Saleh when coalition forces learned about Saleh's alleged crimes against the Kurds. In reality, Saleh continued to issue orders through Latif. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 298.
114. "U.S. Tries Again with Iraqi Force, This Time Emphasizing Consensus," World Tribune.com, 13 May 2004, https://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2004/ss_iraq_05_12.html, Hist Files, CMH.
115. Betsy Hiel, "Reluctant Iraqi Security, Police Units to be Booted," *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, 14 Apr 2004, https://archive.triblive.com/news/reluctant-iraqi-security-police-units-to-be-booted/, Hist Files, CMH.

As the fighting wound down, General Abizaid asked U.S. Army Forces Command to send the 101st Airborne Division's Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, along with a dozen members of his unit, to Iraq to conduct an external postbattle evaluation of Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense security forces. The evaluation team singled out many problems, including issues created by the sudden dissolution of all defense-related institutions and the pervasive lack of resources. Although few NIA units received orders to respond to the fighting in Al Fallūjah, Petraeus noted that all had collapsed before entering battle. He also remarked on the sole example of relative success, recording that "there was a cobbled together unit called the Commando Battalion, which was a mix of militias from the political parties that did actually do some fighting in Fallujah . . . but by and large it did not stay on the line for very long."[116]

The report identified nonstandardization as a major factor in the ICDC's uneven performance. Petraeus noted that six different coalition divisions had created ICDC units, but each treated the Iraqi forces far differently. In locations where insurgent activity levels remained manageable, the divisions "put together bases, paid them on time, scraped together all the equipment they could get for them and partnered them with coalition forces. They would use the companies for three weeks and would then allow them their one week of leave, which enabled them to have a good battle rhythm."[117] In sharp contrast, personnel belonging to ICDC units in central and western Iraq walked to and from their duty stations rather than operate from secure bases. When the security situation in those regions deteriorated, individuals could not rejoin their units without incurring unacceptable personal risk (*Map 2.3*).

Petraeus and his team briefed CJTF-7 on 1 May, focusing on upgrading the ICDC and improving the NIA's positive aspects. Both needed additional resources, including body armor, uniforms, vehicles, and heavy weapons, as well as better logistics, secure bases, and more robust higher-level institutions while raising the integration of the ICDC and NIA as a potential long-range consideration. On his way back to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Petraeus stopped at the Pentagon to update the Army senior leadership. Two weeks later, the general received a call notifying him that he would be turning over his command early so that he could replace General Eaton.[118]

116. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, former MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 11 Dec 2006, 3, OLE.
117. Interv, Clay with Petraeus, 3–4.
118. Interv, Clay with Petraeus, 4.



Map 2.3

CENTCOM's own examination of the Iraqi military's performance during April and May 2004 highlighted trends rather than solutions. About half of the ICDC battalions avoided taking part in any combat operation. Units stationed in the vicinity of Shi'i religious sites such as Karbalāʾ and An Najaf experienced the highest rates of combat refusal. Although statistics on the two ICDC battalions in Al Fallūjah were incomplete, second-hand accounts indicated that all but a handful of their members refused to confront local

insurgents.[119] On a more ominous note, about 10 percent of personnel in units that refused to fight actually switched sides.[120]

CENTCOM ultimately decided that what the NIA and ICDC units needed to perform well in combat was more equipment, rather than improved training or better leadership. Little or no effort was put into finding out if bad actors had infiltrated ICDC units or whether soldiers had been coerced into inaction by threats against their families. Based on the combatant command's limited examination of the problem, General Peter Pace, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate Appropriations Committee that meeting the equipment needs of the Iraqi military constituted the Office of Security Transition–Iraq's top priority. He injected a cautionary note into his statement, saying, "Equipment is on order but not yet in theater. [The Iraqis'] training is being done by local U.S. forces, but we need to be working first, as we are, and with Congresses' [*sic*] support, to get the equipment to them more quickly."[121]

It is difficult to understand why both Abizaid's staff and General Pace concluded that more equipment would produce better performance. Although Iraqis voluntarily joined the post-Saddam military, the ICDC and the NIA performed like a conscript force rather than a professional army. In most cases, conscript armies fight well only if they have substantial firepower and good leadership. The post-Saddam Iraqi Army possessed neither in adequate quantity. In the long run, the Americans would continue to control the supply of equipment but would have little ability to influence leadership once the transition of sovereignty took place and the Iraqis appointed military commanders. The type of equipment being provided, however, did not increase available firepower to any material degree. The Pentagon remained reticent about giving tanks and artillery to the Iraqis.

Although CJTF-7 did not dispute the conclusion reached by CENTCOM, it acknowledged other issues warranted reexamination. The original concept of fielding a local home guard had been appealing before the widespread fighting of spring 2004, but U.S. commanders in Iraq now felt that "there would be some merit in making the ICDC an organization that would operate anywhere within the country."[122] That assessment acknowledged that ICDC

119. Estes, "Operation Vigilant Resolve: The First Battle of Fallujah," 27.
120. "U.S. Tries Again with Iraqi Force, This Time Emphasizing Consensus," 13 May 2004.
121. Testimony, Gen. Peter Pace, *Contingent Emergency Reserve Fund Request for Iraq and Afghanistan for Fiscal Year 2005*, 108th Cong. (2 Jun 2004), *Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate*, 24, https://www.congress.gov/108/chrg/CHRG-108shrg96178/CHRG-108shrg96178.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
122. "Iraqi Military Balked at Fighting Their Own Neighbors," World Tribune.com, 15 Jun 2004, https://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2004/me_iraq_06_17.html, Hist Files, CMH.



Soldiers of the Iraqi Intervention Force, under the command of the 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, conclude an exercise in Azragya, northwest of Al Fallūjah, in early May 2004. (*Pfc. Michael J. O'Brien, U.S. Marine Corps*)

personnel could not fight against their insurgent neighbors without placing themselves and their families at risk of retaliation. Eliminating that factor would require a major change to the charter, makeup, and organization of the ICDC. Rather than phase the ICDC out of existence as the NIA grew, integrating both forces now made more sense.

On 22 April 2004, the CPA published Order No. 73, accelerating the ICDC's transfer to the Ministry of Defense from 30 June to 1 June. Recent events had convinced the CPA that a single ministry needed to be responsible for all Iraqi military units.[123] On the same day, Defense Minister Allawi appointed three new top generals in the Iraqi Armed Forces. He named General Babekr al-Zibari as the senior military adviser to the president, General Amer al-Hashimi as the chief of staff of the Iraqi Armed Forces, and Lt. Gen. Daham al-Assal as General al-Hashimi's deputy. In his first meeting with these Iraqi officers, Eaton informed them, "I am subordinate to you now and I will take your instructions on what to do with the Iraqi Army provided it does not run counter to what I believe my government wants."[124]

Babekr, a Sunni Kurd from a village near Mosul, had resigned from the Iraqi Army in 1973 to join the Kurdish guerrilla forces of the Peshmerga militia. After reorganizing Kurdish fighters into a conventional force, he led them against Saddam Hussein's regime for three decades. As senior

123. CPA Order 73, 22 Apr 2004, Transfer of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps to the Ministry of Defense, http://www.cpa-iraq.org/regulations/, Hist Files, CMH.
124. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 451.

military adviser, Babekr answered to the minister of defense, the Ministerial Committee on National Security, and the future president of the interim government of Iraq. General al-Hashimi, a Sunni Arab from Baghdād, served for twenty-seven years before retiring from the position of deputy commandant of the Iraqi Military Academy in 1997. He soon proved to be a volatile officer who tendered his resignation immediately after experiencing a real or imagined slight.[125] General al-Assal, a Shi'i Arab from Nīnawā, had attended both Britain's Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the U.S. Army Ranger School.[126]

A breaking news story soon overshadowed other security developments within Iraq. On 28 April, the U.S. television program *60 Minutes* aired a segment alleging that members of the U.S. Army Military Police and the Central Intelligence Agency had violated the human rights of Iraqi detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison. The Department of Defense removed seventeen soldiers and officers from duty and charged eleven with assault, battery, conspiracy, maltreatment of detainees, committing indecent acts, and dereliction of duty, but the official response did little to stem rising indignation at home and abroad about the U.S. military's handling of the conflict. Domestic support for a U.S. presence in Iraq became more difficult to sustain, as Americans who initially had backed the March 2003 invasion became less certain of their views while those opposing continued military involvement grew more strident.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of a decentralized insurgency targeting coalition occupation forces and cooperative Iraqis presented the Bush administration with a challenge of unforeseen complexity and scope. Rather than accepting the inevitability of coalition forces participating in a sustained counterinsurgency campaign, the White House sought to shift that task to Iraqi security forces after shaping the battlefield using coalition troops. That transition would enhance the post-Saddam government's legitimacy while providing its

125. The minister of defense talked to Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq about replacing the mercurial General Amer al-Hashimi with General Babekr al-Zibari as early as mid-June. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for CJTF-7 Cdr, 12 Jun 2004, sub: Meeting with Iraqi Defense Minister, Lt. Col. Jeanne H. Godfroy Collection, CMH.

126. News Release, CPA, "Iraqi Interim Defense Minister Appoints Three Top Generals," 22 Apr 2004, https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/cpa-iraq/pressreleases/20040422_generals.html, Hist Files, CMH.

security forces with an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to protecting, rather than oppressing, the Iraqi people.

As the Bush administration sought to alter Middle Eastern political dynamics by reshaping Iraq into a democratized society, it slipped into a subjective "black or white" mindset when evaluating that process. The White House, the Pentagon, the CPA, and CENTCOM grew comfortable with dividing Iraqis into groups that either supported or opposed the United States. Americans compounded that misperception by assuming anyone falling into the former category unreservedly agreed with U.S. goals while those in the latter category were irreconcilable foes of progress. This oversimplification led to U.S. officials authorizing CJTF-7's use of the NIA for internal security purposes after condemning Saddam Hussein for repeatedly doing the very same thing.

Iraqi actions were driven by more complex factors. It is clear neither the NIA nor ICDC received training comparable to that provided to Americans, but it is equally apparent that inadequate preparation did not preordain the events of April 2004. The ICDC either abandoned their posts or changed sides without being subjected to open attack while NIA units dissolved before entering combat. Americans, unused to employing coercion as a military motivator, did not understand that the Iraqi dictator had employed draconian measures to force his troops to battle internal enemies. In the absence of a similarly punitive military environment, it should not have been surprising to discover that Iraqi soldiers were as reticent to fight their countrymen as Americans might have been under similar circumstances.

The fact that the post-Saddam Iraqi military (and police) lacked institutional depth and stability also escaped serious notice. Bremer's critics focused on linking CPA Order No. 2 to the insurgency's expansion, but they seldom if ever noted how the disbanding of the Iraqi military hobbled counterinsurgency efforts by dissolving ministerial-level security organizations, obliterating the military industrial complex, and casting aside competent officers who had been affiliated with the defunct Ba'th Party. Bremer attempted to stamp out the counterproductive practices that took root during Saddam's reign, and yet the task of overhauling that nation's security apparatus depended on Americans gaining a deep understanding of ingrained societal and cultural issues, rather than issuing a flurry of administrative decrees aimed solely at destroying Ba'thist influences.

Although the uneven performance of the NIA and ICDC offered ample proof of a vast gulf between U.S. and Iraqi motivations, the Americans responded with familiar rather than tailored solutions. Driven by a timeline shaped by the CPA's irreversible decisions and its equally rigid seven-step

process—which the United Nations Security Council soon would codify in a resolution—the Pentagon authorized a massive force structure expansion and rearmament program for the Iraqi military. Entrenched American perceptions, combined with the long-term impact of CPA Orders No. 1 and 2, formed an unstable foundation underneath that ambitious undertaking. Eventually, campaign planners in CJTF-7, or its successor, would have to reckon with unacknowledged dynamics or risk the possibility that American strategic objectives in Iraq would remain unfulfilled.

3
Serving Multiple Agendas: June–November 2004

The growing violence attributed to insurgent groups convinced the George W. Bush administration that it had to devise a new approach to stabilizing Iraq. The White House planned to achieve its goals by actively persuading disbelieving Iraqis that the United States would depart Iraq upon completion of the seven-step process. One of the first steps in that approach involved dissolving the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) as a precursor to handing back political authority to the Iraqis. However, the White House held no illusions about the insurgency melting away when L. Paul Bremer III's tenure ended. In order to defeat the insurgency sooner rather than later, the Americans envisioned a greater role for Iraqi soldiers. As a result, development of the New Iraqi Army (NIA) and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) assumed greater importance, especially because the White House predicted a more active counterinsurgency role for both organizations.

Adoption of a new approach would produce a cascading shift in strategic dynamics as the political calculus changed, tactical priorities were altered, enemies were pursued more aggressively, and newly installed decision makers assumed the duties of their experienced predecessors. For example, the dissolution of the CPA would result in an accredited ambassador replacing Bremer in late June. The normalizing of relations not only signaled a change in how Washington, D.C., viewed post-Saddam Iraq, but also required the formation of the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) to assume the responsibilities relinquished by Bremer.

The planned changes eventually would upgrade Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) to a four-star command, designated as Multi-National Force–Iraq



An Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) soldier tells coalition forces soldiers what happened during rebel attacks at their checkpoint. After violence erupted in Ba'qūbah on 24 June 2004, the struggle during the insurgent uprising left a death toll of approximately fifteen Iraqi police officers, two U.S. soldiers, and more than thirty rebels. (*S. Sgt. Klaus Baesu, U.S. Army*)

(MNF-I), led by General George W. Casey Jr. Although U.S. Central Command would be able to graft MNF-I onto an already existing organization, it would have to create two new subordinate entities, Multi-National Corps–Iraq and Task Force 134, from scratch.[1] The former, led by Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz, would focus on tactical operations. The latter, to be headed by a two-star general, would gain responsibility for all aspects of detainee operations, including correcting the deficiencies exposed by the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib.[2] The demise of the CPA also meant that Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton's Office of Security Transition–Iraq (OST-I) transferred to CJTF-7, where it began receiving additional resources and personnel in anticipation of a greatly expanded charter. The Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) and the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team remained in existence as subordinate elements of OST-I. Most of these changes were

1. John D. Banusiewicz, "New Commands in Iraq to Replace Combined Joint Task Force," American Forces Press Service, 14 May 2004, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).
2. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, *Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War, 2003–2006* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 313–18.



Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz (*L. Cpl. Jordan F. Sherwood, U.S. Marine Corps*)

worked out behind closed doors over a period of months, although the White House publicly had announced the IIG's formation in November 2003 as part of a public relations effort to persuade both Iraqis and the American populace that the United States did not plan on maintaining its troops in Iraq indefinitely.[3]

The White House codified the revised approach when it circulated National Security Presidential Directive 36, which stated, "With the [upcoming] termination of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) . . . and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and a sovereign Iraqi government, our efforts in Iraq will take on new and formidable challenges that must be met successfully."[4] The document declared that the Department of State and the U.S. ambassador would take responsibility only for the supervision of general assistance to Iraq. Central

3. David E. Sanger, "The Struggle for Iraq: Government; America's Gamble: Faster Power Shift in Iraq," *New York Times*, 16 Nov 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/16/world/the-struggle-for-iraq-government-america-s-gamble-faster-power-shift-in-iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH.

4. National Security Presidential Dir 36, George W. Bush, 10 May 2004, United States Government Operations in Iraq, https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nspd/nspd-36.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

Command would handle all U.S. government and international efforts in support of training, equipping, and organizing the Iraqi Army and police. As a result, near-term success depended on cooperation between the State Department and the Pentagon as much as any other factor.[5]

The president publicly announced the impending changes during a speech at the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, on 24 May.[6] His remarks touched upon his administration's newfound willingness to use Iraqi troops in an offensive rather than a defensive role. For the first time, Bush discussed at length developments affecting the NIA. "We've learned from [early] failures. And we've taken steps to correct them," he said. "Successful units need to know they are fighting for the future of their country, not for any occupying power. So, we are ensuring that Iraqi forces serve under an Iraqi chain of command. Successful fighting units need the best possible leadership. So, we improved the vetting and training of Iraqi officers and senior enlisted men."[7] That statement, however, reflected the dynamics applicable in late May rather than what would emerge after the CPA handed over sovereignty to the IIG on 28 June, when the United States no longer would have unquestioned control over Iraqi security forces.

Agencies outside of the U.S. government exerted significant collateral influence on the evolving strategy once the details had been revealed. On 8 June, the United Nations (UN) voted unanimously to adopt Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1546, which outlined the posthandover duties of the American military in Iraq.[8] The UN guidance charged MNF-I with building the capability of Iraqi security forces and establishing a security partnership with the IIG.[9] As a result, the MNF-I campaign plan incorporated guidance from National Security Presidential Directive 36, the president's Carlisle speech, and the provisions of UNSCR 1546 that codified Bremer's seven-step process. A crucial component of that blueprint—how to motivate Iraqis to fight their fellow countrymen—still eluded American planners.[10] Rather than explore the topic further, they accepted President Bush's sentiment that

5. George W. Casey Jr., *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom, July 2004–February 2007* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012), 7–8.
6. "Transcript From Bush Speech on American Strategy in Iraq," *New York Times*, 24 May 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/24/politics/transcript-from-bush-speech-on-american-strategy-in-iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH.
7. President George W. Bush talked about the New Iraqi Army (NIA) but did not mention the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) even though it figured prominently in near-term American military plans. "Transcript From Bush Speech on American Strategy in Iraq."
8. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1546, The Situation in Iraq, S/RES/1546 (8 Jun 2004), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/523025?v=pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
9. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 10.
10. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 26.

Iraqi soldiers were as invested in the IIG's success as the U.S. government was. That disconnect existed in large part because Americans still struggled to understand post-Saddam Iraq.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, the commander of CJTF-7, had assumed temporary command of MNF-I from 15 May 2004 until General Casey arrived on 29 June. Casey, who had been the U.S. Army's vice chief of staff, had received less than two months' notice before assuming his new position. Under MNF-I headquarters' expansive responsibilities, he interacted not only with the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, but also with the soon-to-be appointed Iraqi prime minister, his national security adviser, and the heads of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior. The inclusion of the Ministry of Interior reflected the U.S. military's recently acquired police training and equipping responsibilities.[11]

Casey's relationship with the Iraqis would experience significant turmoil in the coming months. The seven-step process directed Iraq along a strictly regulated path. The third step in the overall process had called for Bremer to appoint the IIG. The dissolution of the CPA itself constituted the fourth step. The IIG would turn over power following the January 2005 elections to a transitional government, fulfilling conditions for the fifth step. The IIG's successor would remain in office for a mere eleven months while it completed the sixth step—writing and ratifying a new constitution. The election of a constitutionally supported permanent government in December 2005 constituted the seventh and final step.

The seven-step process laid out a logical pathway to democracy, but it prioritized the attainment of specific goals over the maturation of the Iraqi political system. Each of the successive administrations elected by Iraqis were sure to replace senior ministerial officials wholesale, and, as a result, MNF-I efforts to develop ministerial capabilities were destined to suffer. Nor

11. Congressional legislation had prohibited direct U.S. military interaction with foreign law enforcement agencies since the 1970s, but National Security Presidential Directive 36 served as a temporary exemption from that ruling. Conrad C. Crane, *Cassandra in Oz: Counterinsurgency and Future War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 115; Robert M. Perito, "The Iraq Federal Police: U.S. Police Building Under Fire," U.S. Institute of Peace Special Rpt 291, 18 Oct 2011, 4, https://www.usip.org/publications/2011/10/iraq-federal-police, Hist Files, CMH.



Left to right: Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, outgoing commander of Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I); General John P. Abizaid, commanding general of U.S. Central Command; and General George W. Casey, incoming commander of MNF-I, salute the formation during the MNF-I change-of-command ceremony on 1 July 2004. (*MNF-I Public Affairs Office*)

could Casey count on officials who served only as temporary placeholders to prioritize their nation's needs over their own interests.[12]

In accordance with guidance from the UN and the White House, Casey issued an initial mission statement within thirty days of his arrival:

> In partnership with the Iraqi Government, MNF-I conducts full spectrum counterinsurgency operations to isolate and neutralize former regime extremists and foreign terrorists and organizes, trains and equips Iraqi security forces in order to create a security environment that permits the completion of the UNSCR 1546 process on schedule.[13]

12. Interv, Russell L. Riley, Michael Nelson, and Spencer Bakich, George W. Bush Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, with former Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) Cmdg Gen, Gen. George W. Casey Jr., 25 Sep 2014, 60, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/george-casey-oral-history, Hist Files, CMH.
13. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 29.

The wording signaled a significant shift from business as had been conducted by CJTF-7. The notion of working in "partnership with the Iraqi Government" recognized that the Iraqis would have input on how their troops and U.S. forces were employed. By emphasizing the "completion of the UNSCR 1546 process on schedule," Casey placed security of elections above other objectives. Narrowing down perceived enemies to "former regime elements and foreign terrorists" overlooked the dangers of unchecked sectarianism.[14] Lastly, MNF-I possessed uneven capabilities for "mounting full spectrum counterinsurgency operations," largely because most NIA and ICDC units, as well as most newly arrived American troops, had inadequate counterinsurgency experience. In addition, the loyalties of a number of Iraqi police and military units remained uncertain because of infiltration by Shi'i militia members and Sunni insurgent sympathizers.[15]

TRANSFORMING A SYMBOL INTO AN ARMY

Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus assumed command of OST-I on 6 June 2004, a little more than one month after Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld had announced his promotion to lieutenant general and his new assignment.[16] Brig. Gen. James H. Schwitters, who arrived ten days later, took over CMATT on 17 June.[17] Schwitters, an infantry officer with a background in special operations, had just completed a tour with Central Command's joint security assistance office.[18] Brig. Gen. Andrew D. Mackay, commander of the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, served as the repository of

14. A report by the 1st Marine Division in the fall of 2004 noted that major problems were arising from the fact that Iraqi soldiers and police in Al Anbār were turning a blind eye toward depredations committed by their own tribes. In addition, Iraqi commanders who did not succumb to sectarian interests or who imposed strict discipline standards invariably were targeted for assassination by members of their own unit. Memo, for Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq (MNSTC-I) Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Visit to ISF Personnel in Ar Ramadi 7 October 2004, part B, para. 1, Lt. Col. Jeanne H. Godfroy Collection, CMH.
15. Memo, for MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Visit to ISF Personnel in Ar Ramadi 7 October 2004, 1–8.
16. U.S. Dept. Def News Release 420–04, "Army General Officer Assignment," 5 May 2004, Hist Files, CMH.
17. Interv, Steven E. Clay, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI), with Brig. Gen. James H. Schwitters, former Cmdg Gen, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT), 13 Dec 2006, 16, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI (hereinafter OLE).
18. "Brig. Gen. James H. Schwitters," official biography, 1 Dec 2008, Hist Files, CMH.

organizational continuity, although National Security Presidential Directive 36 left him grappling with managing a seismic change in his team's mandate.

Continuity would have mattered more if Petraeus had inherited the same mission given to his predecessor, General Eaton. Instead, OST-I faced myriad challenges, including implementing the defense secretary's guidance to accelerate NIA fielding, reconstituting units that had lost equipment and personnel during the April uprising, initiating a massive base construction program, and absorbing hundreds of inbound coalition personnel destined for dozens of newly resourced advisory teams. Taking over CJTF-7's responsibilities for training and equipping the ICDC was, perhaps, OST-I's most extensive problem, given that some battalions had been configured as genuine military organizations while others resembled paramilitary auxiliaries or militarized police.[19]

With the Pentagon eager to have Iraqis protect the January 2005 elections, Petraeus had not been surprised when General John P. Abizaid, the Central Command commander, tasked him to provide an update to Secretary Rumsfeld via teleconference on 16 June. As Petraeus highlighted the programs administered by his command, Rumsfeld observed that security details for key Iraqi government officials would need to be especially well-trained. Reflecting his interest in having the Iraqis assume a greater share of the security-related costs, Rumsfeld also directed Petraeus to make a special effort to support the Iraqi units charged with protecting the nation's oil infrastructure. Near the end of the teleconference, the secretary told the OST-I commander to work out a detailed plan, incorporating the guidance received during the briefing, to improve Iraqi military capabilities.[20]

Decisions by the incoming IIG also affected OST-I during this period. Prime Minister Ayad Allawi exercised his newfound authority at a Baghdād news conference on 20 June, declaring that he would transfer the ICDC from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Defense, divide it into six regional units, and rename it the Iraqi National Guard (ING). He then announced the formation of a national security committee consisting of Iraq's defense, interior, foreign, justice, and finance ministers; the national security adviser; the director of intelligence; and Allawi's senior military adviser. He explained that the new arrangements had been designed to enable Iraq to hold elections in January 2005.[21] The prime minister closed by adding that

19. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, former MNSTC-I Cdr, 11 Dec 2006, 3–4, OLE.

20. MFR, Office of Security Transition–Iraq (OST-I), n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (13–20 June 2004), MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

21. Edward Cody, "Iraq Leader Says Army Will Target Insurgents," *Washington Post*, 21 Jun 2004, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A55669-2004Jun20.html, Hist

the Iraqi government planned to establish a joint operations command and control center to oversee all the activities related to national security.[22]

Allawi's press conference reinforced the fact that the transition of sovereignty necessitated closer cooperation between OST-I and the Iraqi government, if only because the Ministry of Defense still lacked the means to carry out its duties. On 22 June, General Sanchez, accompanied by his British deputy, Lt. Gen. John C. McColl, and Iraqi generals Amer al-Hashimi and Babekr al-Zibari, met with General Petraeus to synchronize the various training and fielding initiatives. During the ensuing discussion, Petraeus emphasized that the central and provincial governments first had to agree on a process for coordinating the deployment of Iraqi security forces before MNF-I could synchronize the actions of both armies. The OST-I commander then pointed out that well-meaning plans to coordinate security from a single command center located in Baghdād were premature. Swayed by Petraeus's logic, the Iraqis authorized forming provincial joint coordination centers to link Baghdād with outlying regions.[23]

Alongside these sweeping changes in leadership and organization, Central Command assembled the disparate Iraqi special forces units into the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) Brigade in May 2004. This new unit, commanded by Iraqi Brig. Gen. Najjah al-Shamari, fell under the operational control of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula. The combined joint special operations task force offered MNF-I a long-term means of developing and enhancing Iraqi special operations forces capabilities.[24] The ISOF Brigade initially consisted of two battalions, a brigade headquarters, and a reconnaissance company, together with training and support elements. Like most Iraqi units, its present-for-duty strength fell short of authorized numbers: 517 onhand personnel out of 1,620 positions.[25] The extensive training regimen required to produce a special operations soldier slowed the process of forming the brigade, even

Files, CMH.

22. John D. Banusiewicz, "Iraq Government Reshapes Forces for National Security," American Forces Press Service, 21 Jun 2004, https://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=26231, Hist Files, CMH.

23. MFR, OST-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (20–26 June 2004), Godfroy Collection, CMH.

24. Bfg, Col. Kevin Tovo, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula (CJSOTF-AP), 27 Feb 2007, sub: Provide an Overview, slide 7, https://ndia.dtic.mil/wp-content/uploads/2007/solic/tovo.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

25. MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (1–6 August 2004), Godfroy Collection, CMH.

though the Jordanians also provided training to Iraqi special operations personnel.[26]

The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force, one of the brigade's two battalions, had the mission of conducting high-level operations such as hostage rescue, while the 36th ICDC Battalion, recently redesignated as the 36th Commando Battalion, which had been structured along the lines of a U.S. Army Ranger battalion, supported the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force by cordoning targets and carrying out raids and ambushes.[27] The Iraqi special operations reconnaissance company collected human intelligence and developed targets in support of brigade missions. American special forces detachments trained and advised the brigade, and U.S. personnel performed most of the staff work as they mentored their Iraqi counterparts.[28] As a result, Americans exerted far more control over Iraqi special operations forces and its makeup, personnel selection, training regimen, and operational employment than any other Iraqi military organization.

Perhaps for this reason, the Allawi government formed its own special operations force, albeit not supported or trained by the United States, nominally under Brig. Gen. Mohammed Abdullah al-Shahwani.[29] Recently appointed as head of the newly formed Iraqi National Intelligence Service, al-Shahwani originally had gained fame both among Iraqi dissidents (including Prime Minister Allawi) and within the Central Intelligence Agency by organizing a coup against Saddam Hussein in June 1996. Iraqi security agents had discovered the plot, which collapsed when al-Shahwani fled to Jordan. All three of his sons, however, were executed for their participation in the attempted coup. Given al-Shahwani's lengthy relationship with Prime Minister Allawi, it came as no surprise to Iraqis that the IIG had authorized al-Shahwani to recruit a special operations unit.[30] The unit provided the National

26. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 27 Sep 2004, sub: Meetings and DBE Graduation in Jordan, 2, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

27. David Witty, "The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service" (Washington, DC: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 2015), 7, Hist Files, CMH; Donald P. Wright and Col. Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign, The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom, May 2003–January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 464.

28. Interv, John H. McCool, CSI, with Maj. Dennis Levesque, former Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula J–4, 14 Mar 2006, 4, OLE.

29. David Ignatius, "A Sectarian Spy Duel in Baghdad," *Washington Post*, 14 Jun 2007, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2007/06/14/a-sectarian-spy-duel-in-baghdad/65001f90-85d0-4681-bf7a-8d050f71a021/, Hist Files, CMH.

30. Funding for this organization is alleged to have come from U.S. intelligence services rather than Baghdād's own coffers. Ned Parker, "Divided Iraq Has Two Spy Agencies," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 Apr 2007, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-apr-15-fg-intel15-story.html, Hist Files, CMH.

Intelligence Service with the capability of mounting raids and orchestrating "snatch" operations without having to ask the police, Americans, or Iraqi special operations forces for assistance. The organization consisted of two "Shahwani Battalions," each with approximately 400 personnel. The first was composed of former Iraqi Army officers, and young Iraqi men seeking a high-paying job made up the ranks of the second Shahwani Battalion.[31]

The unilateral IIG effort to expand the Iraqi special operations capacity exposed a fundamental difference between the advisory responsibilities envisioned by the Iraqi government, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula, and MNF-I. When General Casey requested in mid-2004 that U.S. special forces play a larger role in training the Iraqi security forces, the task force objected on the grounds that it lacked the personnel. The Pentagon accepted this rationale and limited the special operations task force's involvement to Iraqi special operations forces training. This policy remained in force for the next several years, with the exception of a brief period between December 2004 and June 2005 when the task force would advise a handful of ING battalions and would train reconnaissance platoons in other Iraqi conventional units.[32]

NEW DIRECTIONS

The formal transfer of governance took place on 28 June 2004. In a low-key ceremony hosted by Bremer, the coalition heralded the IIG as the legitimate political authority. Ambassador John D. Negroponte assumed his position as head of the U.S. Mission in Iraq when Ambassador Bremer departed following the ceremony, and the Transitional Administrative Law came into effect. Under this Iraqi law, which detailed the interim government's composition and powers, Interim President Ghazi Ajil al-Yawar and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi jointly assumed the mantle of leadership. Al-Yawar, a Sunni Arab from Mosul and a leading sheik in the Shammar tribe, had studied engineering at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and had spent fifteen years in exile in Saudi Arabia. Allawi, a secular Shi'i, had been

31. After discovering that serving with special forces did not guarantee a job with the Iraqi National Intelligence Service, most of the original 1st NIA Battalion complement left en masse in late 2004. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 7 Nov 2004, sub: Minister of Defense Visit to Fallujah, 1; MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 7 Oct 2004, sub: Visit to ISF Personnel in Ar Ramadi, 7; both in Godfroy Collection, CMH.

32. Bfg, Tovo, CJSOTF-AP, 27 Feb 2007, sub: Provide an Overview, slide 7; U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: U.S. Special Operations Command, 2007), 121–25; Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 386–88.

a member of the Ba'th Party until he left Iraq in 1971 to study medicine in London. He also was the cofounder (with al-Shahwani) of the Iraqi National Accord, an opposition group supported by the Central Intelligence Agency that had staged an unsuccessful coup against Saddam Hussein in 1996.

Allawi made a few changes to the original cabinet approved by the CPA, the most prominent of which involved appointing Hazim al-Shalaan as defense minister. Al-Shalaan, a Shi'i Arab born in Ad Dīwānīyah, had graduated from Baghdad University with a degree in economics and had been an inspector general in the central real estate bank until he left Iraq in 1985. He had been serving as a provincial governor since spring 2003.[33] The defense minister subsequently appointed Ziyad Cattan, a Polish-Iraqi used car dealer, as the Iraqi military's procurement chief. A news article later observed:

> [CPA] advisors decided that civilians should lead the new ministry, but under Hussein, the Defense Ministry was run by military officers, meaning there was no pool of experienced Iraqis from which to draw. In desperation, Americans cast a wide net, sending interested Iraqis to the United States for a three-week crash course on Defense Ministry management. Cattan was one of the first to go. Upon his return, he rose quickly through the new ministry's ranks, becoming the director of military procurement after the first director's assassination.[34]

On 1 July, General Casey formally replaced Sanchez as MNF-I commanding general. Immediately after the ceremony, General Petraeus briefed Casey on the Iraqi security forces. The new MNF-I commander remarked that he wanted a means of evaluating the ability of Iraqi units to assume greater operational responsibility—information he would use to develop future counterinsurgency strategy. Casey explained that "trained and equipped" statistics favored by Secretary Rumsfeld were too broad to serve as a measure of Iraqi proficiency and readiness. In this instance, Casey's request proved to be prescient, as members of congress also expressed

33. "Sovereign Iraq to Be a Blow to Terrorism: Bush," Canadian Broadcasting Corporation News, 1 Jun 2004, http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2004/06/01/iraq040601.html; Patrick Cockburn, "What Has Happened to Iraq's Missing $1bn?," *Independent*, 19 Sep 2005, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/what-has-happened-to-iraq-s-missing-1bn-313538.html, Hist Files, CMH.
34. Solomon Moore and T. Christian Miller, "Before Rearming Iraq, He Sold Shoes and Flowers," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 Nov 2005, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-nov-06-fg-cattan6-story.html, Hist Files, CMH.

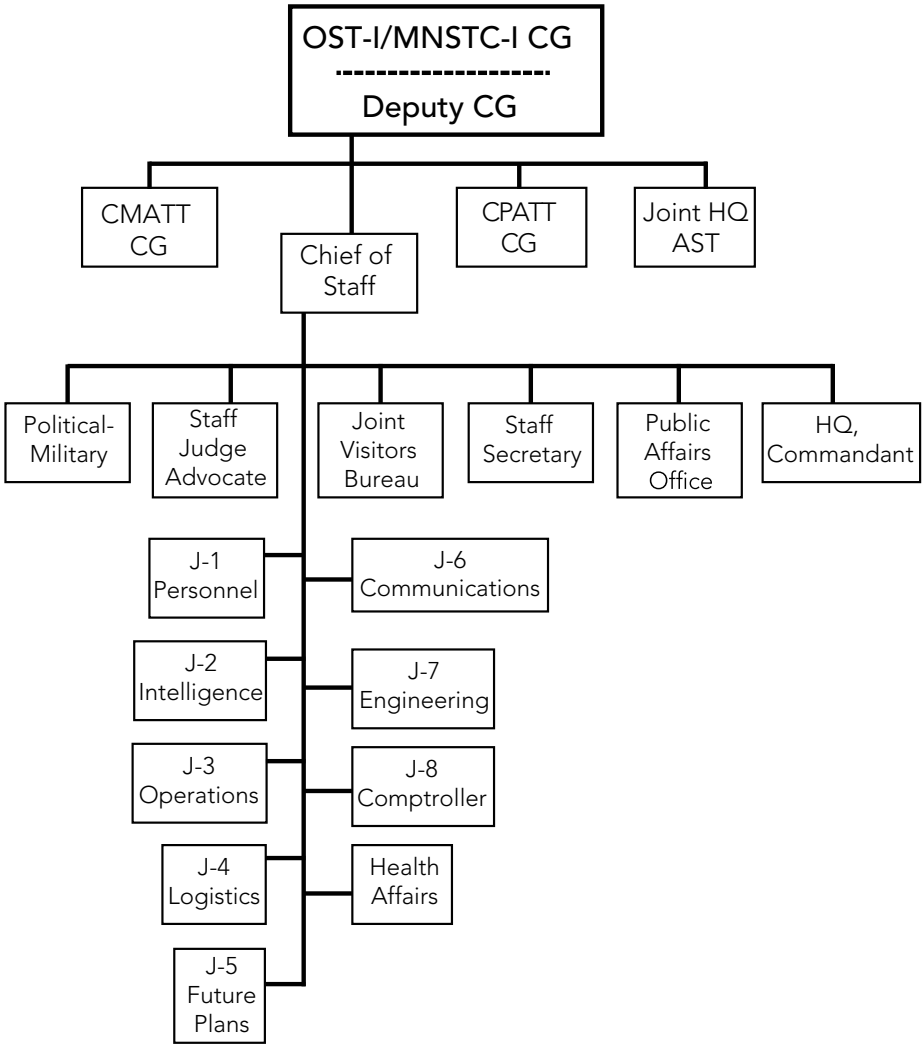
frustration with the overly broad metrics favored by the Pentagon, resulting in the belated adoption of a tiered readiness tracking system applicable to specific units.[35]

Casey tasked General Petraeus with seeking opportunities for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) to play a greater part in training Iraqi security forces. As Casey ended the discussion, he advised Petraeus "to drop the 'Office of Security Transition' portion of [his] command's name."[36] Within twenty-four hours, OST-I rebranded itself as Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) (*Chart 3.1*). One of the first official acts of MNSTC-I was to follow up on an OST-I initiative designed to merge the NIA and ING.[37]

Petraeus ordered his staff to develop a new mission statement that aligned with MNF-I priorities. The new statement defined MNSTC-I's purpose as "help[ing] Iraq organize, train, equip, build infrastructure for, and mentor Iraqi Security Forces in order to transition security tasks to Iraqi control and enable the execution of UNSCR 1546 events on schedule."[38] Ensuring sufficient security forces were in place to support the installation of successive Iraqi governments would make it easier for Petraeus to choose which projects would receive precedence when resources and time ran short. Rebuilding the Iraqi police, therefore, was MNSTC-I's top priority before the January 2005 elections, followed by increasing the capabilities of Iraqi special operations forces, preparing the ING to backstop the police, converting a portion of the NIA into a rapid deployment force capable of deploying anywhere within Iraq's borders, and merging the ING and NIA into a single organization.[39]

35. Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., "How to Close the 'Trained and Equipped' Gap in Iraq: Focus on Raw Standards on Security Over Real Numbers," Chron.com, 8 Feb 2005, https://www.chron.com/opinion/outlook/article/how-to-close-the-trained-and-equipped-gap-in-1640117.php, Hist Files, CMH.
36. MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (27 June–3 July 2004), Godfroy Collection, CMH.
37. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Italian Delegation, 17 Jun 2004, sub: IT Delegation Brief, slides 18–20, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
38. SourceWatch, s.v. "Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq," last modified 24 Jan 2007, 00:49, https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Multi-National_Security_Transition_Command-Iraq, Hist Files, CMH.
39. Bfg, OST-I/MNSTC-I, 6 Aug 2004, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slide 17, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

CHART 3.1—OST-I AND MNSTC-I STRUCTURE



Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Source: Bfg, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, 12 Jul 2004, sub: OST-I/MNSTC-I Structure, 1, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, Historians Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

TRANSLATING GUIDANCE INTO ACTION

Petraeus initially sought to identify some positive lessons from recent events. The ICDC had come out of the April uprising in relatively better shape than the NIA. A CMATT briefing in July 2004 showed the ICDC at 85 to 100 percent overall strength while comparable figures for the NIA were 50 percent or lower. A few ICDC units, most notably the 36th Commando Battalion, had performed well during their first exposure to combat. Iraqi National Congress spokesperson Entifadh Qanbar had attributed the 36th Commando Battalion's success in Al Fallūjah to the fact that its members were primarily from Kurdish and Shi'i militias.[40] In May, the commander of the departing 1st Armored Division, Maj. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, had opined, "We found that the 36th [Commando] Battalion [recruiting] model may have some utility. . . . We have approached the [Iraqi] stakeholders and given them numbers. We've asked them to provide a certain number of young men by party, by tribe, and they have about a week to give us the numbers."[41]

While the CPA formally had handed over the reins of power to the IIG in a public ceremony on 28 June, officials from the yet-to-be-installed government moved into their new offices weeks before that date in order to open up lines of communications and coordinate the transfer of power. Somewhat to the dismay of the Americans, their Iraqi counterparts had begun issuing policies and making decisions before the CPA departed. Petraeus had therefore not objected when Allawi unilaterally had taken steps to integrate more militia fighters into the NIA and police. These efforts had included the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, whose combined ranks numbered 75,000 Peshmerga; the 15,000-strong "Badr Brigades" of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq; and 12,000 fighters belonging to the Iraqi Islamic Party, the Iraqi Communist Party, and the Iraqi Hezbollah.[42] MNSTC-I acknowledged the difficulty of recruiting a substantial number of battalions from militia organizations, but it agreed

40. Betsy Hiel, "Reluctant Iraqi Security, Police Units, to be Booted," *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, 14 Apr 2004, https://archive.triblive.com/news/reluctant-iraqi-security-police-units-to-be-booted/, Hist Files, CMH.
41. "U.S. Tries Again with Iraqi Force, This Time Emphasizing Consensus," *World Tribune.com*, 13 May 2004, https://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2004/ss_iraq_05_12.html, Hist Files, CMH.
42. Nicholas Blanford, "Major Iraqi Militias to Stand Down," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 Jun 2004, https://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0608/p01s04-woiq.html, Hist Files, CMH.

that enlisting experienced fighters offered a means of improving the NIA's cohesion and numbers.[43]

The IIG, however, had different ideas about how to use militia fighters, and opted to divert most of them to newly formed police commando units and dignitary protection battalions rather than incorporate them into the NIA.[44] A portent of developments along those lines had emerged as early as 6 June during a discussion between Petraeus and Defense Minister al-Shalaan. The minister had interrupted a presentation to make the point that near-term threats facing the IIG demanded bold solutions. According to al-Shalaan, creating a new government would require the rapid generation of an Iraqi military force dedicated to securing Baghdād. Petraeus politely had agreed with the underlying logic of al-Shalaan's point, but he had countered that fielding a new organization on short notice would have a widespread impact on other Iraqi security forces. Both parties ultimately settled for their preferred courses of action, with the Ministry of Defense assembling dignitary protection battalions and CMATT assisting without disrupting its own plans.[45] This incident set a pattern that would be repeated many times over the next several years, with MNSTC-I inevitably scrambling to implement a no-notice or short-notice decision that had been made by Iraqi politicians.

Deprived of motivated militia fighters by IIG politicians with priorities that differed from American needs, CMATT sought to create a specially indoctrinated, trained, and equipped rapid deployment force, which would become known as the Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF). CMATT assigned the nascent 1st NIA Division, consisting of recently established brigades and other units not yet formed, to be the test bed organization.[46] That decision ended plans for dedicated NIA training organizations. The 1st NIA Battalion, which took great pride in learning that, as part of the future IIF, it would

43. Memo, MNSTC-I J–1 for MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Militia Reintegration Status, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

44. The commando units had been described by Civilian Police Advisory Training Team representatives as "mostly Sunni with a mix of Shiites and minority groups who were personally loyal to their commands and bound together by tribal and family backgrounds." MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 6 Nov 2004, sub: Deputies Ministerial Committee for National Security Meeting, 5, Godfroy Collection, CMH. While Robert M. Perito notes that Multi-National Corps–Iraq tactical units had been surprised by the commando units' unexpected appearance in key cities and towns, Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus had tracked Ministry of Interior efforts to create them. Perito, "Iraq Federal Police," 18 Oct 2011, 5.

45. MFR, OST-I Cmdg Gen, 6 Jun 2004, sub: Meeting with Iraqi Ministers of Interior and Defense, 1–4, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

46. American sources briefly referred to this unit as the Iraqi National Task Force before adopting the Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF) designation.



ICDC recruits conduct urban combat training at Camp Taji under the supervision of U.S. advisers. (*S. Sgt. D. Myles Cullen, U.S. Air Force*)

become a regular infantry unit, joined the 2d and 4th NIA Battalions to form the 1st IIF Brigade (formerly the 1st NIA Brigade).[47] Acknowledging that it would take some time to put together a full division, CMATT designated the 1st IIF Brigade as the premier component of the IIF. The 2d NIA Brigade comprised the 3d, 8th, and 9th NIA Battalions. The final component of the force, which would not be fielded until fall 2004, was the 6th NIA Brigade, consisting of the 22d, 23d, and 24th NIA Battalions.[48] The Ministry of Defense deferred designating the 2d and 6th NIA Brigades as IIF units until they proved themselves in combat.

Officials from the IIG approved of the IIF initiative, as evidenced by the chief of staff of the NIA visiting the 1st IIF Brigade to ask its members to volunteer for the new organization. After the general spoke with the rank and file, the soldiers received four days of leave so they could talk with members of their families and local communities before making a decision.

47. The 1st, 2d, and 4th NIA Battalions became the 1st, 2d, and 4th IIF Battalions, respectively, when the 1st NIA Brigade became the 1st IIF Brigade. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Maj. Roger Swartwood, former Advisory Spt Team Leader, 1st New Iraqi Army (NIA) Bn, 3 Nov 2006, 1, OLE.

48. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 23 Nov 2004, sub: Iraqi Armed Forces, slide 1, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

Approximately three-quarters of the brigade's personnel chose to stay in the brigade and join the IIF; the others were reassigned.[49] Recognizing that IIF units would need more training, CMATT relocated the 1st IIF Brigade from Kir Kush to At Tājī so it could receive urban combat training. Upon completion of that instruction, CMATT sent the 2d NIA Battalion to Sāmarrāʾ where it began operating alongside the 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized), while the remainder of the IIF brigade transferred to Ar Rustamiyah near Baghdād.[50]

MNSTC-I efforts to accelerate the NIA's fielding continued unabated as it formed the IIF, now commanded by a Kurdish officer, Maj. Gen. Thaher Ahmad.[51] Maj. Gen. Kursheed Saleem Hassan's 3d NIA Division consisted of the 4th, 5th, and 8th NIA Brigades stationed at Al Kasik Military Base with subordinate battalions respectively numbered as the 10th through 12th NIA Battalions, the 13th through 15th NIA Battalions, and the 19th through 21st NIA Battalions.[52] Maj. Gen. Ahmed Klaibos Awad's 5th NIA Division at Kirkush Military Training Base consisted of the 3d, 7th, and 9th NIA Brigades with subordinate battalions numbered, respectively, as the 5th through 7th NIA Battalions, the 16th through 18th NIA Battalions, and the 25th through 27th NIA Battalions.[53]

Although the NIA was setting up brigade headquarters, the process of instructing those organizations on their duties encountered major obstacles. The most pressing issue was the shortage of qualified personnel, which prompted MNSTC-I to postpone brigade-level staff training until fall 2004. Making matters more complex, the sheer number of Iraqi brigades being generated at that time ensured that any training their staffs received would be geared toward learning only the essentials. On a positive note, the brigade training teams that arrived from the United States were composed of former instructors from the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff

49. Interv, Dennis Van Wey, CSI, with Col. Toby Hale, former Ch, Senior Adviser Team, 3d NIA Bde, 24 Jan 2006, 13–14, OLE.
50. Interv, Clay with Schwitters, 13 Dec 2006, 8.
51. This officer had been chosen by a fellow Kurd, the secretary of the Ministry of Defense. He did not make a good first impression as a division commander; Maj. Gen. Tariq Abdul Wahab Jassim would receive command of the division in the spring of 2005. A similar turnover took place in the 6th NIA Division after the Iraqi president personally selected its commander because of his tribal ties. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Oct 2004, sub: Meeting with the Minister of Defense, 1; MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 14 Dec 2004, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 3; MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 19 Dec 2004, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 1; all in Godfroy Collection, CMH.
52. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 23 Nov 2004, sub: Iraqi Armed Forces, slide 2.
53. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 23 Nov 2004, sub: Iraqi Armed Forces, slide 3.

College and Combined Arms Services and Staff School, both located at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.[54]

The mission of educating Iraqi division staffs faced a number of obstacles that included fallout from the "bottom-up" approach to rebuilding the Iraqi military, the limited number of U.S. trainers who had specialized knowledge, and the recent decision to close the Combined Arms Services and Staff School. As a result, MNSTC-I found itself forced to address brigade-level issues before tackling divisional needs. However, filling brigade requirements depleted the pool of experienced Iraqi staff officers, which resulted in American instructors teaching unqualified individuals at division-level how to perform tasks of significantly greater complexity while at the same time attempting to build cohesion within an administrative entity far larger and more complex than its brigade equivalent.[55]

The burgeoning NIA presence required MNSTC-I to activate four installations before the January elections: Camp Taji (north of Baghdād), Al Kasik Military Base (west of Mosul), An Numaniyah Air Base (southeast of Baghdād), and Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah (in the western Baghdād suburbs).[56] The increasing number of NIA troops also resulted in basic training branching out from Kir Kush to Al Kasik and At Tājī, which meant that each of the three divisions now had a training installation colocated on its main base.[57]

To prevent insurgents from interrupting the fielding of infantry units, the 5th NIA Division temporarily relinquished control of its 5th and 6th NIA Battalions to secure the Camp Taji and Kirkush Military Training Base perimeters. MNSTC-I did not have to task a third battalion to perform the same mission at Al Kasik Military Base because the construction company responsible for upgrading that base had hired private contractors to handle

54. Sgt. Jared M. Zabaldo, "MNSTC-I Dispatches 'Mobile Training Teams' to Iraqi Staffs," *Advisor* 1, no. 13 (4 Dec 2004): 4, Hist Files, CMH.

55. The Iraqis attempted to recall the staffs of Saddam-era divisions with mixed success. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Sep 2004, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense Personnel, 7, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

56. Camp Taji construction alone cost $278 million, with Al Kasik Military Base and An Numaniyah Air Base totaling a combined $307 million, while improvements to Kirkush Military Training Base totaled $92 million. Baghdad-area projects included not only Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah, but also a base for the 36th Commando Battalion and Ministry of Defense upgrades totaling $165 million. The cost for these projects and other proposed installations amounted to more than half of the initial $2 billion allocation. Bfg, MNSTC-I J–7 Joint Team to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Dec 2004, sub: IAF Construction Program, Construction Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

57. Bfg, OST-I/MNSTC-I to Dep Cdr, Multi-National Div–Center South, 7 Aug 2004, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slide 15, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.



Iraqi National Guard troops file past a Bradley fighting vehicle north of Baghdād. (*Sgt. Ashely Brokop, U.S. Air Force*)

security.[58] That expedient proved risky. In August 2004, a suicide bomber detonated his explosive devices inside a dining facility at Al Kasik Military Base, killing nine soldiers from the 10th NIA Battalion and wounding twenty-three. The incident triggered mass desertions within the unit, which halted collective training until new recruits arrived.[59]

SEEKING PARTNERS

Adding more NATO resources to the U.S. effort to bring the seven-step process to fruition was one of the lesser challenges facing MNF-I, in large part because Poland's involvement in Multi-National Division–Center South

58. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, CMH, with Col. (Ret.) Thomas F. Thaler, former Cdr, Al Kasik Coalition Base Spt Team, 8 May 2007, Hist Files, CMH; Michael Zacchea and Ted Kemp, *The Ragged Edge: A US Marine's Account of Leading the Iraqi Army Fifth Battalion* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2017), 128–29; Bfg, OST-I/MNSTC-I to Dep Cdr, Multi-National Div–Center South, 7 Aug 2004, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slide 15.
59. Sgt. Lorie Jewell, "Iraqi Army Soldiers Making Progress in Confronting Anti-Iraqi Forces and Bonding with Citizens, Coalition Partners," *Advisor* 2, no. 29 (16 Jul 2005): 6, Hist Files, CMH.

already had opened the door for developments along those lines. In early 2004, NATO had dispatched a planning delegation to determine if its recent experience in the Balkans and Afghanistan could be put to use in Iraq. The team reported that NATO could contribute to maintaining stability in Iraq, provided its own political leadership organized the popular support needed to send troops there.

The treaty organization's member nations agreed to consider deploying forces in a noncombat role, albeit with some preconditions. These included the passage of a UN resolution pledging security assistance to the Iraqis, a request for assistance from an internationally recognized Iraqi government, and unanimous support for the mission within the alliance itself. The passage of UNSCR 1546 on 8 June had satisfied the first precondition. Twelve days later, Prime Minister Allawi met the second precondition by sending a letter to Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer formally requesting NATO assistance.[60] Several weeks after that, at a summit held in Istanbul, Turkey, all NATO member states pledged their full support to the IIG.[61]

Following those green lights, NATO sent a fact-finding mission, consisting of Admiral Gregory G. Johnson, the commander in chief of Allied Forces Southern Europe, and eleven members of his staff, to Baghdād. General Petraeus met with Johnson on 6 July 2004 to determine what type of support the alliance might consider furnishing.[62] An assessment team, headed by Johnson's deputy chief of staff for operations, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, did the same with Petraeus's staff. Their initial findings recommended providing training for Iraqi staff officers destined for a position at a joint headquarters, national command center, joint operations center, or national joint operations center. Lynch also recommended NATO participation in the creation of an Iraqi security forces training command and suggested more emphasis be placed on persuading alliance members to mentor key headquarters personnel within Iraqi divisions and brigades.[63] NATO

60. Memo, Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi for NATO Sec Gen Jaan De Hoop Scheffer, 20 Jun 2004, an. A to Memo, Supreme Allied Cdr, Europe, and Supreme Allied Cdr, Transformation, for Director, International Mil Staff, 7 Sep 2004, sub: NATO Assistance to Iraq in Training Security Forces, NATO Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
61. Rick Lynch and Phillip D. Janzen, "NATO Training Mission–Iraq: Looking to the Future," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 40 (1st Quarter, 2006): 30, https://ndupress.ndu.edu/portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-40.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
62. Lynch and Janzen, "NATO Training Mission–Iraq: Looking to the Future," 31.
63. Memo, Supreme Allied Cdr, Europe, and Supreme Allied Cdr, Transformation, for Director, International Mil Staff, 7 Sep 2004, sub: NATO Assistance to Iraq in Training Security Forces, an. B.

responded by preparing to send a forty-person training delegation to follow up on Lynch's observations.[64]

Secretary Rumsfeld requested another update from Petraeus soon after Johnson's visit. During the 21 July video teleconference, Petraeus identified MNSTC-I's six most critical tasks: (1) determining what Iraq needs; (2) determining the "ground truth" on current Iraqi security forces and (3) identifying "gaps"; (4) laying out the way ahead in terms of timelines, resources, execution, and priorities; (5) developing methodologies permitting MNSTC-I to track the progress of new programs; and (6) integrating the entire effort within the overall coalition strategy.[65] Many of the critical tasks implied that efforts to create an Iraqi army had been haphazard at best. Rumsfeld acknowledged those points before steering the conversation to the topic of ING expansion.[66] He ended by asking Petraeus for a series of updates over the coming month before the next White House principals meeting on Iraq.[67] When appraised of Rumsfeld's desire, General Casey informed the MNSTC-I commander that he would attend the updates as well.

The 28 July update by Petraeus focused on expansion plans. He started by explaining that MNSTC-I would have to recruit, train, equip, and base 135,000 civilian police, 32,000 border enforcement personnel, and 65 National Guard battalions to meet security needs for the upcoming election. These figures represented an increase of 45,000 police, 15,000 border enforcement personnel, and 20 ING battalions. The additional personnel already were deploying in accordance with geographic priorities, which included Baghdād, Al Anbār, and the region encompassing Tikrīt, Baʿqūbah, and Ar Ramādī known as the Sunni Triangle. This region, along with Al Anbār Province in the western part of the country and Mosul to the north, hosted major concentrations of Sunni Arabs sympathetic to insurgent groups. Although Petraeus acknowledged that expanding the civilian police and ING warranted high priority, he stressed the need to accelerate the development of Iraqi special operations forces and provide more support to the embryonic IIF.[68]

General Petraeus then reminded Rumsfeld that MNSTC-I would need additional infrastructure and logistical sustainment to underpin force

64. Memo, Supreme Allied Cdr, Europe, and Supreme Allied Cdr, Transformation, for Director, International Mil Staff, 7 Sep 2004, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Training Requirements, NATO Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
65. Interim Progress Rpt (IPR), MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Sec Def, 28 Jul 2004, slide 4, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
66. IPR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Sec Def, 28 Jul 2004, slide 3.
67. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to U.S. president, 23 Aug 2004, slides 2–11, POTUS Brfg Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
68. IPR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Sec Def, 28 Jul 2004, slides 5–6.



A soldier from the newly formed Iraqi Intervention Force provides security as his company patrols the streets in the Rasheed District of Baghdād on 8 July 2004. (*Tech. Sgt. Steve Faulisi, U.S. Air Force*)

structure expansion. Petraeus explained that while facilities for five ING brigades and two military training bases were complete, Iraq still required a new ministry of defense and joint headquarters, central military academy, Ministry of Defense equipment warehouse, special operations force training facility, six ING brigade bases, Iraqi air force bases capable of supporting C–130 aircraft and helicopters, and a coastal defense installation. They also would need to expand and upgrade training facilities to handle the increased number of recruits. The cost of the additional construction, equipment procurement, and training resources for the ING, border enforcement, and police units exceeded available funding by an estimated $1.5 billion. In addition to needing more money, Petraeus elaborated, MNSTC-I needed more trainers and advisers.[69]

Rather than provide further resources, Rumsfeld asked Petraeus to have the Iraqis absorb as much of the additional cost as possible. The secretary of defense also directed MNSTC-I to seek more assistance from NATO. He

69. IPR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Sec Def, 28 Jul 2004, slide 26.

concluded by directing Petraeus to brief the secretary of state and the IIG before delivering his final update on 4 August.[70]

Petraeus convinced the IIG to pay the salaries, operations, maintenance, and sustainment costs for the additional security forces. The Iraqis also pledged to pay 20 percent of the cost to replace damaged equipment and 10 percent of the funding needed to maintain existing installations. The Iraqi contributions reduced the unfunded $1.5 billion by two-thirds.[71] General Petraeus passed that information to Secretary Rumsfeld well in advance of the August meeting. Although the Iraqis' financial contribution was welcome news to the Pentagon, it also gave Baghdād more influence over the equipment, leadership, and deployment of Iraqi troops.

The 4 August briefing to Rumsfeld began with an explanation of why MNSTC-I trained-and-equipped numbers differed from the higher figures lauded by Pentagon spokespeople. A Defense Department report dated 13 July 2004 claimed that 229,000 members of the Iraqi security forces had been trained and equipped, whereas the comparable MNSTC-I figure was only 110,000. Petraeus clarified that the higher figure presented an inaccurate picture because it included not only Facilities Protection Service personnel but also Iraqi soldiers and police still in training.

The secretary of defense then switched the discussion to funding, making it clear that he wanted MNSTC-I to seek more ways to reduce U.S. costs, which included giving the Iraqis a freer hand in procuring equipment. Rumsfeld also suggested asking pro-U.S. members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and NATO for more money. On a concluding note, he directed Casey and Petraeus to study the feasibility of withdrawing some coalition military forces if the projected increase in Iraqi security forces took place.[72] The secretary's priorities were clear: train more Iraqi personnel in order to decrease the number of American troops needed in Iraq, thereby reducing the burden on U.S. taxpayers.

70. IPR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Sec Def, 28 Jul 2004, slide 26, annotated comments by Gen. David H. Petraeus.
71. IPR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Sec Def, 4 Aug 2004, slides 9, 13, 16, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
72. IPR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Sec Def, 4 Aug 2004, title slide, annotated comments by Gen. David H. Petraeus.

SETTLING ON A TRANSITIONAL APPROACH

Feedback from the 4 August briefing had provided Casey's staff with the final input it needed to complete MNF-I's updated campaign plan.[73] The document, published on 5 August 2004, explained, "The MNF [Multi-National Force] is no longer a force of occupation. . . . For the face of security operations to change it is vital to have a capable and operating ISF [Iraqi security force]. The Force will therefore use the full spectrum of military and civilian tools to separate the insurgents and activists from the Iraqi people, and to rebuild [a] capable ISF."[74] Future success rested on Iraqi security forces playing an increasing role in tactical operations despite the fact that their tactical skills remained far below that of American units.[75]

The Pentagon sought to offset the disparity by generating additional force structure, which, in turn, required more U.S. trainers and advisers. That approach focused on quantity over quality. To help achieve it, Army leaders looked beyond the active duty force. Interest in using Army reservists first had emerged in the summer of 2003 following the Army National Guard's assumption of the Afghan advisory mission. Although the Defense Department had selected Vinnell Corporation to train the NIA, Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, the chief of the Army Reserve, continued to champion the use of institutional training divisions or training support divisions to perform that mission.

Helmly had directed his staff to sketch out a new concept, known as the Foreign Army–Training Assistance Command program, designed to provide basic and advanced training to foreign soldiers. As he later elaborated, "I saw us establishing a Fort Benning, Georgia, or a Fort Knox, Kentucky, inside Iraq and training civilians to become soldiers."[76] Impressed with the proposal's potential, the Army's deputy chief of staff for operations, Lt. Gen. Richard A. Cody, had asked Helmly for a detailed presentation on 28 April 2004. Cody expressed his full support for the concept while directing Helmly to replace the ad hoc command and control node overseeing the effort with a stripped down, but otherwise intact, training support division headquarters.

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73. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 177.

74. Memo, MNF-I for all Subordinate Cmds and National Cmd Authorities/CENTCOM, 5 Aug 2004, sub: Campaign Plan: Operation Iraqi Freedom, Partnership: From Occupation to Constitutional Elections, Multi-National Force–Iraq, 17, 2004 Folder, Casey Papers, CMH.

75. Memo, MNF-I for all Subordinate Cmds and National Cmd Authorities/CENTCOM, 5 Aug 2004, sub: Campaign Plan: Operation Iraqi Freedom, 6.

76. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Maj. Gen. James R. Helmly, Ch Army Reserve and Cmdg Gen, U.S. Army Reserve Cmd, 2 Dec 2006, 6, OLE.

General Petraeus initially had heard about the Foreign Army–Training Assistance Command during a follow-on briefing by Helmly in General Cody's office soon after he had returned from his April visit to Iraq. When Petraeus learned the Army planned to send almost 800 reservists from the 98th Division (Institutional Training) to Iraq, he suggested sending a senior officer to make a detailed assessment of the situation before the entire contingent deployed from the United States to the Middle East. That had made sense to Cody, who authorized the dispatch of a small advance team to Iraq in late July.[77]

A three-person party—including the commander of the 1st Brigade, 98th Division, Col. Robert G. Catalanotti—arrived in Iraq on 24 July.[78] A little under one-third, or 250, of the soldiers taking part in the Foreign Army–Training Assistance Command mission belonged to Catalanotti's unit.[79] The rest of the assessment team, led by the 98th Division's assistant commanding general, Brig. Gen. Richard J. Sherlock Jr., joined the trio two weeks later. Assisted by Petraeus's chief of staff, Sherlock examined a list of unfilled duty positions authorized for MNSTC-I to identify which assignments were most suitable for the incoming reservists.[80] The fact that Sherlock's team had to sift through MNSTC-I manning authorizations served notice that the Foreign Army–Training Assistance Command concept did not correlate well to the realities of training Iraqi soldiers. General Helmly's staff had envisioned reservists working with individual recruits on secure bases that boasted well-equipped classrooms, established weapons ranges, and adequate living conditions for trainers and new inductees alike. Rather than collectively perform a familiar mission, the 98th Division contributed "750 individual filler personnel, who just happened to be from the same unit" to augment an existing train, equip, and advise effort.[81]

The first test of the IIG's willingness to use its security forces against violent groups came on 5 August when Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army attacked a police station in An Najaf. The police repelled the initial assault, but the Sadrists succeeded in occupying the station after launching a second attack several hours later. Successive attempts by the IIG to respond to these attacks resulted in two ING units dissolving and a third becoming combat

77. Steven E. Clay, *Iroquois Warriors in Iraq* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007), 8–9.
78. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Brig. Gen. Richard Sherlock, Asst Div Cdr, 98th Inf Div, 16 Nov 2006, 4–5, OLE.
79. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Col. Robert Catalanotti, 1st Bde Cdr, 98th Inf Div, 3 Nov 2006, 4, OLE.
80. Interv, Clay with Sherlock, 16 Nov 2006, 8–9.
81. Clay, *Iroquois Warriors*, 222.



Imam Ali Shrine in An Najaf (*Sgt. Jose Hernandez, Joint Combat Camera Center–Iraq*)

ineffective when half of its soldiers refused to deploy to An Najaf.[82] The violence soon spread to other parts of the city, prompting the provincial governor to request coalition assistance. Although initial media accounts attributed the fighting to a response to an earlier clash between Sadrists and U.S. marines on 1 August, later reports suggested that the arrest of a key aide by Iraqi authorities had spurred Sadr into challenging Prime Minister Allawi.[83]

When the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed to An Najaf in response to the governor's plea, the Americans received heavy fire from the Wadi as Salaam, the largest burial ground in the Muslim world. Drawing on lessons from Al Fallūjah, the marines used ground troops rather than artillery and air strikes to force Sadr's fighters to retreat to the Imam Ali Shrine. Although the marines made good progress, reinforcements dispatched by other pro-Sadr militia groups drew two battalions of the 1st Cavalry Division

82. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 338.
83. Scott Baldauf and Dan Murphy, "Uneasy Truce Evaporates in Najaf," *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 Aug 2004, https://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0806/p06s01-woiq.html; Mark Oliver, "Najaf Standoff Nears End," *Guardian*, 25 Aug 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/aug/25/iraq.markoliver, Hist Files, CMH.

and the 36th Commando Battalion into the fight.[84] As the battle escalated in intensity, MNF-I prohibited the use of air and artillery fire in a wide arc around the well-known shrine to avoid damaging it. The fighting died down over the next forty-eight hours as the Americans concentrated on isolating Sadr's followers without provoking a major engagement near the mosque.

The outbreak of fighting within one of the most religiously significant cities in Iraq threatened to fracture the fragile political alliances binding together the IIG. Prime Minister Allawi and his senior ministers realized that an American attack on the shrine would have produced intense anger and resentment among Iraqis, but they also felt that the protracted standoff had allowed Sadr time to incite rebellion in other parts of the country. Some ministers agreed with Sadr's pronouncements blaming the coalition for the violence, while others perceived the fighting as an attempt to undermine Allawi's credibility. The coalition military effort ground to a halt when Iraqi National Security Advisor Mowaffak al-Rubaie traveled to An Najaf to broker a cease fire.[85]

The Sadrists bluntly informed Rubaie that they never would leave the shrine while American troops remained in An Najaf. On 14 August, Prime Minister Allawi sought to end the crisis by deploying the 1st IIF Brigade, less one battalion, to An Najaf. Rather than appear indecisive or weak by simply replacing the American cordon with Iraqi troops, the interim government agreed to an MNF-I proposal to prepare for an Iraqi-led assault against the shrine. A Ministry of Interior spokesman explained the decision to send the IIF into An Najaf, saying, "Quite frankly, we don't have adequate police and national guard forces to deal with the Mahdi Army, . . . and we don't want the [U.S. forces] to go into the shrine."[86]

The process of readying the IIF for commitment in An Najaf took considerable time. The 1st IIF Brigade had only a fraction of its authorized vehicles and equipment. Other problems arose when the soldiers learned of their new mission. One of the IIF battalion commanders, Col. Saadi Salih al-Maliki, asked his men if they would fight against Sadr's militia. "Two hundred and fifty said they would not," he recalled. "I made them strip down to their underwear. I kicked them off the base. They did not deserve to wear this

84. Alex Berenson and Dexter Filkins, "The Reach of War: The Insurgents; Rebel Iraqi Cleric Is Told to Give Up or Face Attack," *New York Times*, 25 Aug 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/25/world/reach-war-insurgents-rebel-iraqi-cleric-told-give-up-face-attack.html, Hist Files, CMH.

85. Karl Vick and Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Iraqi Army to Battle al-Sadr's Militia; Premier Sends Troops to Najaf After Peace Negotiations Fail," *Washington Post*, 15 Aug 2004, reprinted at https://www.deseret.com/2004/8/15/19845323/iraq-army-to-battle-al-sadr-s-militia, Hist Files, CMH.

86. Vick and Chandrasekaran, "Iraqi Army to Battle al-Sadr's Militia."



Commandos from the 36th Commando Battalion practice entering and exiting amphibious assault vehicles during the An Najaf standoff in August 2004. (*Cpl. Annette Kyriakides, U.S. Marine Corps*)

uniform."[87] After consolidating his remaining 300 troops into companies led by reliable officers, Colonel al-Maliki continued with his preparations.

The IIF contingent arrived in An Najaf on 24 August. The Iraqi troops patrolled through pacified neighborhoods to signal the interim government's willingness to use its forces against the renegade cleric. Prime Minister Allawi made it clear that Iraqi forces were authorized to conduct combat operations around the shrine. In a Baghdād news conference attended by top interim government officials, the Iraqi defense minister also called on the Mahdi fighters to surrender their weapons or face devastating attack. Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari echoed that uncompromising statement, explaining to reporters that the credibility of the Allawi government was at stake.[88]

In the meantime, the Sadrists settled down for a long siege and set up a reception center for volunteers arriving from other cities. On 26 August, a pair of U.S. Air Force F–16 fighters dropped precision-guided bombs on

87. Michael Hastings and Scott Johnson, "We Want Better Weapons," *Newsweek*, 20 Feb 2006, https://www.newsweek.com/we-want-better-weapons-113137, Hist Files, CMH.
88. Berenson and Filkins, "Reach of War."

two commandeered hotels near the shrine, killing or wounding a number of enemy combatants without causing collateral damage. When Iraqi troops marshalled for an assault following the bombing attack, Sadr indicated that he would be willing to negotiate a settlement. Prime Minister Allawi accepted the cleric's subsequent offer of a binding truce, and the crisis ended when Mahdi fighters retreated from the shrine. On 29 August, General Petraeus observed, "Although heavily supported by Coalition forces, Iraqi Security Forces played a key role in setting the conditions for the Iraqi Interim Government's successful coordination with religious leaders to end the standoff in An Najaf. Their presence fortified the government's position by conveying the signal that Iraqi rather than American troops would enter the mosque."[89]

The An Najaf experience reinforced General Casey's belief that Iraqi troops were indispensable in politically sensitive operations. In addition, the Iraqis provided situational awareness and local intelligence that coalition units had difficulty acquiring on their own. Casey concluded that Iraqi units could perform well when provided with sufficient advisers. "We had with [the Iraqi security forces] the early version of transition teams," Casey recalled. "What we found was [the Iraqi units] do okay when we're with them. That became kind of a lesson that was going to expand into the transition strategy."[90] Yet, it was by no means certain that the presence of transition teams—rather than the conduit to American firepower provided by advisers—would be the key to improving Iraqi combat performance.

Casey's upbeat assessment overlooked that the incident had shown that Iraqi forces still had serious problems. The dissolution of ING units and the combat refusal of a portion of the IIF brigade demonstrated that many soldiers could not be depended upon to fulfill their mission. Moreover, the interim government treated the incident in the same manner as the governing council had treated the NIA's combat refusals—by foregoing immediate disciplinary proceedings and not adopting policies to forestall similar incidents in the future. The belief that the Iraqis might perform better in combat as long as American advisers accompanied them was overshadowed by the fact that many refused to take part in battle.

Events in Baghdād during this period provided a persuasive counterpoint to concerns about Iraqi combat readiness. On 19 September, government authorities arrested a high-ranking Sadrist, Sheikh Hazem al-Araji, in Kadhimiyah. Sadrists masquerading as a previously unknown Shi'i insurgent

89. MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (22–29 August 2004), Godfroy Collection, CMH.
90. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 340.

group retaliated by kidnapping eighteen ING soldiers. The group paraded the captives in front of Al Jazeera television cameras, threatening to kill them in forty-eight hours if the interim government did not release al-Araji. In a surprising turn of events, the so-called insurgents freed their hostages several days later without obtaining the release of the Sadrist lieutenant.[91]

The 1st Cavalry Division, aided by the 1st IIF Battalion and the 40th ING Brigade, responded by mounting a number of raids throughout central and eastern Baghdād on 21 September. They arrested twenty-four suspected terrorists and seized a sizable quantity of arms and ammunition. The effort targeting Sadrist fighters resumed the following day with a series of combined assaults in the western part of Sadr City. Ten enemy fighters were killed, and ninety-two were wounded, while the attackers suffered damage to a helicopter and an M1A1 Abrams tank. A third day of clashes between Sadrist militia members and a coalition strike force consisting of an American mechanized battalion augmented by elements of the 40th ING Brigade ended at dusk on 23 September with several coalition soldiers wounded, three armored vehicles destroyed or damaged, and forty Sadrists killed.[92]

Two days later, Iraqi troops stormed the Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque in western Baghdād in an unsuccessful attempt to locate enemy weapons caches. Operations resumed on 27 September with American helicopters engaging militia fighters early in the day followed by a late afternoon probe by a U.S. mechanized force designed to gain the attention of Sadr's followers. Orbiting AC–130 gunships targeted the enemy gunmen as they rushed to attack coalition vehicles, which exited Sadr City as the aircraft engaged their targets. A deadly game of cat and mouse ensued over the next week with a succession of combined patrols penetrating Sadr City for the purpose of drawing enemy fighters out into the open and into the line of fire of the AC–130s.[93]

Although the coalition did not establish a lodgment in Sadr City, the losses suffered by Sadr's militia foot soldiers persuaded the Mahdi Army to call for a cease fire. In early October, the Sadrists turned in weapons to Iraqi police officials.[94] The consistently steady performance of both the 1st IIF Battalion

91. "Organizational Legacy of the 1st Cavalry Division and its Subordinate Commands, Iraqi Freedom II 2003–2005," 1st Cav Div, n.d., https://www.first-team.us/tableux/chapt_19/ (page discontinued; accessed 4 Oct 2023), Hist Files, CMH.
92. "Organizational Legacy of the 1st Cavalry Division and its Subordinate Commands," 1st Cav Div.
93. "Organizational Legacy of the 1st Cavalry Division and its Subordinate Commands," 1st Cav Div.
94. "Militia to Disarm in Sadr City Peace Deal," CNN, 9 Oct 2004, https://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/10/09/iraq.main/index.html, Hist Files, CMH.



Personnel from the 304th Iraqi National Guard Battalion check underneath shrubbery for hidden weapons during a combined cordon and sweep of the farmlands south of Baghdād with soldiers from 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment. (*Tech. Sgt. Steve Faulisi, U.S. Air Force*)

and the 40th ING Brigade raised hope that Iraqi troops could be employed against hostile militia forces without instances of mass desertion.[95] The Iraqis did not necessarily share the same hope, explaining that many soldiers still were reluctant to operate outside the province where their families and acquaintances lived. There had not been mass desertion during the battle in Sadr City because the 40th ING Brigade soldiers were fighting in their home city. The Americans remained reluctant to recognize that fact, and MNF-I continued to use Iraqi units as it saw fit, despite the demonstrated negative impact created by insurgent threats against the families of ING soldiers operating in close proximity to their own homes.[96]

95. The 40th Iraqi National Guard Brigade experienced problems in August when some of its soldiers refused to fight the Mahdi Army, but these issues appeared to be resolved by the following month. Memo, from MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 14 Aug 2004, sub: Meeting at 40th Iraqi National Guard Brigade Headquarters, 1–4, Godfroy Collection, CMH.
96. Memo, for MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Visit to ISF Personnel in Ar Ramadi 7 October 2004, part A, para. 1, sec. B.

Although the NIA obtained mixed results at An Najaf and Sadr City, the spectacle of Iraqi troops operating alongside Americans had caught the interest of insurgent groups. On 18 September, a suicide car bomb in Kirkūk had killed nineteen and wounded sixty-seven prospective National Guard recruits.[97] On 22 September, a car bomb had exploded in Baghdād at a photocopying kiosk that was frequented by National Guard recruits copying enlistment paperwork. Eleven were killed.[98] On 4 October, a suicide car bomber targeted National Guard recruits waiting outside the walls of Baghdād's heavily guarded "Green Zone" governmental enclave, killing eleven and wounding seventy.[99] The most dramatic incident took placed twenty days later when terrorists executed a busload of fifty-one soldiers from the 17th NIA Battalion, who were heading home on leave after basic training graduation.[100] These attacks prompted the implementation of additional security measures, which proved effective at deterring car bombs but did so at the cost of diverting personnel from election security preparations.

MORE TRAINERS, UNEXPECTED MISSIONS

The deployment of the 98th Division's main body, which included 116 transfers from other units to fill critical shortages, began during the Sadr City skirmishes. An initial six-week preparatory phase, conducted by Col. Charles A. Stafford's 3d Brigade, 85th Division (Training Support), provided refresher training to deploying soldiers, albeit based on generic requirements rather than feedback from Iraq.[101] Although the 98th Division learned more about its upcoming mission during this period, Stafford's unit lacked the time and resources to revise the curriculum.[102] The 98th Division personnel received more predeployment training than soldiers currently assigned to MNSTC-I, but not all of that instruction helped them in their new jobs.[103]

97. "Kirkuk Suicide Blast Kills 19," CNN, 18 Sep 2004, https://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/09/18/iraq.main/index.html, Hist Files, CMH.
98. "22 Die in Baghdad Violence," *Guardian*, 22 Sep 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/23/iraq1, Hist Files, CMH.
99. The U.S. Embassy, the Iraqi parliament, and government ministries were located in the Green Zone. "21 Killed in Iraq Blasts," *Guardian*, 4 Oct 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/oct/04/iraq.usa, Hist Files, CMH.
100. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Oct 2004, sub: Meeting with the Minister of Defense, 2.
101. Interv, Clay with Catalanotti, 3 Nov 2006, 5–6.
102. For example, an effort by the 85th Division (Training Support) to provide an Arabic language course succeeded in hiring only two civilian instructors capable of teaching a limited range of vocabulary. Interv, Clay with Catalanotti, 3 Nov 2006, 6.
103. Interv, Clay with Sherlock, 16 Nov 2006, 8.

MNSTC-I soldiers in Iraq possessed knowledge that Colonel Stafford's instructors lacked, but General Petraeus needed personnel regardless of how prepared they were for an advisory or staff assignment. During this period, MNSTC-I was operating with only 642 of its 1,328 authorized military and civilian personnel. Priority for filling assignments went to the advisory teams followed by slots within the headquarters itself, so 76 percent of the 390 authorized advisory positions were filled. They expected to be at 100 percent by 1 December 2004.[104] In sharp contrast, only 38 percent of the 594 Joint Manning Document positions reserved for the command group and staff were occupied, and only 74 percent of these positions were predicted to be filled by 1 December. Almost 250 of the 750 incoming 98th Division personnel went to joint slots with most of the remainder becoming advisers.[105]

The activation of the NATO Training Mission–Iraq played a part in the decision to shunt 98th Division personnel into staff or advisory jobs rather than training positions. While the alliance member states were willing to train Iraqi security forces, they stipulated that the effort had to take place in classrooms rather than on battlefields. The initial group of a dozen NATO personnel, which soon grew to more than fifty individuals, concentrated on resurrecting the Iraqi professional military education system.[106] That initiative began with two junior officer pilot courses. The first, consisting of forty-three students, was held at Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah near Baghdād; the second, held at the Zakho Military Academy in Kurdistan, enrolled eighty-five students.[107]

Alliance involvement did not provide MNSTC-I with immediate relief, prompting Petraeus to observe, "While the NATO assessment team

104. Coalition Military Assistance Training Team advisory teams initially were assigned only to NIA and IIF units at this time. Battalion-level teams were organized with ten personnel; brigade-level teams had five personnel; and division-level teams were authorized ten personnel. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 17 Jul 2004, sub: MNSTC-I CDR's Conference, part 1, slide 11, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

105. The Joint Manning Document—which was not approved until 17 July—included personnel from all U.S. military services, from coalition nations, and from U.S. interagency (Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security) entities. The Joint Staff in the Pentagon is the authority that validates these positions, which occurs only after it coordinates with the appropriate combatant command, military services, and civilian governmental departments. Clay, *Iroquois Warriors*, 221; Bfg, MNSTC-I J–1 to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Sep 2004, sub: Current JMD Status, slides 1, 7, Hist Files, CMH.

106. Sgt. Jared M. Zabaldo, "Iraqi 'Ops' Center Continues NATO Training, Operations," *Advisor* 1, no. 9 (6 Nov 2004): 1, 9, Hist Files, CMH.

107. Most of these individuals had prior experience as commissioned officers before attending training. MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (3–9 October 2004), Godfroy Collection, CMH.

has contributed enormously in a short time already, SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe] has much work to do to flesh out the [operations plan] and begin flowing NATO trainers into country over the next months."[108] NATO's involvement in the development of a professional school system had the potential to produce long-term benefits, but MNSTC-I's main challenge focused on the near-term goal of generating sufficient Iraqi units to safeguard the January 2005 elections.[109]

In addition to bombing recruiting centers, insurgent groups began ambushing contracted civilian supply convoys to Camp Taji, Kirkush Military Training Base, and other NIA bases. Those incidents continued to multiply, which prompted MNSTC-I to add several NIA transportation units to its near-term fielding schedule so it would not have to rely on contractor convoys in high-risk areas. Vehicles for the initial transportation company, fifty Russian-made medium trucks, arrived at Camp Taji on 4 October, followed a short while later by another fifty vehicles after the Iraqis decided to expand the initial company into a battalion.[110]

Lt. Col. Theresa R. Baginski, a reservist assigned to the unit advisory team, recalled, "The [New] Iraqi Army had put in an acting colonel to be the commander, and we had about 50 soldiers who were initially assigned to the unit. . . . Most of the soldiers were Shi'a, older, and had transportation experience in the old Iraqi Army."[111] Driver training for the transportation battalion's first company began on 10 October, with additional courses taking place throughout October and November.[112] The operator training proved more complicated than forecasted because few NIA recruits had driving skills comparable to most Americans. Iraqis with sufficient experience, such as commercial truck operators and taxi drivers, gravitated toward better paying civilian jobs instead of joining the Army.

Starting in November 2004, sixty-eight drivers and ten mechanics formed the second transportation unit. Equipped with one hundred 5-ton trucks donated by the German government, the new organization required training

108. MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (3–9 October 2004).
109. Interv, Clay with Sherlock, 16 Nov 2006, 10.
110. MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (3–9 October 2004); MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Nov 2004, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 4, Godfroy Collection, CMH.
111. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Lt. Col. Theresa Baginski, former adviser to 1st Motor Trans Rgt, 5 Nov 2006, 1–3, OLE.
112. MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (17–23 October 2004), Godfroy Collection, CMH.

to operate, repair, and maintain vehicles unfamiliar to American advisers.[113] Because of domestic political considerations, the German government prohibited its citizens from conducting operator-level training classes within Iraq. As a result, the Americans coordinated with the United Arab Emirates to provide a training site for German instructors to teach Iraqi soldiers. The Americans then persuaded the United Arab Emirates to pay for the shipment of German vehicles to Iraq.[114] Accepting donated material yielded near-term savings but degraded ongoing efforts to standardize equipment and reduce future logistical burdens.

BAGHDĀD MAKES ITS VOICE HEARD

Senior officials of the IIG watched MNSTC-I efforts with great interest during the early fall of 2004. Although the Iraqi civilian leaders sought to safeguard the upcoming elections, they harbored a different vision for the security forces that would be employed for that mission. The urgent need to accelerate their training, equipping, and deployment had ranked high among the topics discussed when Prime Minister Allawi met with President Bush at the White House on 23 September.[115] MNF-I had not had to wait long before that dialog produced a formal request for more American assistance.

After addressing the U.S. Congress, Allawi returned to Iraq and, on 6 October, he passed Ambassador Negroponte a letter he had written to President Bush. In it, Allawi asked for another high-level meeting to consider ideas for "more visible and effective Iraqi Security Forces to 'engage the hard end of the insurgency.'"[116] The fight against rampant violence, Allawi had claimed, would not be successful until Iraqi units became more like their American counterparts. That development would require the delivery of heavier weapons in order to narrow the firepower disparity between the American and Iraqi armies.[117] Allawi did not blame the Americans for his military's shortcomings, explaining that "the current training and equipment plan developed by General Petraeus is comprehensive and should be continued . . ., [but] the delivery is far too slow to meet the challenge we

113. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Dec 2004, sub: 30-day assessment, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
114. MNSTC-I Public Affairs Office, "Germany Partners with Iraq, United Arab Emirates for Training," *Advisor* 2, no. 12 (19 Mar 2005): 13, Hist Files, CMH.
115. Robin Wright and Mike Allen, "Iraqi Leader Vows Elections Won't Be Delayed," *Washington Post*, 24 Sep 2004, Hist Files, CMH.
116. Ltr, Ayad Allawi to George W. Bush, 5 Oct 2004, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
117. Ltr, Allawi to Bush, 5 Oct 2004.

now face: the bulk of the forces will not be available until well into next year, which is simply too late."[118]

When Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld learned of Allawi's letter, he dispatched a memorandum to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers and Under Secretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith. "It's past time to get an assessment team in there. Let's figure out what he thinks he wants, what we think is possible, and tell him to make a proposal. We need to get on the right track, if we're not on the right track. If we are on the right track, we ought to disabuse him of his concerns."[119] The memorandum resulted in the selection of General (Ret.) Gary E. Luck, a former commander of U.S. Forces Korea and the senior civilian adviser to U.S. Joint Forces Command, to head a team to go to Iraq in early January. They would review the security situation and report back to the Department of Defense.[120]

The Allawi letter did not surprise the MNSTC-I leadership. During the course of frequent meetings, Petraeus learned of the initiatives mentioned in the document before its dispatch to the White House. Ongoing dialogue between key Iraqi leaders and Petraeus allowed MNSTC-I to lay the groundwork for potential changes in the current unit fielding schedule well in advance of formal approval. Although General Petraeus believed it would be premature to provide the NIA with armored vehicles, he acknowledged that the United States could not ignore the political impetus for a mechanized force. Once the Iraqi government agreed to fund and equip such a unit, MNSTC-I would comb its ranks for advisers with appropriate experience.

The command dispatched a Ukrainian assessment team to inspect ex-Soviet armor that had been collected at Camp Taji and Forward Operating Base Normandy near Al Miqdadiyah. The Ukrainians classified forty-eight BMP infantry fighting vehicles, fifty-seven MTLB tracked personnel carriers, fifty T55 main battle tanks, and ten armored recovery vehicles as salvageable.[121] After MNSTC-I briefed the Ministry of Defense on those findings, the Iraqis appointed Brig. Gen. Mahmoud Bashar as their mechanized brigade project manager. The ministry also authorized

118. Ltr, Allawi to Bush, 5 Oct 2004.
119. Memo, Sec Def for Chairman Joint Chs Staff and Under Sec Def Policy, 9 Dec 2004, Sub: Iraqi Forces, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
120. Al Pessin, "US Sends Retired General to Assess Iraqi Security Forces," Voice of America News, 7 Jan 2005, https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2005-01-07-voa72/308549.html, Hist Files, CMH.
121. BMP stands for *boyevaya mashina pyekhoty* (infantry fighting vehicle), and MTLB stands for *mnogotselevoy tyagach legky bronirovanny* (multipurpose light-armored towing vehicle). MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (3–9 October 2004).

$10 million for additional barracks at Camp Taji and added $20 million to a vehicle refurbishment contract managed by Wye Oak Technology.[122]

Petraeus chose a willing armor officer, Col. David J. Styles, as the coalition project manager. Fielding a mechanized brigade was far more complex than simply generating an infantry unit, and MNSTC-I projected that the brigade would not be combat-ready until June 2005.[123] The embryonic force, initially commanded by staff Brig. Gen. Jassem Nazal Qassim, received four T55 tanks and eighteen MTLB personnel carriers in November, which allowed the brigade's mechanized battalion to start training. Although the acquisition of armored vehicles was a welcome development, American advisers unfamiliar with Soviet equipment had to ask the Iraqis how to drive and maintain them.[124] A second shipment, numbering six T55s and nine MTLBs, arrived in early December, permitting training to begin for the first of two tank battalions.[125]

EXTINGUISHING THE INSURGENCY'S GLOWING EMBERS

The assaults on recruiting stations and supply convoys were part of a loosely coordinated campaign to undermine the January 2005 elections by targeting Iraqi security forces. MNF-I sought to preempt attempts to derail the process by proactively neutralizing centers of insurgent resistance within striking range of Baghdād. General Casey favored securing Sāmarrāʾ in the Sunni Triangle and Al Fallūjah in Al Anbār Province. Both cities served as launching pads for homegrown insurgent groups and foreign extremists to strike against polling stations and high-visibility targets within the Iraqi capital.

Casey likewise realized that a sizable contingent of troops would have to garrison in each city after an offensive, which meant that the Americans could not mount either operation on their own. Committing large numbers of NIA personnel to a mission of uncertain duration remained the purview of the IIG political leaders rather than MNF-I. Although the Bush administration had faith in Casey's proposal, the Iraqi Governing

122. MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (3–9 October 2004).
123. Chief Petty Officer Joe Kane, "Iraqi Mech Brigade Moves Toward Initial Ops," *Advisor* 1, no. 5 (9 Oct 2004): 1, 7, Hist Files, CMH.
124. Sgt. Jared M. Zabaldo, "Iraqi Armed Forces Receive Thirty Eight Armored Personnel Carriers," *Coalition Bulletin* 13, U.S. Central Cmd HQ, Nov 2004, 3, Hist Files, CMH.
125. Sgt. Jared M. Zabaldo, "Iraqi Brigade Receives Second 'Armor' Shipment," *Advisor* 1, no. 14 (11 Dec 2004): 5, Hist Files, CMH.



Iraqi and American troops prepare their vehicles for combat in Al Fallūjah. The Iraqis are using commercial pickup trucks with extemporized armor protection. (*Spc. Brandi Marshall, Joint Combat Camera Center–Iraq*)

Council's unexpected withdrawal of support for the April 2004 attack on Al Fallūjah lingered in American memories. While Allawi harbored concerns about further alienating the Sunni community just before the elections, the MNF-I commanding general managed to convince the prime minister that the long-term rewards outweighed the near-term risks.[126]

Sāmarrāʾ and Al Fallūjah presented very different tactical problems for MNF-I. The Americans did not have a good idea of how many insurgents were present in Sāmarrāʾ nor how well they were armed, but by all indications their numbers did not exceed several hundred. In sharp contrast, thousands of well-armed foreign fighters and Sunni dissidents had flocked to Al Fallūjah in the wake of the abortive Operation Vigilant Resolve offensive. A far larger assault force, supported by much greater firepower, would be required there. In addition, it would take the sustained commitment of many more Iraqi soldiers and police to secure Al Fallūjah afterward.

126. Casey not only succeeded in gaining Allawi's permission to mount offensive operations involving the NIA, but also he convinced Allawi not to withdraw his support if unexpected developments arose. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 42.

MNF-I surveyed available Iraqi military assets in advance of mounting the operations and made a preliminary examination of resources needed for each attack. The command estimated that it would need four Iraqi battalions for Sāmarrāʾ, a minimum of two Iraqi brigades for the Al Fallūjah assault, and another pair of Iraqi brigades to maintain a long-term presence in Al Fallūjah. Police commandos or Iraqi special operations forces would reinforce units participating in both operations. The Americans judged that several locally based ING battalions were sufficiently prepared to participate in the Sāmarrāʾ operation, which reduced NIA involvement to a single battalion.[127]

The unreliability of virtually every ING battalion in Al Anbār argued for a major NIA commitment in Al Fallūjah.[128] The forced disbandment of the ad hoc brigade of former Saddam-era veterans stationed there after Vigilant Resolve reinforced that assessment.[129] The only candidates for the Al Fallūjah assault echelon were the understrength ISOF Brigade, an IIF brigade, and the 3d NIA Brigade. Luckily, MNSTC-I's efforts to build up the NIA had been paying off, which gave Casey more options when it came to choosing follow-on units. These included the 10th, 11th, and 12th NIA Battalions of the 4th NIA Brigade, which were slated to complete basic training on 17 October, and the 16th and 17th NIA Battalions of the 7th NIA Brigade, which were scheduled to graduate on 17 and 23 October, respectively.[130]

Operation Baton Rouge began on 1 October in Sāmarrāʾ.[131] The American contribution included four and one-half infantry battalions accompanied by the 7th NIA Battalion and four ING units (the 36th Commando, and the 201st, 202d, and 203d ING Battalions). The Americans cleared out enemy forces while the Iraqis secured the area surrounding the Al-Askari, or Golden,

127. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Sep 2004, sub: Meeting with Ministry of Defense Personnel, 2.

128. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Sep 2004, sub: Meeting with Ministry of Defense Personnel, 8.

129. At the time of its dissolution, the brigade had an overall strength of 2,075, including 375 officers and 23 generals. The Iraqi version of events claims that the brigade initially had high morale, but the Americans refused to let it operate independently of their control, which built up resentment until open conflict broke out between the unit and marines. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 344; Najim Abed al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen, "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening," *PRISM–The Journal of Complex Operations* 2, no. 1 (Jul 2012): 11, 17, https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/prism/prism_2-1/prism_2-1.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

130. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: CG's Weekly Report (17–23 Oct 04), MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

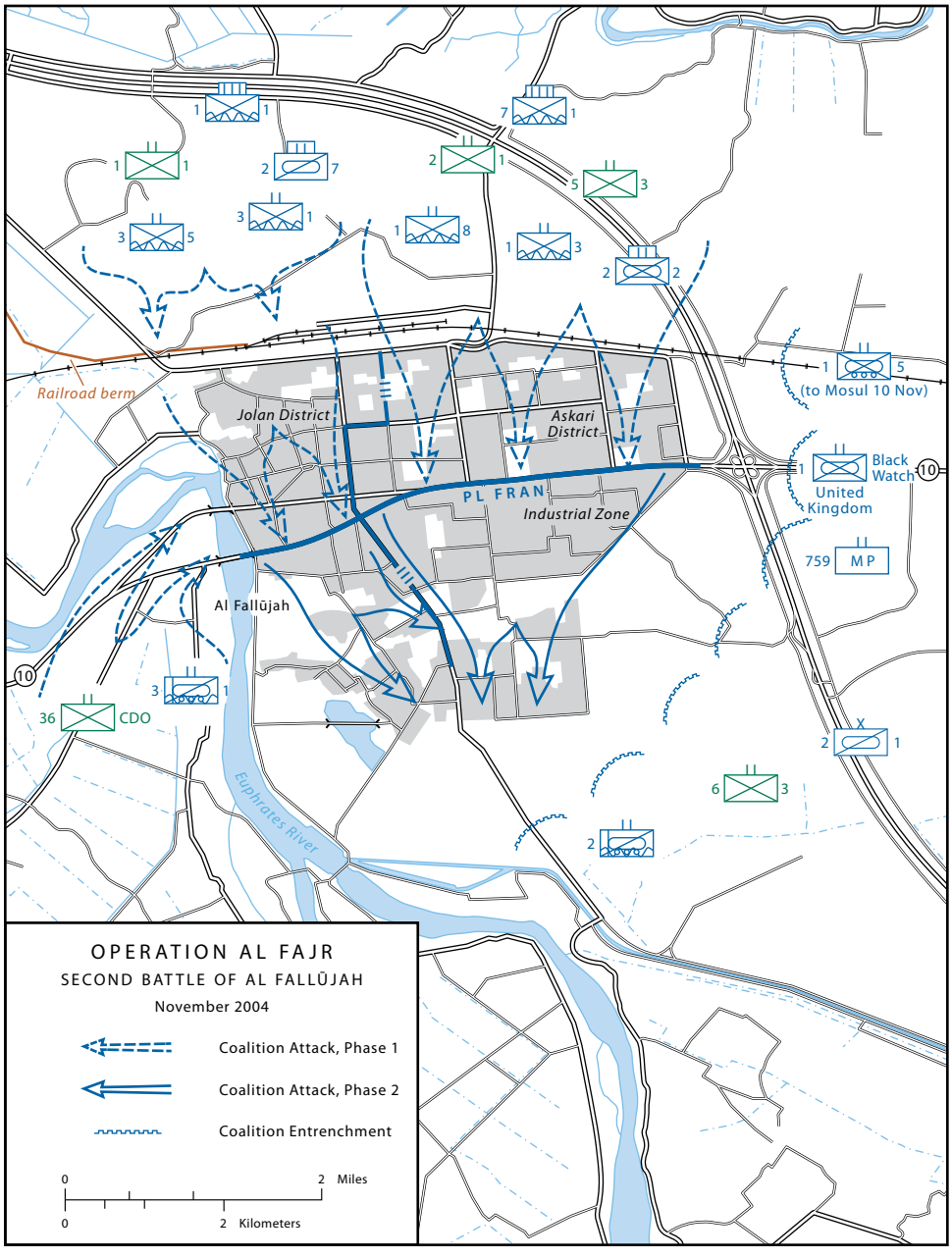
131. The operation originally had been intended to take place in late summer with two American and two Iraqi National Guard battalions, but events in An Najaf led to its postponement and reinforcement. Bfg, MNF-I Strategy/Pol-Mil to MNF-I Cmdg Geb, 4 Aug 2004, sub: Samarra Operations, Rayburn MSS Declass Files, Hist Files, CMH.

Mosque, the third holiest Shi'i shrine, in the city's northwest quadrant.[132] The operation went as expected with the attackers gaining control of half of the city after little more than twenty-four hours of fighting. Combat continued for two more days until MNF-I met all its tactical objectives.[133]

The accomplishments of Iraqi units during Baton Rouge ranged from disappointing to outstanding. The 202d ING Battalion performed competently, but the leadership of the 201st and 203d ING Battalions did not prove equal to the task.[134] Although the 36th Commando Battalion succeeded in detaining twenty-five insurgents after entering the Al-Askari Mosque undetected, the 7th NIA Battalion suffered a major loss of cohesion after an improvised explosive device killed one Iraqi soldier and wounded seven others. An Iraqi company commander accompanied the injured soldiers to an American aid station where they received equal priority for treatment alongside U.S. wounded. Nevertheless, upon his return, the officer informed his troops that the Americans had ignored their comrades. By the next day, a sizable portion of the unit had deserted, including the battalion commander and the intelligence officer.[135]

Multi-National Force–West, consisting of Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler's I Marine Expeditionary Force and some U.S. Army units, initiated planning for the assault on Al Fallūjah during this timeframe.[136] Extremist groups in the city knew they were the next target and issued statements that they would defend to the death. The coalition therefore made no secret of its intent to attack and made little effort to conceal the burgeoning force of U.S. and Iraqi troops assembling outside the city. Unlike the hastily conceived and executed effort in April, the I Marine Expeditionary Force's second attempt to pacify Al Fallūjah placed great emphasis on persuading innocent civilians to leave before the assault. Warned by media reports and leaflets dropped by coalition aircraft, most of the city's inhabitants fled, leaving behind 2,500 insurgents determined to exact a prohibitive toll from any attacking force.[137]

132. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 339.
133. Wright and Reese, *On Point II*, 342–43.
134. Interv, Maj. James Reed, CSI, with Maj. Bill Adler, former member, 7th NIA advisory team, 7 Dec 2007, 5, OLE; MFR, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (19–25 September 2004); MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 1 Oct 2004, sub: Meeting with Qassam Daoud, 1–3; all in Godfroy Collection, CMH.
135. Interv, John H. McCool, CSI, with Maj. Robert Dixon, former 7th NIA Bn adviser, 4 Oct 2006, 1–12, OLE.
136. The 1st Marine Division and the I Marine Expeditionary Force had arrived on 29 August and 12 September, respectively. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Kenneth W. Estes, *U.S. Marine Corps Operations in Iraq, 2003–2006* (Quantico, VA: U.S. Marine Corps History Division, 2009), 50; Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 344.
137. Matt M. Matthews, *Operation AL FAJR: A Study in Army and Marine Joint Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 37.



Map 3.1

Six Iraqi battalions participated in the opening phase of the Al Fallūjah assault, code-named Operation Al Fajr (*Map 3.1*). These included the 36th Commando Battalion, three battalions from the 1st IIF Brigade, and two battalions from the 3d NIA Brigade. The preparatory stages of the offensive

against Al Fallūjah disclosed that U.S. forces were not prepared to provide their Iraqi allies with the same level of support that American units took for granted. However, MNC-I covered coalition units with a protective umbrella of AH–64 attack helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles as they transferred from other parts of Iraq to their starting points at prepared staging areas near the city. In contrast, Multi-National Force–West allotted perhaps a section or platoon of armored Humvees to escort Iraqi battalion-sized convoys, coverage so sparse that at least one NIA unit was ambushed en route.[138] Other Iraqi units arrived in Al Fallūjah to discover that the Americans had not finished building their assigned temporary camps.[139] Even so, unlike in earlier deployments involving NIA units, few Iraqi soldiers deserted before their unit had moved to Al Fallūjah.[140]

The overall concept of the operation called for coalition troops to establish a cordon around the entire city before launching the main assault from the north using two regimental combat teams (each organized with two U.S. Marine Corps battalions and one U.S. Army battalion) from the 1st Marine Division. The Iraqi troops supporting Regimental Combat Team 1 included the 1st IIF Battalion reinforced with two companies of special operations forces from the Shahwani Battalions, a platoon of regular Iraqi troops, and the 4th IIF Battalion. Multi-National Force–West also attached a Shahwani special operations forces company to Regimental Combat Team 7 along with a battalion-sized Ministry of Interior Emergency Response Unit, the 2d IIF Battalion, and the 5th NIA Battalion. The remaining troops, consisting of the 6th NIA Battalion reinforced with a Shahwani special operations forces platoon, augmented the participating U.S. Army units. The 36th Commando Battalion, in concert with the 3d Marine Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, had the mission of securing several bridges and the main hospital complex on the western bank of the Euphrates River.[141]

Al Fajr began during the night of 7 November with coalition forces moving into attack positions covered by artillery and orbiting AC–130 gunships. The main assault took place at 1100 on 8 November when U.S. troops blasted lanes through a ring of improvised explosive devices girding

138. Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge,* 203–11.
139. Interv, John H. McCool, CSI, with Maj. Pete Fedak, former Advisory Team Leader, 6th NIA Bn, 15 Feb 2006, 12, OLE; Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, 212.
140. Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, 231–32.
141. The dispositions reflected here were briefed to the minister of defense during a visit to Al Fallūjah on the afternoon of 7 November. The Iraqi special operations forces elements were the Shahwani Battalions rather than the 36th Commando Battalion. Dick Camp, "Operation Phantom Fury: The Assault and Capture of Fallujah, Iraq, November 2004," *Leatherneck–Magazine of the Marines* 97, no. 11 (Nov 2014): 20–21; MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 7 Nov 2004, sub: Minister of Defense Visit to Fallujah, 1–2, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

Al Fallūjah. Iraqi troops followed behind, coming upon small groups of insurgents who were seeking to escape by overrunning outposts. The 2d IIF Battalion commander recalled that he "encountered the most difficult action in the military neighborhood; [his] unit was ambushed there."[142] Both sides traded gunfire before the insurgents retreated back into the city center. Other Iraqi units had similar encounters, suffering a number of casualties while inflicting losses on extremist fighters in the process.

By the end of the first week, the assault force had reoccupied many of the city's key civic buildings, including the mayoral office. The fighting continued for another week or so before winding down sufficiently for residents to return to their shattered homes. Between 8 and 27 November, Iraqi military units incurred sixty-one casualties, including six killed in action and fifty-five wounded. The advisory teams accompanying them suffered one killed and five wounded.[143] The commandos performed to the satisfaction of Marine commanders while the IIF brigade consistently met mission objectives when tasked to clear mosques and occupy terrain captured by U.S. troops. The 3d NIA Brigade also achieved a solid record, which earned it the formal designation of 3d IIF Brigade.[144]

Rather than turn over control of the city to civilian authorities, Prime Minister Allawi appointed Maj. Gen. Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji, the commander of Iraqi ground forces in Al Fallūjah, as the interim governor of western Al Anbār Province.[145] Thus the army, rather than the police, would be responsible for maintaining law and order. That arrangement remained workable until MNF-I executed the preplanned relief-in-place in early December. MNSTC-I's earlier concerns about sending untested formations to Al Fallūjah turned out to be prescient: the 2d IIF Brigade and the 7th NIA Brigade experienced 923 and 339 desertions, respectively, before they departed for Al Anbār.[146] Yet even though most of

142. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 7 Dec 2004, sub: Visit to Iraqi Security Forces in Fallujah, 4–5, Godfroy Collection, CMH.
143. Sgt. Jared M. Zabaldo, "MNSTC-I 'ASTs' Led Way, Training in Iraqi Fight for Fallujah," *Advisor* 1, no. 12 (27 Nov 2004): 7, Hist Files, CMH.
144. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 26 Nov 2004, sub: 30-Day Assessment, Godfroy Collection, CMH.
145. Capt. Steve Alvarez, "Nov 10: Forces Retake Key Centers in Fallujah," *Advisor* 1, no. 10 (13 Nov 2004): 3, 7–9, Hist Files, CMH.
146. The 2d IIF Brigade avoided becoming combat ineffective only because it had 90 to 120 more soldiers present for duty per battalion than authorized. It arrived with 388 to 412 personnel per unit despite the massive number of desertions. The minister of defense reacted to the news of the 7th NIA Brigade desertions by dispatching three companies of the Muthanna (Presidential Protection) Brigade to bring the unit back up to strength. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 14 Dec 2004, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 1; Bfg, MNSTC-I, 2 Dec 2004, sub: IAF Slides 2 Dec 04, slides 1–2, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

the participating NIA brigades had some readiness issues, MNF-I viewed Al Fallūjah as a win because the battle not only demonstrated the IIG's resolve, but also disrupted Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's plans to interfere with the January polling.

CONCLUSION

The policy developments that provided General Casey with strategic guidance had a tremendous impact on the train-and-equip program. President Bush's decision to issue National Security Presidential Directive 36, which temporarily set aside the prohibition on U.S. military personnel taking a direct hand in law enforcement training, presented MNSTC-I with a challenge it had neither anticipated nor prepared for. That task proved so demanding that developing the police became MNSTC-I's top priority for the remainder of 2004. The dramatic shift came just as the train-and-equip program received a major boost in personnel, which filled sufficient advisory teams for the NIA. However, because it lacked the personnel to train and advise both the police and the ING, MNSTC-I outsourced the instruction of many of those units to the Iraqis to meet force-generation milestones. That solution produced enough units to safeguard the elections, but it also flooded Iraqi security forces with organizations of unknown quality.

The adoption of UNSCR 1546 influenced Casey to designate the Iraqi government's legitimacy as the coalition center of gravity. In this instance, preserving legitimacy exerted an indirect impact on MNSTC-I by blinding Americans to the fact that some senior members of the IIG actively sought to maintain high office after the January elections. Their individual agendas rarely aligned with the goals of the U.S. train-and-equip program, as evidenced by senior command appointments reflecting sectarian interests rather than professional accomplishments, contracts being awarded in order to secure bribes rather than procure the highest quality items, and dignitary protection units being created without first consulting the Americans.

To further enhance the legitimacy of the IIG, MNF-I showcased the Iraqi military during operations, which sought to reduce insurgent enclaves before the January elections. While Casey made efforts to build up a core of combat-experienced units within the NIA, employing them against prepared urban defenses carried the risk of combat failure. To minimize that gamble, he mainly used NIA units to add depth to American assaults rather than to spearhead coalition efforts. However, using Iraqi troops in

this manner contradicted the original CPA mandate that stated the NIA would be employed solely for external defense. In addition, committing Iraqi soldiers alongside U.S. troops in combat weakened the IIG's legitimacy among those segments of the population who saw the Americans as occupiers rather than liberators. Finally, the fact that Iraqi units made up of Shi'i and Kurdish soldiers were fighting Sunni dissidents inflamed rather than reduced sectarian tensions.

Sectarian issues affected the NIA on both a collective and personal level to a greater degree than MNF-I admitted. Although most Shi'i and Kurdish Iraqis refused to participate in extremist acts directed at the IIG and expressed support for U.S. efforts to democratize their country, they were less inhibited when it came to using violence against Sunnis and each other.[147] Americans had firsthand knowledge of the relationship between forced displacement and civil conflict from their involvement in the Balkans in the 1990s, but they resisted drawing parallels to similar developments taking place in Iraq.[148] Rather than take over the IIG's responsibility to address ingrained cultural and societal issues—and in the absence of guidance to do so from the White House—MNF-I concentrated on one goal: foster a security environment amenable to meeting the UNSCR milestones in advance of a future U.S. troop withdrawal.

147. Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2006): 5–7.

148. Emma Sky, *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015), 32–33.

4
Election-Driven Imperatives: December 2004–April 2005

The Global War on Terrorism was an important issue during the United States presidential election in November 2004. Americans were disenchanted because the fighting in Iraq had no end in sight, and foreign policy issues dominated campaign rhetoric. Democrat John F. Kerry assailed the administration's handling of Iraq while defending opposition to greater defense funding.[1] Ultimately, George W. Bush won the electoral and popular votes, and congressional Republicans prevailed in both the House and Senate by piggybacking on Bush's campaign, which was overseen by the White House.[2] Bush's reelection presaged greater public White House involvement in the Iraq debate. Several moderate Democrats willing to work with the president lost primary elections to challengers with strong negative views on the war, and the newcomers undercut the spirit of bipartisan cooperation that had emerged in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. The White House responded to growing legislative tension by taking Iraq-related matters directly to the American people.[3]

1. David Espo, "Cheney, Miller Assail Kerry as Protests Continue in Convention City," Associated Press, 2 Sep 2004, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/9309876/ukiah-daily-journal/; "In Acceptance Speech President Bush Shares his Plan for a Safer World & More Hopeful America," 4President.Org, 2 Sep 2004, http://www.4president.org/speeches/2004/bushcheney2004convention.htm; both in Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).
2. Jeffrey Bloodworth, "Congressional Election Results," The Election of 2004, The Collective Memory Project at SMU, Center for Presidential History, Southern Methodist University, n.d., https://blog.smu.edu/2004-election/congressional-election-results/ (accessed 2 Jul 2023), Hist Files, CMH.
3. "Bush: Stay the Course on Terror War," Inside Politics, CNN, 6 May 2004, https://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/03/17/bush.terror/, Hist Files, CMH.



Iraqi Interim President Ghazi al-Yawar (*at podium*) addresses the media at a press conference in Baghdād during Operation Iraqi Freedom. (*S. Sgt. D. Myles Cullen, U.S. Air Force*)

The Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) approached its own period of uncertainty and change as the January 2005 parliamentary election drew closer. Sunnis originally sought to delegitimize the voting by boycotting it until they belatedly realized that the central government had the authority to convene a national parliament regardless of their participation. Sunni notables, including Iraqi Interim President Ghazi Ajil al-Yawar, flocked to the doorstep of General George W. Casey Jr., commander of Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I), in an eleventh-hour attempt to solicit support for delaying the vote until they could persuade Sunnis to take an active part in the process. Although Casey sympathized, any suggestion to put off the election encountered insurmountable opposition from both Kurds and Shi'i Arabs in addition to similar disapproval from Americans determined to meet the milestones laid out in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546.[4]

Casey remained focused on building upon the August campaign plan's momentum while seeking ways to proactively address future problems. He

4. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, *Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War, 2003–2006* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 367–68.

had directed the MNF-I staff to review the current state of affairs in Iraq soon after the liberation of Al Fallūjah in November.[5] The study, which came out in December, reaffirmed that the development of effective Iraqi security forces offered the only viable exit strategy for the United States. The review intimated that a firm foundation for achieving that goal already existed, claiming that, "in spite of their small numbers, capable and effective ISF [Iraqi security forces] have already had strategic impact, most notably at An Najaf, Samarra, and Fallujah."[6] Casey's subsequent decisions indicate that he agreed with that viewpoint while recognizing that assigning more responsibility to the Iraqis required a commensurately greater investment in their equipping and training. However, one critical issue remained unexplored. The study did not define what it meant by "effective" Iraqi security forces, so MNF-I defaulted to a definition that met its own requirements.

THE ENEMY REGROUPS

At the end of 2004, surviving bands of Sunni underground fighters were adjusting to new realities. The grievous casualties suffered at Al Fallūjah, coupled with the fall of their Sāmarrāʾ stronghold, convinced them to abandon major urban areas for more remote bases. In several instances, heavy losses compelled groups to merge so that they could field a respectable number of fighters.[7] Rather than risk losing popular backing by transitioning to a purely defensive posture, Sunni opposition groups decided to confront the coalition in Mosul. This course of action set the stage for the return of displaced opposition groups to Ar Ramādī and Al Fallūjah by drawing coalition forces from Al Anbār to northern Iraq, while demonstrating to ordinary Iraqis that losing temporary control of a few towns had minimal long-term impact on the insurgency.

The events in fall 2004 had sparked another stage in the evolution of the insurgency, albeit one that outside observers would not recognize for some time. Most, if not all, resistance organizations boasting strong ties to the defunct Baʿth Party had surrendered their de facto leadership of the Sunni insurgency. The defeat in Al Fallūjah, along with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's violent attacks on fellow Muslims, also had nudged a few moderate Sunnis

5. Rpt, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Dec 2004, Five Month Campaign Progress Review, 1, Casey Papers, CMH.
6. Rpt, MNF-I HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Dec 2004, Five Month Campaign Progress Review, 7.
7. Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (London: C. Hurst, 2006), 179.

toward reconciliation. An influential Sunni cleric, Mohammed Mahmoud Latif, had convened a meeting of underground leaders in the western city of Hit to discuss potential political solutions. The gathering revealed a split within the movement between rejectionists and those willing to negotiate.[8] During the same period, Harith Sulayman al-Dhari's Association of Muslim Scholars had issued a fatwa forbidding the killing of Iraqi national guardsmen, to which Zarqawi responded by instructing his men to increase kidnappings and assassinations of government security personnel.[9] Infighting among the Sunni insurgent community flared up as groups competed for the mantle of ideological leadership.[10]

A clear picture of these changes eluded the coalition for numerous reasons, including the fact that coalition leaders were sensitive to growing criticism—not only from political opponents, but also from those originally opposed to the invasion—of the Bush administration's statements about the rise of foreign influence in Iraq. For example, the *Christian Science Monitor* quoted a University of Michigan Middle East expert who claimed, "If the Iraqi Sunni nationalists could take over their own territory, they would not put up with the few hundred foreign volunteers blowing things up, and would send them away or slit their throats."[11] Although this observation correctly noted that foreigners made up a minority of active Sunni combatants, it downplayed the strategic influence generated by a small group imbued with extraordinary levels of ruthlessness, motivation, and leadership.

A similar debate took place within Shi'i militias opposed to a foreign presence in Iraq. Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army also had lost hundreds, if not thousands, of fighters and junior leaders between April and August. His surviving commanders concluded that to engage the coalition in open warfare using the same tactics as before would be tantamount to organizational suicide. Heeding their advice, Sadr shifted from open combat to intimidation and infiltration. The radical Shi'i cleric also sought to take advantage of MNF-I's preoccupation with Baghdād and Al Anbār by turning Al Başrah into a Sadrist enclave.[12] In addition to providing a safe haven for

8. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 395.
9. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi believed Iraqi security forces were a deadlier threat to Sunni interests than coalition troops. The al-Qaeda leader stated, "We announce that the Iraqi Army is an army of apostates and mercenaries that has allied itself with the crusaders and came to destroy Islam and fight Muslims. We will fight it." Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 195–96, 203.
10. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 390, 395.
11. Peter Grier, "Is War in Iraq a Shield Against Attacks at Home?," *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 Sep 2006, 3, https://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0918/p03s02-usfp.html, Hist Files, CMH.
12. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 391.

the Mahdi Army, the port city offered unfettered access to major recruiting venues and sources of illicit income.[13]

Sadr may have accepted the need to avoid antagonizing the Americans in the near term, but he also prepared for a future resumption of hostilities by asking Tehran for assistance. Although the Iranian government rarely shrank from openly confronting the United States, it decided to provide only covert aid to Sadr. Brig. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force, acted as an adviser and go-between.[14] Soleimani's organization had acquired a well-deserved reputation for mounting terror strikes aimed at Iran's enemies, prompting one U.S. intelligence analyst to observe, "The Qods [*sic*] Force is to the Shia militias as al-Qaida in Iraq is to the Sunni insurgent groups."[15] The Iranian use of ideologically compatible proxies, such as the Lebanese terrorist group Hezbollah, prevented MNF-I from accurately determining the scope of assistance being provided to Sadr for almost two years.[16]

MOVING BEYOND AL FALLŪJAH

Even as the tide of battle decisively had turned against the extremist defenders of Al Fallūjah, Sunni insurgents had overrun much of Mosul and had recaptured the neighboring city of Tall' Afar on 10 November. Iraqi politicians claimed the offensive provided evidence that insurgent groups were cooperating with one another. Captured fighters later admitted that their leaders had decided to attack Mosul simply because "there were seven or eight [coalition] brigades in Baghdad [but] there was [only] one brigade up north."[17] The offensive had exposed the problem with earlier efforts to

13. "Mahdi Army–Growing Iranian Influence," GlobalSecurity.Org, n.d., https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/al-sadr-2005.htm (accessed 12 Oct 2023), Hist Files, CMH.
14. Nectar Gan, "Who Was Qasem Soleimani, the Iranian Commander Killed by a US Airstrike?," CNN, 3 Jan 2020, https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/03/asia/soleimani-profile-intl-hnk/index.html, Hist Files, CMH.
15. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Rick Francona, "Iranian Qods Force in Iraq: Treat Them Like al-Qaida," Middle East Perspectives, 26 Jan 2007, http://francona.blogspot.com/2007/01/iranian-qods-force-in-iraq-treat-them.html, Hist Files, CMH.
16. Although Americans captured documents that detailed Iranian involvement in Iraq during the latter half of 2006, President George W. Bush did not publicly accuse the Tehran regime of aiding Shi'i insurgents until 10 January 2007. Lionel Beehner and Greg Bruno, "Iran's Involvement in Iraq," Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder, 3 Mar 2008, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/irans-involvement-iraq, Hist Files, CMH.
17. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 352; Borzou Daragahi, "Insurgent Violence Mounting in North/Attacks on Mosul Could Disrupt Area's Oil

remodel the Iraqi police along the same lines as Western law enforcement agencies, which prepared police to arrest perpetrators not fight battles. Displaying impressive coordination and determination, the enemy had swarmed over one police station after another, convincing their overpowered occupants to surrender their weapons and equipment or face annihilation. By 13 November, insurgents had seized two-thirds of Mosul. In response, MNF-I sent a Stryker battalion from Al Fallūjah, and the Ministry of Interior dispatched the 3d Police Commando Battalion, with the Americans standing ready to provide additional aid if needed. Prime Minister Ayad Allawi wanted to deploy more soldiers and police, but pressing commitments in Al Fallūjah conspired to prevent that option.

The tide of battle had shifted after the police commandos waged a successful day-long battle on 14 November near the northernmost Tigris River bridge linking eastern Mosul with the western half of the city.[18] An American adviser accompanying the commandos observed that the Iraqis had done well, but noted their deficiencies. "Their training had concentrated on small tactics for building entry and raids. This kind of urban combat in a defensive position was new to them. I hate to think what would have happened if we really had to try and maneuver with a support base. At their level of training, they were unprepared to do that kind of move. They found themselves in a position they were psychologically not prepared for."[19]

On 17 November, more than 1,000 American and Iraqi troops had pushed forward in a combined effort to recapture police stations in insurgent-controlled neighborhoods. They recovered six intact; the enemy had blown up three before government troops arrived. Once coalition forces had secured those objectives, they combed the western half of the city for hidden groups of enemy fighters.[20] Al-Qaeda in Iraq made a belated appearance in Mosul during this period, executing at least a half dozen Iraqi National Guard (ING) soldiers who fell into their hands.[21] The successful but costly efforts of police commandos, combined with the ferocity of the enemy's initial assault rendering virtually every ING battalion within the city temporarily combat

Production," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 Nov 2004, https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Insurgent-violence-mounting-in-the-north-2673155.php, Hist Files, CMH.

18. Rpt, Col. James Coffman, n.d., The Battle for 4-West, or The Longest Five Hours of My Life, 2–9, Lt. Col. Jeanne H. Godfroy Collection, CMH.

19. Rpt, Coffman, n.d., The Battle for 4-West, or The Longest Five Hours of My Life, 8.

20. Michael Howard, "US Push to Rid Mosul of Insurgents," *Guardian*, 16 Nov 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/nov/17/iraq.usa, Hist Files, CMH.

21. James Glanz and Richard A. Oppel Jr., "Beheaded Bodies Found in Mosul; U.S. Storms Baghdad Mosque," *New York Times*, 19 Nov 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/19/international/middleeast/us-soldiers-and-iraqis-raid-mosque-in-baghdad.html, Hist Files, CMH.

ineffective, had reinforced the observation that "trained and equipped" metrics were inadequate for predicting combat performance.

Although a prompt reaction to events in Mosul immediately decreased enemy activity, the Ministry of Defense concluded that the potential for violence to resume warranted maintaining a robust Iraqi military presence in northern Iraq through the end of January. Iraqi officials dispatched two Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF) brigades (the 2d and the 6th) to Mosul in response to reports of 3d New Iraqi Army (NIA) Division and 2d ING Division units being significantly under strength.[22] In addition to sending the temporary IIF reinforcements, the Ministry of Defense planned to send three battalions of new recruits to bring the 3d NIA Division up to strength.[23] Although Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, the commander of Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I), suggested replacing the 3d NIA Division commander because of his lack of aggressiveness, the Iraqi officer remained with his unit at the insistence of the defense minister.[24]

The fighting in Mosul persisted for weeks despite the arrival of Iraqi and American reinforcements. Insurgents introduced one notable new tactic designed to degrade cooperation between Iraqi and American troops. On 21 December, a Saudi extremist wearing an NIA uniform detonated a suicide bomb in the dining facility of Forward Operating Base Marez, south of the city. The explosion killed fourteen American soldiers and wounded fifty-one, making it the deadliest attack on U.S. troops since the invasion.[25] The aftereffects reverberated throughout Multi-National Corps–Iraq. Tactical U.S. units on shared installations prohibited Iraqis from entering their area without American escorts. Unsatisfied with procedural safeguards, some American commanders erected barbed-wire fences between their troops and Iraqi units.[26] An even more fundamental change occurred in American units that had suffered casualties in the bombing. Soldiers who previously

22. MFR, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) Cmdg Gen, 16 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 1, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

23. The majority of the shortfalls were in the 3d NIA Division's 4th Brigade. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Nov 2004, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 5, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

24. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (12–18 December 2004), 2; MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 20 Dec 2004, sub: Meeting with LTG Mohan, 5–6; both in Godfroy Collection, CMH.

25. Four U.S. Halliburton contractors also died. Lisa Burgess, "Investigation of FOB Marez Mess-Hall Bombing is Complete, Says General," *Stars and Stripes*, 20 Aug 2005, https://www.stripes.com/news/investigation-of-fob-marez-mess-hall-bombing-is-complete-says-general-1.37279, Hist Files, CMH.

26. Michael Zacchea and Ted Kemp, *The Ragged Edge: A US Marine's Account of Leading the Iraqi Army Fifth Battalion* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2017), 114–16; Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 354.

had been enthusiastic about operating with Iraqi troops now displayed less interest in doing so, raising psychological barriers that undermined mutual trust and effectiveness.[27]

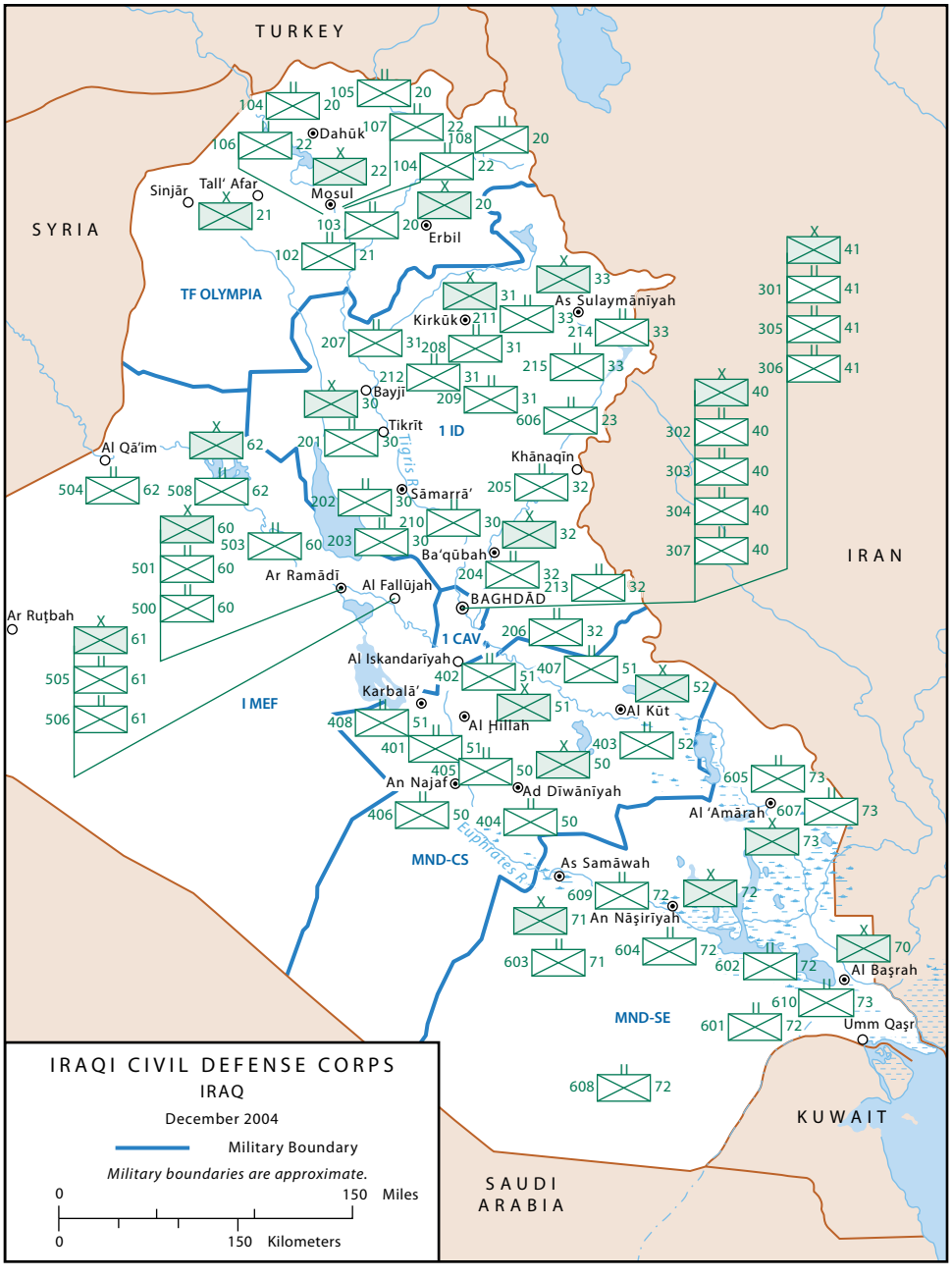
The Iraqis, who also suffered casualties in the attack, took a sober view of the event. The 11th NIA Battalion commander, who had lost four soldiers, told American reporters, "This situation is only temporary. . . . We deal with it because we know in the future it will change. But right now we can't work without the Americans."[28] Fortunately for MNF-I, the inability of the insurgents to follow up on the dining hall bombing, coupled with the passage of time and the rotation home of affected American units, kept the tension from lingering.

PLANNING AMIDST THE FIGHTING

In the weeks leading up to the national election, Allawi and his ministers regularly met with General Petraeus to discuss the NIA's development (*Map 4.1*). On 28 November 2004, the MNSTC-I commanding general had briefed the prime minister on what the Iraqi armed forces required to conduct and sustain independent operations. Petraeus led off by suggesting the Iraqis form centralized training and support commands to serve the entire army's needs. The support command, consisting of logistics, signals, engineer, intelligence, and transportation brigades, would sustain both the training command and tactical units. Rather than provide every division with an organic maintenance, logistical, intelligence, engineer, and transportation capability, MNSTC-I proposed creating a pool of such units under a single headquarters. When infantry divisions took part in combat operations, the support command would provide a standard package that would meet their needs. However, Petraeus noted that mechanized troops required specialized types of sustainment, so they needed dedicated units.[29]

Petraeus also proposed transforming the remaining NIA divisions into IIF organizations, fielding more commando battalions, and upgrading the

27. Capt. David Uthlaut, "The Success of 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry, in Defeating the Insurgency in Hammam al Alil and Qabr Abd, Iraq from November of 2004 to September of 2005" (personal experience paper, Infantry Captain's Career Course, 23 May 2006), 8–9.
28. Christine Hauser, "US Troops and Iraqis Are on Edge at Mosul Base," *New York Times*, 27 Dec 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/27/world/middleeast/us-troops-and-iraqis-are-on-edge-at-mosul-base.html, Hist Files, CMH.
29. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Prime Minister, 28 Nov 2004, sub: 2005–2006 Ministry of Defense Structure, slide 5, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.


TURKEY
SYRIA
IRAN
KUWAIT
SAUDI ARABIA
Dahūk
Sinjār
Tall' Afar
Mosul
Erbil
TF OLYMPIA
Kirkūk
As Sulaymānīyah
Bayji
Tikrīt
1 ID
Tigris R.
Al Qā'im
Khānaqīn
Sāmarrā'
Ba'qūbah
Ar Ramādī
Al Fallūjah
BAGHDĀD
Ar Ruţbah
1 CAV
Al Iskandarīyah
Karbalā'
I MEF
Al Hillah
Al Kūt
An Najaf
Ad Dīwānīyah
Al 'Amārah
Euphrates R.
MND-CS
As Samāwah
An Nāşirīyah
Al Başrah
MND-SE
Umm Qaşr
IRAQI CIVIL DEFENSE CORPS
IRAQ
December 2004
Military Boundary
Military boundaries are approximate.
0 150 Miles
0 150 Kilometers

Map 4.1

Muthanna (Presidential Protection) Brigade.[30] Iraq could further enhance its operating forces by fielding a mechanized division from scratch and converting an infantry division into a second mechanized division. These initiatives mirrored MNSTC-I priorities developed in late summer: build a core of fully mobile divisions, aided by a robust special operations organization and capable of reinforcing less-capable ING divisions according to operational needs. To carry out the strategy envisioned by MNF-I, however, Iraqi divisions would have to break free of the static installations that currently supported them. Meeting that goal would require mobile support elements habitually attached to each division and more vehicles within maneuver units.

General Petraeus concluded with a review of the schedule for implementing the upgrades. He made it clear that the interim government had little time to debate the conversion of two regular divisions into IIF formations or a mix of IIF and mechanized divisions if it wished those units to become operational in 2005. The initial cost, which did not include a second mechanized division, amounted to $3.8 billion. The additional mechanized unit, which could not be ready before 2006, would add $1.5 to $2 billion.[31] After brief discussion, Allawi agreed to consider the force structure proposals. He also officially endorsed the Iraqi Governing Council's 2004 proclamation that had designated 6 January as an official holiday known as Army Day.[32]

COMBINING OLD AND NEW

On 6 January 2005, Prime Minister Allawi, Defense Minister Hazim al-Shalaan, and General Babekr al-Zibari attended ceremonies at Camp Taji honoring the eighty-fourth anniversary of the old Iraqi Army. The prime minister and Babekr both used the occasion to announce major policy changes. Prime Minister Allawi named recently promoted Lt. Gen. Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji, newly returned from Al Fallūjah, as the commander of all Iraqi land forces while General Babekr took over the project of amalgamating the NIA divisions with the ING divisions, an

30. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Prime Minister, 28 Nov 2004, sub: 2005–2006 Ministry of Defense Structure, slides 4, 5, and 7.

31. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Prime Minister, 28 Nov 2004, sub: 2005–2006 Ministry of Defense Structure, slide 5.

32. The $3.8 billion included $2.1 billion to both sustain the existing force and enable limited enhancements within the special forces, coastal defense, and infrastructure. The initial mechanized division and support command cost a combined $850 million. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Prime Minister, 28 Nov 2004, sub: 2005–2006 Ministry of Defense Structure, slides 12 and 15.



Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Donovan, Multi-National Force–Iraq's chief of staff, shakes hands with Lt. Gen. Babekr al-Zibari at the Multi-National Division–Center South headquarters in Ad Dīwānīyah on 18 January 2005. (*Pfc. Timothy Villareal, U.S. Army*)

endeavor that would be complete in June. Integrating these components, Babekr explained, would "ensure unity of command and effort to meet the security challenges we face."[33] The observance concluded with a pass in review by forty-five armored vehicles manned by Iraqi crews.[34] After making his way to central Baghdād, the prime minister attended an Army Day ceremony held at the Monument to the Unknown Soldier. General Casey, General Petraeus, and Ambassador John D. Negroponte, the head of the U.S. Mission in Iraq, were also present at the ceremony. In his remarks to an audience that included ninety-one cadets from military academies in Zakho and Baghdād's Karadah District, Allawi reminded attendees that Iraqi soldiers had taken part in a number of major operations since June

33. MNSTC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Iraqi Army Day Celebrates Service, Honors Sacrifice," American Forces Press Service, 10 Jan 2005, http://www.defenselink.mil, Hist Files, CMH.
34. MFR, MNSTC-I/NATO Training Mission–Iraq (NTM-I) Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (2–9 January 2005), Godfroy Collection, CMH.

2004. At the conclusion of his speech, the cadets were sworn into the army as commissioned officers.[35]

The public ceremonies did not include displays of military strength and personnel, with the exception of the mechanized review, primarily because Iraqi divisions were still in a state of considerable organizational flux. For example, an ongoing assessment of security needs resulted in a decision to authorize four brigades for some divisions while others retained their original three-brigade configuration.[36] There was some talk of assigning ING units to regular army divisions in order to field the additional brigades more rapidly, but doing so required careful coordination because the organizations were configured and armed differently.[37] The vast majority of the ING battalions assigned to the 8th ING Division in Al Anbār, however, were considered unreliable because of conflicting loyalties.[38] All of the divisions, regardless of how many combat-effective battalions they had, were projected to be understrength until at least the end of March 2005.[39]

The NIA brigades that had deployed to Al Fallūjah in support of offensive operations in the late fall posed another problem because their presence had offered only a temporary solution to the issue of maintaining security in Al Anbār. The Ministry of Defense therefore decided to dissolve the 8th ING Division and send regular army forces to the region instead. Removing the 8th ING Division from the order of battle produced a domino effect on unit numbering. The 10th ING Division in Ad Dīwānīyah was redesignated as the new 8th ING Division, and the 12th ING Division in Al Başrah was redesignated as the new 10th ING Division.[40] The 2d, 4th, and 6th ING Divisions retained their designations, and, for the time being, there was no 12th Division of any kind. (*See Table 4.1.*)

At the same time as it was dissolving the old 8th ING Division, the Ministry of Defense deployed the newly formed 7th Division to western Iraq.[41] The new division's initial building blocks consisted of a brigade temporarily

35. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Jan 2005, sub: 30-day assessment, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
36. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 2 May 2005, sub: Brigade Renumbering, slides 1–4, Hist Files, CMH.
37. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 28 Feb 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 5, Godfroy Collection, CMH.
38. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 21 Feb 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 3; MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, General Casey, 1; both in Godfroy Collection, CMH.
39. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 27 Mar 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 1, Godfroy Collection, CMH.
40. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 21 Feb 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 3.
41. Personnel from the 8th Iraqi National Guard Division could return to the colors only after reintegrating as individual enlistees. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Mar 2005, sub: Meeting with Iraqi Generals, 5, Godfroy Collection, CMH.



T72 tanks assigned to the 9th Regular Army Division drive through a checkpoint near Camp Taji. (*U.S. Navy*)

transferred from the 5th NIA Division and one of several "Defenders of Baghdad" brigades.[42] A decision to enlarge the 1st Division (IIF) to four IIF brigades soon resulted in the temporary transfer being quashed. As a result, the 7th Division would not have three brigades until early 2006.[43] Given the severity of the ongoing threat in Al Anbār, the ministry also transferred the bulk of the 1st Division (IIF) from At Tājī to Al Habbaniyah, leaving one brigade behind in Baghdād as an operational reserve.[44]

The cost of building a brigade to replace the one donated by the 5th NIA Division, combined with moving the IIF and creating a second regular army division for Al Anbār, thwarted plans to create two mechanized divisions. Lacking the funds for implementing all of these initiatives, the Ministry of

42. By this time, the Ministry of Defense had created a second Defenders of Baghdad brigade. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Mar 2005, sub: Meeting with Iraqi Generals, 7–8.
43. The building blocks for the 2d and 3d Brigades, 7th Division, consisted of a handful of understrength battalions that originally had belonged to the old 8th ING Division in Al Anbār before it was dissolved. Approximately 1,300 or more new recruits reported for duty with 2d Brigade, 7th Division, in June 2005 while more than 2,200 new recruits made up for even more extensive shortfalls in the 3d Brigade, 7th Division, that fall. Bfg, MNSTC-I Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team to MNSTC-I/NTM-I Cmdg Gen, 10 Oct 2005, sub: 3rd BDE, 7th Division Build; Capt. Rob James, "From Wingers to Iraqi Soldier Trainers, Marines Ensure Iraqis Are Combat-Ready," 2d Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) Mil Transition Team, Multi-National Force–West Avn Combat Element Public Affairs Ofc, 12 Aug 2005, https://www.2ndmaw.marines.mil/news/article-view/article/522717/from-wingers-to-iraqi-soldier-trainers-marines-ensure-iraqis-are-combat-ready/; both in Hist Files, CMH.
44. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 16 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 2–3.

TABLE 4.1—CHANGES IN IRAQI DIVISION DESIGNATIONS, JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2005

Iraqi National Guard		Regular Army	
Old Designation	**New Designation**	**Old Designation**	**New Designation**
2d ING Div	2d ING Div	1st IIF Div	1st RA Div (IIF)
4th ING Div	4th ING Div	3d NIA Div	3d RA Div
6th ING Div	6th ING Div	5th NIA Div	5th RA Div
8th ING Div	inactivated	activated	7th RA Div
10th ING Div	8th ING Div	activated	9th RA Div (Mech)
12th ING Div	10th ING Div		

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Defense settled for generating a single armored formation, the 9th Division (Mechanized). Initial plans called for at least one brigade of the 9th Division to be stationed north of the capital at Camp Taji, along with an option to position two more brigades south of Baghdād. Funding issues intruded once again with the result that the entire division settled down at Camp Taji.

The creation of the 7th and 9th Divisions produced an unanticipated naming conundrum, because their lineages could not be traced to either the NIA or the ING. Both the Americans and the Iraqis wanted to adopt a new designation for these units rather than place them in existing organizational categories. As a result, MNF-I agreed to use "Regular Army" (RA) instead of "NIA" in order to set these units apart from ING organizations. This change would affect all NIA divisions, not just the 7th and 9th. The 1st, 3d, and 5th Divisions now would have "RA" in their designations as well (*Table 4.1*). These redesignations served as a necessary stop-gap measure until the different types of Iraqi divisions were formally amalgamated.

The need for reorganization measures of a different sort cropped up in northern Iraq following the insurgent offensive targeting Mosul. The 2d ING Division nominally consisted of three brigades with plans for adding a fourth already in the works. In reality, the division had suffered a significant loss of personnel, morale, and equipment in November. Now, only three of its nine battalions were capable of mounting offensive operations; the remaining ones were limited to staffing checkpoints and performing other static security missions. The vehicle fleet assigned to the 3d RA Division, based west of Mosul at Al Kasik Military Base, suffered from crippling maintenance issues. Although nominally organized with three brigades

(with activation of a fourth under consideration), the division's sole mobile asset consisted of the understrength 11th RA Battalion.[45] The 6th IIF Brigade, which deployed to Mosul before the January elections, would remain there until May because of the dire condition of both divisions.

The status of the 4th ING Division, based in Tikrīt, was a bright spot in the force; no major problems were evident within its untested brigades. After losing a brigade to the newly formed 7th RA Division, the 5th RA Division, stationed at Kirkush Military Training Base (east of Baghdād), would have to rebuild during the upcoming year. The division also had deployed a battalion from its 3d IIF Brigade to Sāmarrāʾ, located 135.18 kilometers northwest of Kir Kush, during the October offensive against the insurgent enclave in that city. MNSTC-I recommended to the Ministry of Defense that it remain in Sāmarrāʾ for the time being. In addition, a second 5th RA Division brigade, stationed in An Nuʾmaniyah, remained under the de facto control of the Ad Dīwānīyah–based 8th ING Division. Thus, the 5th RA Division commander could reliably count upon only two of nine authorized battalions for the foreseeable future.[46]

The 6th ING Division, headquartered in Baghdād, deployed the 40th ING Brigade on the west side of the city with the 41st ING Brigade in the eastern districts. The division's remaining two brigades were based respectively in southern Baghdād and just outside the city limits in the northern portion of neighboring Bābil Province. The 6th ING Division also was responsible for coordinating with the Muthanna Brigade, which guarded the Ministry of Defense and the Green Zone. Details on how the division would cooperate with the latest Defenders of Baghdad brigade created by the Ministry of Defense defied easy resolution for the time being.[47]

The remaining major units, consisting of the 8th ING Division in Ad Dīwānīyah and the 10th ING Division in Al Başrah, were based far to the south of the capital. Plans for organizing the former with four brigades, driven by promises to Shiʾi clergy that had resulted in a pair of infantry battalions being assigned to secure the shrines at Karbalāʾ and An Najaf, were under discussion. For the time being, the 8th ING Division would rely upon a borrowed brigade from the 5th RA Division. MNSTC-I recommended that the 10th ING Division also receive a fourth brigade to augment the three brigades already trained by the British, but the Al Başrah–based formation remained a low priority because of the relatively quiet situation in that region.[48]

45. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Mar 2005, sub: Meeting with Iraqi Generals, 1–3.
46. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Mar 2005, sub: Meeting with Iraqi Generals, 7–8.
47. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Mar 2005, sub: Meeting with Iraqi Generals, 7–8.
48. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Mar 2005, sub: Meeting with Iraqi Generals, 8.



Soldiers of the 98th Division accompany Iraqi troops on a patrol near Al Kasik Military Base. (*U.S. Army*)

MORE SPACES THAN FACES

By late fall 2004, MNSTC-I had 88 percent (1,838 out of 2,093) of its authorized duty positions occupied thanks to the steady flow of incoming 98th Division soldiers. Those billets reflected the requirements that the Army, other armed services, and coalition members had agreed to fill when Combined Joint Task Force 7 had had responsibility for a much smaller force of ING battalions and the Department of State had overseen police training. Since then, MNSTC-I had received responsibility for training not only the Iraqi police and Department of Border Enforcement personnel, but also a steadily growing number of Iraqi military units that far exceeded the original NIA and Iraqi Civil Defense Corps estimates.

The imbalance between requirements and personnel had forced MNSTC-I to divert individuals to newly created positions to accommodate the unforecasted needs. Although the command was understrength overall, its subordinate elements did not enjoy an equal share of the available personnel. The advisory support teams were filled at 102 percent (397 personnel against 390 authorizations), reflecting the command's emphasis on fielding regular army units. The headquarters staff stood at 72 percent (424 out of 594), and only 67 percent (14 out of 21) of the Ministry of Defense advisers were on hand, which gave Petraeus less insight into the impending government

transition than he preferred.[49] The Civilian Police Assistance Training Team's staff, which originally interacted with State Department trainers, received some personnel from the 89th Military Police Brigade in order to function at the minimal level of effectiveness.[50]

Ironically, this situation was manageable only because the Allawi government refused to permit American advisers to accompany most police units.[51] Petraeus gained permission to attach advisers to emergency response units, mechanized police formations, and police commandos; however, local police, national police, facilities protection services, and highway patrol all went without.[52] The Ministry of Interior received only a fraction of the advisers assigned to its military units and conducted its own recruiting and training programs.[53]

The swelling number of Iraqi installations, projected to reach thirty-three of battalion size or larger by the end of 2005, posed another challenge.[54] Existing locations could accommodate only a portion of the growth projected for late 2005 and 2006. The expansion of logistical infrastructure, combined with the creation of fourth brigades for several divisions, necessitated the building of another eight bases.[55] Those requirements had not been included in the updated authorizations for advisory personnel submitted by the Office of Security Transition–Iraq in early 2004, which meant that it would take a minimum of six to nine months for the Joint Staff to validate the unanticipated personnel requirements. As a result, MNSTC-I had to reassign individuals to the expansion task from its other elements starting in late 2004, which increased the number of staff sections with fewer personnel than they needed to do their jobs effectively.

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49. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Dec 2004, sub: 30-day assessment, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

50. Robert M. Perito, "The Iraq Federal Police: U.S. Police Building Under Fire," U.S. Institute of Peace Special Rpt 291, 18 Oct 2011, 3, https://www.usip.org/publications/2011/10/iraq-federal-police, Hist Files, CMH.

51. George W. Casey Jr., *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom, July 2004–February 2007* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012), 58.

52. Advisers only were provided to police units that were expected to fight alongside American troops on a regular basis. Perito, "Iraq Federal Police," 18 Oct 2011, 4–6.

53. Jeremy M. Sharp, *Iraq's New Security Forces: The Challenge of Sectarian and Ethnic Influences*, RS22093 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 12 Jan 2006), 4–5.

54. Baghdād is counted as a single base or installation area, but in fact it encompassed no fewer than five separate compounds. Bfg, 6 Aug 2005, sub: Ministry of Defense Force Structure, slides 8–13, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

55. The new bases were located in Qualachulon in northeast Iraq, in Al Kirzah near Baghdād, at Al Asad Air Base in western Iraq, plus in Az Zubayr, Al Salman, Ar Rifa'i, Umm Qaşr, and Al 'Amārah in the south. Bfg, 6 Aug 2005, sub: Ministry of Defense Force Structure, slides 8–13.

The new installations required base support teams of varying size to oversee vital functions until Iraqi soldiers could assume that mission. The teams consisted of three to seven officers and enlisted personnel who were responsible for coordinating base defense, operations and training, medical support, administration, and life support. The latter included amenities such as water, electricity, sewage, food service, postal service, and laundry service, as well as infrastructure and billeting, making life support the most complex aspect of the team's mission. Few personnel performing this function had experience interacting with partnered organizations, so they had to learn their jobs even as they passed on knowledge to the Iraqis.[56]

The mission of teaching Iraqis to manage installations was complex and time-consuming. Team personnel interacted with coalition and Iraqi military units, civilian bureaucrats, and commercial vendors running the gamut from multinational corporations to local-operator-owned establishments. Almost all of the civilian workers commuted onto the bases to do their jobs, so insurgents took advantage of the cursory security checks of commercial vendors to place informants within the installation. These individuals mapped out the base interior, identified MNSTC-I base support team members, and marked for execution Iraqi soldiers who displayed an aptitude for installation management.[57]

A constantly shifting construction schedule, coupled with the evolving knowledge base of the base support teams, posed a major personnel management issue for MNSTC-I. During a periodic examination of personnel needs, Petraeus's staff recommended boosting Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) authorizations from 107 to 232 to allow for the addition of a deputy commanding general, a full-time convoy security element, and 79 base support slots to expand existing teams and add new ones.[58] Petraeus recognized that it would take longer to process a formal request for additional personnel than it would to complete the new bases. As a result, MNSTC-I continued to pluck individuals from within its existing

56. Thirty-eight members of the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) staff were on temporary loan from Multi-National Corps–Iraq. Bfg, n.d., sub: CMATT JMD Recommendations in Support of Base Support Units, slide 7, JMD Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

57. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, CMH, with Col. (Ret.) Thomas F. Thaler, former Cdr, Al Kasik Coalition Base Spt Team, 8 May 2007, Hist Files, CMH.

58. The size of the base support teams furnished by MNSTC-I varied according to the number of Iraqi troops stationed on the installation. Major Iraqi installations, such as the newly constructed bases in Al Habbaniyah and at the Baghdad International Airport, were authorized a larger number of personnel. Teams assigned to smaller bases made do with fewer. Bfg, n.d., sub: CMATT JMD Recommendations in Support of Base Support Units, slide 8.



Lt. Col. Ian A. Cruickshank (*WO2 Al Green, Australian Army*)

authorizations to fill high-priority needs. Marine Col. Thomas F. Thaler, for example, found himself reassigned from the MNSTC-I staff to become the base support team leader for Al Kasik Military Base. He replaced Petraeus's own chief of staff, Col. James F. Laufenberg, who had taken the team leader position temporarily after a truck bomb had wounded the previous team leader. Colonel Thaler inherited a three-fold mission from Laufenberg: (1) finish construction of the base, (2) defend it, and (3) train members of Iraq's 3d RA Division to manage it.[59]

The presence of an Australian Army Training Team provided Thaler with a unique opportunity to evaluate coalition involvement with the Iraqi military. The Australians, led by Lt. Col. Ian A. Cruickshank, a career infantry soldier, were trainers first and foremost, but they also were equipped to defend themselves against attack. In addition to a full complement of small arms, the training team possessed four light armored vehicles mounting turreted 25-mm. cannons.[60] Although the Australians were able to ease MNSTC-I's requirements for trainers, they could not accompany the Iraqis into combat, so U.S. advisers from the 98th Division had to fill that role.

During his six-month tenure, Thaler interacted with four different Iraqi officers selected to learn installation management duties at Al Kasik Military Base. The first two were unable or unwilling to master their

59. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, CMH, with Col. (Ret.) Thomas F. Thaler, former Cdr, Al Kasik Coalition Base Spt Team, 8 May 2007, Hist Files, CMH.
60. Interv, Reardon with Thaler, 8 May 2007.



Australian light armored vehicles of the 2d Cavalry Regiment on patrol outside Al Kasik Military Base. (*L. Cpl. Neil Ruskin, Australian Army*)

new responsibilities in the allotted time. One demonstrated outstanding leadership and troop leading skills as well as a respectable expertise in logistical matters but then failed to report for duty. A few days later, a local civilian handed a videodisc to one of the Iraqi soldiers at the front gate. The disc showed footage of the Iraqi officer being beheaded.

Insurgents also targeted local businesses that supported the bases. In early 2005, soldiers from the 98th Division advisory team, based at the old fortress in nearby Tall' Afar, discovered that two workers from their kitchen staff had been murdered. Enemy fighters also threatened a baker with death if he continued to provide bread to Iraqi troops at Al Kasik Military Base. CMATT representatives convinced the man to continue honoring his contract for as long as he could. A few days later, the insurgents killed the merchant and his entire family.[61]

When the base water supply unexpectedly shut down, Thaler led a patrol of thirty soldiers, composed of base support personnel and soldiers from the 98th Division team, to the pumping station near the Tigris River. A quick survey found that all of the facility's pumps were operational, but further examination revealed that there were puddles of water beneath all of the pumps except for the one supplying the military base. When Thaler confronted the operator, the Iraqi citizen admitted that he had turned on the base's water supply pump only upon the patrol's approach. He explained that the insurgents had promised to kill him if the station continued to provide water to the base. Like so many Iraqis, the station operator had had to choose sides in order to survive.[62]

61. Interv, Reardon with Thaler, 8 May 2007.
62. Interv, Reardon with Thaler, 8 May 2007.

WASHINGTON INTERVENTION

As part of the White House's postelection commitment to keeping Americans abreast of developments in Iraq, on 7 January, President Bush publicized Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld's decision to evaluate the security force assistance effort. "The assessment team is going to Iraq," he explained, "to make sure that at this historic moment in the history of Iraq, there is a focused, determined strategy to help the new government to stand up the forces necessary to defend themselves."[63] The group, consisting of experts familiar with military operations and the situation, would develop recommendations for improving and streamlining the process of creating Iraqi security forces. They arrived at Baghdad International Airport two days after Bush's announcement.[64]

Headed by General (Ret.) Gary E. Luck, the team included Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the assistant chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Lt. Gen. Carlo Cabigiosu, a retired Italian Army officer who had led NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) troops in Kosovo from October 2000 to April 2001; and twenty other members.[65] Rumsfeld tasked Luck with determining what needed to be done to make the Iraqi military, and other indigenous security forces, more effective and cohesive. The U.S. media described the effort thusly: "General Luck will be looking at what's going on and why the Iraqis are not performing, why they are so vulnerable to the intimidation of the insurgency."[66]

During his initial meeting with Luck, General Casey related that he could guarantee the Coalition Provisional Authority's seven steps and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546's milestones through December 2005, but that certainty did not extend to the development of credible and effective Iraqi security forces. Casey also felt that the Iraqi government would have to take more responsibility for directing and carrying out counterinsurgency operations in order to gain a degree of legitimacy that American support could not provide. The departure of U.S. troops from Iraq

63. Al Pessin, "US Sends Retired General to Assess Iraqi Security Forces," Voice of America News, 7 Jan 2005, https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2005-01-07-voa72/308549.html, Hist Files, CMH.

64. Eric Schmitt, "The Conflict in Iraq: Security; General Seeking Faster Training of Iraq Soldiers," *New York Times*, 23 Jan 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/23/washington/world/the-conflict-in-iraq-security-general-seeking-faster.html, Hist Files, CMH.

65. Travel Requirements Sitrep, 5 Jan 2005, Luck Assessment Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

66. "Secretary Powell Concludes Visit to Tsunami Affected Region; Thai Tourist Industry Struggling to Survive; Draft Report Criticizes CIA Actions Before 9/11," CNN, 7 Jan 2005, http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0501/07/nfcnn.02.html, Hist Files, CMH.



Lt. Gen. Gary E. Luck, the commanding general of XVIII Airborne Corps, addresses elements of the 82d Airborne Division in 1991 upon their return to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, during Operation Desert Storm. (*Bob Howe, U.S. Army*)

could not take place until the central government gained credibility and the proficiency levels of Iraqi security forces increased.[67] General Luck made it clear to Casey that his input—intended for Rumsfeld, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the U.S. Central Command leadership—would form the basis of the Pentagon's assistance to MNF-I as it attempted to craft a strategy to implement those goals.[68]

Luck's unofficial agenda, which reflected Rumsfeld's desire to disentangle the U.S. military from its open-ended commitment in Iraq, aligned with MNF-I's belief that the involvement of more advisers would facilitate a faster handover of security responsibilities to the Iraqis.[69] The assessment team's visit therefore began with a briefing by General Casey and General John P. Abizaid, the Central Command commander, detailing the MNF-I transition concept. The MNSTC-I staff then dedicated one afternoon to giving Luck's team a comprehensive overview of the Iraqi military before providing recommendations on how assistance from Washington could speed up its

67. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 56.
68. Robin Wright and Josh White, "U.S. Plans New Tack After Iraq Elections," *Washington Post*, 23 Jan 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A29420-2005Jan22.html, Hist Files, CMH.
69. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 58.

development.[70] Afterward, the assessment team toured several units and installations.[71] Luck's busy schedule did not dedicate significant time to learning what the Iraqis wanted for their armed forces. The assessment team would depart on 21 January.

The IIG did not react passively to the visit. On 15 January, while the assessment team was still in country, Prime Minister Allawi had released a national security strategy paper laying out Baghdād's own blueprint for the Iraqi military. The introduction stated that "rebuilding the armed forces is not the responsibility of the coalition force. It is the main duty of the Iraqi Government, and the Minister of Defence in particular."[72] The paper expressed a clear preference for a general-purpose force, rather than one optimized for counterinsurgency: "We are keen to strengthen Iraqi firepower to surpass that of the armed terrorist. We have bought new heavy weapons, ammunition for the artillery and tanks, besides the continuous acquisition of medium weapons and rocket-propelled grenade launchers."[73] The strategy paper introduced at least one major surprise—the Iraqis planned to field an army consisting of twelve divisions rather than the ten they currently had.[74]

Within forty-eight hours of the assessment team's return, Defense Department officials shared a summary of General Luck's initial findings with the media. Rather than provide the Iraqis with heavier equipment, Luck recommended doubling or tripling the number of advisers. The source of the additional personnel was the only point of contention with the press. As a Defense Department official explained, "There are really two options being discussed. . . . Can resources already in Iraq be shifted over from offensive operations to handle training of Iraqi forces, or are we going to have to send over more people specifically for that mission?"[75]

70. MFR, MNSTC-I/NTM-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (9–15 January 2005), Godfroy Collection, CMH.
71. Travel Requirements Sitrep, 5 Jan 2005.
72. Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's personal involvement in authoring this document is evident from the distinctly British spelling of some words. Strategy Paper, Ayad Allawi, 15 Jan 2005, National Security Strategy and The Role of Army and the Internal Security Forces, 8, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
73. Strategy Paper, Allawi, 15 Jan 2005, National Security Strategy and The Role of Army and the Internal Security Forces, 11.
74. Strategy Paper, Allawi, 15 Jan 2005, National Security Strategy and The Role of Army and the Internal Security Forces, 10.
75. Wright and White, "U.S. Plans New Tack After Iraq Elections."

EVOLVING PRIORITIES

Casey's staff most likely already had been working on similar solutions to the one favored by Luck. Thirty days before the assessment team's arrival, MNF-I had completed an internal staff review of the previous five months for the purpose of charting a new path forward. It diverged from August assessments promoting the IIG's legitimacy by placing far more emphasis on the train-and-equip mission: "The development of capable ISF [Iraqi security forces] is critical to long-term success and the withdrawal plan. Despite their small numbers, capable and effective ISF have had a strategic impact, most notably in Najaf, Samarra, and Fallujah. They are acceptable to the Iraqi public in a way that CF [coalition forces] are not and never will be."[76] The evaluation concluded by bluntly stating that MNF-I's strategy would collapse unless adequate numbers of trained, motivated, and well-led Iraqi military and police units entered the fight.[77]

Although both the IIG and MNF-I sought to create a military force competent enough to assume greater responsibility for providing security to the Iraqi people, unilateral force structure decisions by the Allawi government made it more difficult to attain that goal. For example, General Petraeus learned after the fact that the minister of defense had fielded another Defenders of Baghdad brigade in response to rumors of impending insurgent attacks within the capital in mid-January.[78] As a result of this initiative and other unilateral IIG actions, the MNF-I assessment cautioned, "The ad hoc generation of irregular ISF [Iraqi security forces] units at the personal initiative of IIG ministers has produced some effective police units, but is starting to disrupt the overall coherence of the plan. . . . Without such a plan, the ISF program and committal of units to operations will continue to suffer from short-termism."[79]

The Ministries of Defense and Interior were not the only entities clamoring for the Americans to supply them with expertise, arms, and

76. Rpt, MNF-I HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Dec 2004, Five Month Campaign Progress Review, 7.
77. Rpt, MNF-I HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Dec 2004, Five Month Campaign Progress Review, 7–8.
78. These units were trained by Iraqis, not Americans, which is understandable given that the Iraqi Interim Government wanted to present them as a fait accompli to MNSTC-I. The Iraqis also planned to field multiple Defenders of Baghdad brigades for use in other regions. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 19 Dec 2004, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 1; MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 5 Feb 2005, sub: Meeting with Gen Babakir, 1; both in Godfroy Collection, CMH.
79. Rpt, MNF-I HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Dec 2004, Five Month Campaign Progress Review, 7.

equipment. Making matters worse, some of the challenges facing MNSTC-I were self-imposed as a result of the IIG suggesting changes to initiatives originally devised by the Americans. As early as September 2004, MNSTC-I had recognized that ING units were overtasked with responsibilities ranging from assisting coalition troops to safeguarding oil pipelines.[80] The Ministry of Oil took advantage of that dilemma by submitting a request to organize and equip fourteen battalions of tribal fighters to protect pipelines in northern and central Iraq. That initiative gained support within the Ministry of Defense because it opened the possibility of indirectly acquiring more equipment while divesting the ING of its pipeline mission. After the Americans expressed some interest in providing aid, the oil ministry expanded the original proposal to include sixteen more battalions to protect southern pipelines.[81]

Other ministries were turning to the Ministry of Defense for help because they realized that al-Shalaan had a direct conduit to the Americans. Tapping into MNSTC-I resources allowed Iraqi officials to bypass their own unresponsive and immature bureaucracy in order to solve pressing security needs.[82] That mindset motivated the Ministry of Trade to arrange with the Ministry of Defense to provide military escort for commercial trucks traversing the Jordan-Baghdād route.[83] Although that attitude reflected confidence in the Americans' ability to support the Iraqi military, it strained relations not only between MNF-I and the IIG, but also between Iraqi police and soldiers by reinforcing perceptions that the Ministry of Interior lacked the ability and means to protect the population.

Recognizing that the next iteration of the MNF-I campaign plan required Iraqi input, Casey and Petraeus visited Prime Minister Allawi on 17 January. Although the MNF-I commanding general's planners were still working on the details, Casey wanted to introduce the plan's essential elements to the Iraqi government before the elections took place. Casey's main concern stemmed from the White House's desired end-state of Iraq being "at peace with its neighbors and an ally in the [Global] War on Terror[ism] with a representative government that respects human rights of all Iraqis, and

80. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 1 Sep 2004, sub: Visit to Kirkuk, 3–5, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

81. The Ministry of Oil delayed paying for this force, hoping that the Americans or the Ministry of Defense would do so out of frustration. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 16 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 3.

82. The Ministry of Oil had not approached MNSTC-I directly when seeking to upgrade its pipeline security battalions, instead using the minister of defense as a go-between to obtain support vehicles and weapons. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 16 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 1–3.

83. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 16 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 4.

security forces sufficient to maintain domestic order and to deny Iraq as a safe haven to terrorists."[84] President Bush's official vision did not specifically address the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, but MNF-I crafted a campaign plan that met all of his stated goals while also serving as a framework for U.S. troop withdrawals.

The evolving MNF-I campaign plan was a bold step into uncharted territory. Reaching the end state as defined by the White House would require the Iraqi government to offer major concessions to Sunnis and Kurds, and the Iraqi security forces would have to improve their tactical proficiency to the point at which they could "credibly and independently assume the lead of a nationwide counterinsurgency campaign."[85] The latter goal significantly altered the train-and-equip effort's original trajectory. In addition, neither the Americans nor the Iraqis had explored the issues associated with transitioning security between their armies.

Rather than delve deeply into matters best handled by diplomats, Casey focused on explaining a concept being examined by MNF-I, known as the military assistance team (MAT). He told the assembled IIG leadership that the roles of the American and Iraqi militaries would be reversed over time with the former adopting a train-and-advise posture while the latter assumed responsibility for mounting combat operations. Rather than elaborate using abstract terms, Casey offered the example of colocated American and Iraqi brigades—each with three maneuver battalions—serving side-by-side in Baʿqūbah. The MAT conversion would begin with one of the coalition battalions relinquishing its tactical responsibilities in order to provide a robust advisory presence within each of the Iraqi battalions. As the Iraqi forces improved, another coalition battalion would be redeployed to the United States, with the third coalition battalion remaining in place to act as a rapid response force to back up the Iraqi units.

Casey further stated that the MATs were structured to provide Iraqi units access to capabilities currently unique to coalition forces, such as close air support, aeromedical evacuation, and airmobile assault. Each MAT would function as a coordinating mechanism to allow Iraqi units to request those types of support from their American counterparts. Casey added that, in order to hasten the development of the Iraqi forces, the cycle of "train, fight, train" was also important, and the MATs would help the Iraqi units both train and fight. He noted that implementation of the concept would not begin until after the elections, and it would require two to three months to

84. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 53.
85. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 54.

take full effect.[86] That optimistic timeline, however, suggests that the MNF-I commanding general and his staff really did not understand the complexities inherent in any large-scale advisory program nor did they account for systemic issues within the Iraqi military that influenced the overall effort.

The prospect of Iraqi troops taking over responsibility for security from the Americans, sooner rather than later, struck a positive chord with the Iraqi government. Further discussion centered on the finer points of the concept, specifically on what levels of command would receive MAT personnel. Casey recommended that teams would be employed at the division, brigade, and battalion levels. Ministry of Defense representatives interjected that Iraqi troops currently operated at the company level because of the leave rotation system and understrength battalion-level staffs. As a result, the MAT concept would have less immediate impact, given that virtually all division and brigade headquarters were still being formed. General Casey explained that battalions would receive an assistance team that could be broken down into smaller detachments to work with individual companies. He deferred on the topic of the near-term utility of division and brigade teams.[87]

Iraqi interest then turned to the issue of preparing the MATs for their new responsibilities. Mindful that the Pentagon bureaucracy required a minimum of six months to address personnel-related issues, Casey responded that MATs would be formed using soldiers from combat units already in Iraq, and they would have a short training period to acquire the skills they would need to interact with their partnered units. He did not mention that their instruction would include counterinsurgency doctrine.[88] He predicted that, by the end of 2005, as the political process would be coming to completion, the Iraqi military would have enough operational experience to be able to keep the insurgency in check.[89] Casey concluded by stating, "coalition commanders believed that, the more that they do, the more Iraqi forces will become dependent on them. That is why the plan emphasizes taking CF [coalition forces] away from the COIN [counterinsurgency] operations and put them working with the Iraqis to help fight."[90]

86. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, General Casey, 2.
87. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, General Casey, 3.
88. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, General Casey, 4–5.
89. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, General Casey, 1.
90. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, General Casey, 4–5.

Following the meeting, Casey mused:

> We were very conscious that this adjustment to our campaign plan entailed a major shift for our conventional Army and Marine Forces. For the first time since Vietnam, we would be asking conventional forces to actively participate in the training of indigenous forces during combat operations. . . . We would accomplish this by increasing our capacity to improve ISF [Iraqi security forces] capabilities—transition teams and partnerships—and by conducting aggressive counterinsurgency operations to bring the insurgency to levels that could be contained by increasingly capable ISF.[91]

PROTECTING THE VOTE

In MNF-I's view, having successful elections in January 2005 would be the pivot point for shifting the American strategy. The command therefore committed all available ING battalions, augmented by most of the IIF and other regular army battalions, to protect voters and safeguard polling stations.[92] Coalition troop strength in country increased from 138,000 to 150,000 with the temporary addition of two battalions from the 82d Airborne Division; elements of the 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division; and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. About 3,500 soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division and a further 3,000 from the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized), who had been slated to depart before the elections, had their tours of duty extended.[93] Coalition units formed the outer security ring for the election but remained behind the scenes unless the Iraqis required assistance.

Recent experiences in Al Fallūjah had provided the Iraqi military with an example of how it could use its unique influence within the IIG more efficiently. After asking the MNSTC-I commander to visit him, General Babekr informed Petraeus that the sheer number of forces deployed to Mosul during the previous month warranted a different command arrangement moving forward. He sought to have General Abdul Qadr temporarily assume the role of military governor in Nīnawā Province so he could act

91. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 61–62.
92. MFR, MNSTC-I/NTM-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (31 January–5 February 2005), Godfroy Collection, CMH.
93. Donald P. Wright and Col. Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign, The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom, May 2003–January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 419.

in the role of corps commander in an effort to better integrate the 1st RA Division (IIF), 2d ING Division, and 3d RA Division elements.

Babekr noted that he could not perform the role himself because of his Kurdish background and explained that the original request had come from prominent local officials seeking to have a senior Sunni Arab military officer take charge of security arrangements in Mosul.[94] MNF-I, however, remained more interested in planning for the postelection footprint than in implementing major changes less than two weeks before polling. The interaction reinforced the fact that the two armies viewed deployment decisions from fundamentally different perspectives; the Iraqis always were concerned about sectarian sensibilities and interactions with civilian officials while the Americans concentrated primarily on purely military factors.

Despite the heavy presence of Iraqi soldiers and police in major cities, Sunni insurgent groups attempted to disrupt voting using propaganda and violence. In Mosul, rebels waged a worrisome information campaign aimed at convincing voters that government forces could not protect voters.[95] During the first week of January, two suicide bombers drove a car packed with explosives into a crowded bus near Balad, killing twenty-five ING soldiers.[96] On 22 January, insurgents executed fifteen ING soldiers who had been kidnapped from a bus near Hit during the previous month. That same day, eight ING soldiers and one Iraqi civilian were injured when a suicide bomber detonated an explosive belt near a military camp in Al Ḥillah.[97] However, the antigovernment fighters were unable to capitalize on their moments of success. The attacks generated media headlines but had only a fleeting effect on Iraqi morale and did not disrupt the voting.

Although the insurgents displayed little ability to interfere on a nationwide scale, the IIG spared no effort to protect access to the polls. The armed forces chief of staff, General Babekr, suspended leave for all soldiers beginning 24 January to ensure the maximum number of troops were available. As a hedge against insurgent efforts to intimidate soldiers, the Defense Ministry announced plans to increase hazardous duty pay.[98] In addition to administrative measures, three infantry companies and a tank

94. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Jan 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, General Casey, 4.

95. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 20 Jan 2005, sub: Visit to Ninawah, 1–2, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

96. "Iraq: Insurgents Step Up Attacks as Vote Looms," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 3 Jan 2005, https://www.rferl.org/a/1056667.html, Hist Files, CMH.

97. "Further Security Measures Announced in Iraq," Associated Press, *Guardian*, 22 Jan 2005, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/jan/22/iraq, Hist Files, CMH.

98. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Jan 2005, sub: 30-day assessment.

company from the 1st Mechanized Brigade, 9th RA Division (Mechanized), secured the streets surrounding key government buildings in Baghdād. An IIF battalion and several police commando units reinforced the armored units.[99]

The most unexpected national security challenge to emerge leading up to the January elections emanated from within the Iraqi government rather than the insurgency. On 22 January, U.S. sources reported that Ahmed Chalabi, a former member of the Iraqi Governing Council, had accused Defense Minister al-Shalaan of corruption.[100] Chalabi claimed that al-Shalaan had smuggled large sums of cash out of the country, using the procurement chief as a go-between. One of Chalabi's aides told media representatives that the cash shipments were linked to an "arms deal [that] had been approved by four senior members of the Iraqi government, to include Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and Mr. Shalaan. . . . He said it had been carried out quickly because of the urgency of guerrilla war."[101] Minister al-Shalaan responded by publicly announcing his intention to arrest Chalabi.[102] The situation remained unresolved as Iraqis prepared to go to the polls with both individuals trading claims and threats.

On 28 January, almost 300,000 Iraqis in fourteen countries began casting absentee ballots. In Iraq itself, hundreds of candidates from numerous parties vied for the National Assembly's 275 seats. Thousands more competed for forty-one seats on each of seventeen provincial governing councils, fifty-one seats on the Baghdād provincial governing council, and the 111-member Kurdistan Regional Government. Two days after absentee voters started submitting their ballots, 8.4 million Iraqis, representing almost 60 percent of the eligible voting population, went to the polls. All of the security preparations paid off, and the vote proceeded in a calm environment.

Less than two weeks after the elections concluded, Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz of III Corps transferred command of Multi-National Corps–Iraq to

99. MFR, MNSTC-I/NTM-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (23–29 January 2005), Godfroy Collection, CMH.
100. "Congress Leader to be Arrested," Television New Zealand News, 22 Jan 2005, http://tv.nz/view/news_world_story_skin/469955?format+html (page discontinued; accessed 13 Aug 2009), Hist Files, CMH.
101. Dexter Filkins, "The Conflict in Iraq: Missing Money; Mystery in Iraq as $300 Million is Taken Abroad," *New York Times*, 22 Jan 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/22/world/middleeast/mystery-in-iraq-as-300-million-is-taken-abroad.html, Hist Files, CMH.
102. "Iraqi Defense Minister Vows to Arrest Chalabi," Voice of America News, 22 Jan 2005, https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-cn018-iraq-chalabi-22jan05/293506.html, Hist Files, CMH.

Lt. Gen. John R. Vines of XVIII Airborne Corps.[103] The IIG prepared to hand over the reins of power to the Iraqi Transitional Government, which would have the additional responsibility of writing a new constitution for Iraq. The shift did not proceed as smoothly as the Americans wanted because no one bloc or party was able to secure enough votes to control the transition. Prime Minister Allawi's Iraqi National Accord party garnered only 40 out of 275 parliamentary seats, representing 14 percent of the vote. The Kurdistan Alliance fared a bit better, earning seventy-five seats and 26 percent of the vote. The United Iraqi Alliance, an amalgam of various Shi'i Islamist factions that included supporters of Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the Islamic Da'wa Party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a handful of smaller parties, and even Sadrists, won 58 percent of the vote to gain 140 seats and form the largest voting bloc. Yet even though the United Iraqi Alliance dominated the election by a respectable margin, it lacked the two-thirds majority needed to unilaterally select the next prime minister.

The lengthy negotiations required to choose a successor government represented one of two unforeseen developments in the democratization process. The other was the self-disenfranchisement of Sunni Arabs, who made up approximately 20 percent of Iraq's population of 28.6 million. Out of 2.2 million people living in Sunni-majority Al Anbār Province, for example, only 2 percent voted.[104] A similar pattern emerged throughout the rest of the provinces. As a result, Sunnis gained less than 6 percent of available National Assembly seats. Although 98 percent of Kurds were Sunnis, they viewed events through an ethnic rather than a sectarian perspective. Thus, Sunni Arab nonparticipation guaranteed that Shi'i and Kurdish factions would dominate the incoming government.[105]

REBALANCING THE FORCE

The January election allowed the Americans to shift some emphasis from generating combat units toward creating a more self-sustaining Iraqi military. On 1 February, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed subordinate staffs to place a higher priority on developing Iraqi logistical

103. Sgt. David Foley, "XVIII Airborne Takes Lead Role in Iraq," Army News Service, 11 Feb 2005, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/02/mil-050211-arnews01.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
104. "Q&A: Iraqi Election," BBC News, 13 Feb 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3971635.stm (accessed 9 Jun 2019), Hist Files, CMH.
105. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 369–70.

capabilities.[106] Rather than mimic the unique and expensive structure of U.S. forces, General Casey's staff designed a support system virtually from scratch. MNF-I embraced a hybrid approach, combining contractor-provided services with military sustainment units, and using a modified British Army logistics template for determining supply consumption and personnel authorizations. The model also assigned some sustainment responsibilities to other government ministries. While the Iraqi military boasted an organic capability for some types of medical care, for example, only the Ministry of Health would provide specialized and long-term care.

National depots managed by the Ministry of Defense provided material to five regional support units, which were allocated on the basis of one support unit for every two Iraqi divisions. The regional outfits, in turn, filtered sustainment to maneuver forces through seventy-seven garrison support units colocated with brigades and battalions. Civilian contractors furnished basic life support needs, such as water, fuel, and food to all installations.[107] All told, the system required 42,000 dedicated logisticians—according to standards set by the U.S. Army—even after subtracting the functions performed by contractors and civilian agencies.[108]

General Petraeus took on the task of shepherding the support model from concept to reality. MNSTC-I began by creating doctrine to guide the proposed force structure, then provided a few Iraqi officers with hands-on experience by embedding them within coalition logistical staffs.[109] The next step was repurposing a few small buildings at Camp Taji to serve as the Iraqi military's logistics training center.[110] An advance party of Australian soldiers had arrived at Camp Taji on 13 January to establish the interim training center, followed on 18 February by thirty-eight Australian personnel who composed the main body of the training force. They had four weeks to refurbish the temporary classrooms, familiarize themselves with the hybrid logistical concept, and develop lesson plans. The training facility, designated

106. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032,"Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistics Capabilities," 28 Oct 2006, 1, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA460534.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

107. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032,"Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistics Capabilities," 28 Oct 2006, 5.

108. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032,"Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistics Capabilities," 28 Oct 2006, 9.

109. Only eight Iraqi officers, two of whom were generals charged with overseeing similar efforts in the future, and six logisticians working at the Phoenix Base support facility operated by MNSTC-I, participated in the pilot phase of the program. Sgt. Matt Murphy, "Iraqi Army, MoD, MNSTC-I Program Breeds Success," *Advisor* 2, no. 10 (5 Mar 2005): 3, Hist Files, CMH.

110. Bfg, n.d., sub: CSS School–Current Situation, slide 3, CSS School Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.



Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus (*left*), the commanding general of the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, and Col. A. M. Haslam (*right*), the commander of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, listen as a local Iraqi contractor explains a building concept during the construction of a market in An Najaf. (*Cpl. Matthew S. Richards, U.S. Marine Corps*)

as the Iraqi Army Support and Services Institute, would open its doors to 153 students from the IIF division on 21 March.[111] However, plans to turn the institute over to Iraqi control in August 2005 would go awry after MNSTC-I discovered Iraqi unit commanders were assigning the initial graduates to infantry billets rather than service support vacancies.[112]

The Australian government's decision to send instructors to Camp Taji had preceded a unanimous vote by NATO members on 22 February to support the Iraqi military's future training needs.[113] The prospect of more help from the alliance allowed MNSTC-I to reallocate American personnel to inadequately resourced projects such as generating headquarters and service companies for forty-three infantry battalions and four motor transport regiments by the end of 2005. In addition, MNSTC-I planned to create five additional logistical support centers and four maintenance facilities.[114]

111. Sgt. Lorie Jewell, "New Support and Services Courses Begin for Iraqi Troops," *Advisor* 2, no. 13 (26 Mar 2005): 6, Hist Files, CMH.
112. Bfg, n.d., sub: CSS School–Current Situation, slides 5 and 7, handwritten comment by General David H. Petraeus.
113. "All 26 NATO Allies Will Help Train Iraqi Troops," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 Feb 2005, https://www.smh.com.au/world/middle-east/all-26-nato-allies-will-help-train-iraq-troops-20050223-gdksif.html, Hist Files, CMH.
114. Bfg, n.d., sub: Logistical Capability Development in Support of the Iraqi Army, slide 6, Military Transition Team (MiTT) Folder, 50th MHD Collection, CMH.

Although civilian contractors initially would operate the new installations, MNSTC-I optimistically estimated that the Iraqi military would be capable of logistically supporting counterinsurgency operations without coalition assistance by mid-2007.[115]

ALTERING THE CAMPAIGN TRAJECTORY

The initial MNF-I campaign plan had focused on safeguarding the January elections by mounting set-piece assaults on insurgent enclaves and strengthening the Iraqi military and police. MNF-I achieved these objectives, albeit at the price of significant organizational turbulence within partnered security forces.[116] The process of shifting from an offensive orientation to a defensive stance designed to safeguard the polling process began with a detailed reexamination of recent events by Casey's staff. Successes at An Najaf, Sāmarrāʾ, and Al Fallūjah argued for shifting MNF-I's operational center of gravity from safeguarding the United Nations–directed political process to improving the security situation. The rationale for making that change stemmed from two factors. First, aligning the U.S. military too closely with the newly elected Iraqi government could undermine rather than strengthen its legitimacy. Second, little or no effort had been devoted to U.S. military disengagement from Iraq. As a result, MNF-I priorities expanded to include setting conditions for a coalition withdrawal, which could only happen after Americans had handed over their security responsibilities to their indigenous counterparts.

The Iraqi military and police, rather than the Americans themselves, provided the United States with the means of pulling out its troops. Although deploying more U.S. soldiers would improve security in the near term, neither the White House nor the Iraqi government favored that course of action. Making matters more complicated, the groups opposing the coalition presence had become better organized and more lethal over the preceding six months. For MNF-I to set the conditions for an American withdrawal within a period of time acceptable to the Bush administration, it not only had to safeguard the elections process, but also it had to expand Iraqi force structure and provide its partners with better equipment while furnishing specialized training at multiple levels of command. The latter task proved complex because American soldiers, including prospective advisers, had concentrated on fighting conventional conflicts for so long

115. Bfg, n.d., sub: Logistical Capability Development in Support of the Iraqi Army, slide 6.
116. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 52.

that it would take months to teach themselves—let alone the Iraqis—how to wage counterinsurgency operations efficiently.[117]

The MNF-I commanding general had proactively gained IIG approval for implementing the transition-based approach in mid-January. Casey also convened a meeting of senior subordinate commanders at the end of January, well in advance of the unveiling of the new campaign plan. He opened the meeting by stating that the full weight of the U.S. military presence in Iraq, rather than MNSTC-I alone, had to be brought to bear on the challenge of training Iraqi security forces. The adoption of a more robust partnership program with Iraqi units operating in the same battlespace, he explained, would be the best and most expeditious means of enhancing the capability of those elements and facilitating the transfer of security responsibilities to them.

Casey envisioned the new approach as a step-by-step effort, with initial emphasis on building habitual relationships between coalition and Iraqi battalions. The second phase focused on training Iraqi brigades to plan, direct, conduct, and sustain independent counterinsurgency operations. The third step consisted of training Iraqi divisions to effectively synchronize the actions of subordinate brigades. While combat units from both armies interacted at division, brigade, and battalion levels, Multi-National Corps–Iraq headquarters concentrated on improving the ability of their counterparts to exercise effective command and control, and the MNF-I staff mentored the Ministry of Defense.[118] The latter task would prove to be one of the most difficult because the incoming government soon would replace many of the bureaucrats in that organization.

Partnership arrangements were based on geographical proximity rather than organizational similarities. In the north, the 2d ING Division and the 3d RA Division paired with Task Force Olympia, also known as Multi-National Brigade–North West, which was a reinforced brigade composed of elements from the Fort Lewis, Washington–based I Corps. In the Sunni Triangle, the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized), now known as Multi-National Division–North Central, aligned itself with the 4th ING Division and the 5th RA Division. The 1st Cavalry Division (now Multi-National Division–Baghdad) paired with the 6th ING Division, which was composed of a loose collection of specialized brigades, and the IIF brigade based in the capital. In western Iraq, I Marine Expeditionary Force would develop a relationship with the 1st RA Division (IIF), and the 1st Marine Division

117. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 61.
118. Bfg, MNF-I Combined Div Cdrs Conf, 1 Mar 2005, sub: Partnership Brief, slides 8–12, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

would partner with the 7th RA Division. The Polish-led Multi-National Division–Center South aligned itself with the 8th ING Division, and the British contingent (Multi-National Division–South East) did the same with the 10th ING Division. The 9th RA Division (Mechanized), still in the process of forming, did not yet have a dedicated counterpart.[119]

Casey recognized that near-term difficulties would arise because of some dissimilarity in geographical and organizational footprints. The single brigade allotted to Multi-National Brigade–North West lacked the depth it needed to partner effectively with two Iraqi divisions. Although MNF-I planned to merge Multi-National Brigade–North West with Multi-National Division–North Central to create Multi-National Division–North in the future, using one coalition brigade to mentor six Iraqi brigades was a problem that defied an immediate solution.[120] MNF-I faced similar challenges in other areas. Iraqi units outnumbered coalition troops assigned to Multi-National Division–North Central, Multi-National Force–West, and Multi-National Division–Baghdad. That disparity would grow more pronounced after MNSTC-I fielded a fourth brigade for selected Iraqi divisions. On a positive note, Multi-National Division–Center South and Multi-National Division–South East were each paired with a single Iraqi division.

The new campaign plan therefore involved considerable risk, in large part because progress at the strategic level depended on widespread tactical success. The MNF-I commander acknowledged that fact by allowing coalition units some time to prepare themselves for their new responsibilities. The requirement for detailed preparation reflected the fact that both the Americans and the Iraqis already had switched the focus of their efforts between several different missions within a short period of time—from targeting enemy enclaves to securing elections and then to transitioning security. The Americans had to provide support to partnered units during combat operations while at the same time ensuring multiple levels of command within the Iraqi military were capable of assuming security responsibilities from coalition troops. To achieve that goal, a considerable amount of training had to take place at division, brigade, and battalion levels

119. Bfg, MNF-I, 12 Jan 2005, sub: 2005 Security Force Strategy–Creating Iraqi Capacity for Independent Operations," slide 5, Security Strategy Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

120. "Task Force Freedom Transfers Authority to Task Force Band of Brothers," *Newsblaze*, 30 Dec 2005, http://newsblaze.com/story/20051230081916nnnn.nb/topstory.html, Hist Files, CMH.

within combat units, combat support organization, and combat service support organizations.

On 28 January, Casey informed division commanders that beginning on 1 April, they would have ninety days to organize and train various types of partnership teams using internal assets rather than MNSTC-I resources.[121] Brigade-level partnerships would begin in April, followed by the division level in June and the battalion level in July 2005, with the order driven by Casey deeming brigade skills the most critical. MNF-I envisioned terminating all battalion-level partnerships within four to six months—a very short period of time in which to improve the professionalism of its Iraqi counterparts—with the brigade and division programs winding up sometime in 2006.[122]

Some of the subordinate commanders in attendance had had advance notice of Casey's intentions because their units already had been participating in limited validation trials for the transition-based partnership concept. Thus, only four weeks after the initial meeting, on 26 February, the 256th Infantry Brigade (Task Force Bengal) of Multi-National Division–Baghdad passed control of a neighborhood in Baghdād to Brig. Gen. Jaleel Khalaf Shwail's 40th ING Brigade.[123] The second transfer occurred when a battalion of the 3d IIF Brigade assumed responsibility for central Mosul on 7 March, replacing American paratroopers who had completed their temporary ninety-day deployment to Iraq.[124] Although the 1st RA Division (IIF) planned on its 6th IIF Brigade returning soon after the elections, the IIF soldiers remained in place until a locally based unit assumed their mission several months later.[125] These trials proved that the transition concept was feasible on a small scale, but it had not yet been thoroughly tested in the crucible of combat.

121. Msg, MNF-I Cmdg Gen to U.S. Central Cmd Cdr, 28 Jan 2005, sub: Commanders Estimate–2005 MNF-I Security Strategy, 7, Security Strategy Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
122. Bfg, MNF-I, 14 Jan 2005, sub: 2005 Security Strategy–2005 Way Ahead, slide 11, Security Strategy Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
123. 1st Inf Div Public Affairs Ofc, "Iraqi Brigade Takes Control of Area, Future," *Advisor* 2, no. 9 (26 Feb 2005): 11, Hist Files, CMH.
124. Lt. Col. Chris Gibson, "Battlefield Victories and Strategic Success: The Path Forward in Iraq," *Military Review* 86, no. 5 (Sep-Oct 2006): 47–58.
125. MFR, MNSTC-I/NTM-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Commanding General's Weekly Report (22–28 May 2005), 2, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

TURNING A NEW PAGE

MNF-I formally unveiled its updated campaign plan, entitled "Transition to Self-Reliance," on 22 April 2005. The document opened with a markedly upbeat recounting of recent accomplishments, including "rolling back insurgent gains and eliminating insurgent and terrorist safe havens, suppressing the Shia insurgency, quintupling reconstruction, keeping ISF [Iraqi security forces] development on track, and assisting Iraq to its first free election."[126] The plan then noted that "2005 is a period of key transitions—[the] MNC-I [Multi-National Corps–Iraq] transfer of authority in February, the IIG to ITG [Iraqi Transitional Government] transition running through April and possibly extending further, the transition of key [U.S.] embassy personnel, the shift in our main effort, and another Iraqi election period late in the year."[127]

These efforts would not be open-ended. Secretary Rumsfeld made it clear that he wanted to see sufficient initial progress in the security handover process to allow troop withdrawals to start before the U.S. congressional midterm elections in November 2006.[128] Armed with that firm guidance, MNF-I divided the campaign into three overlapping phases spanning eighteen months (February 2005 to July 2006), followed by a culminating fourth phase. The first phase, which had begun two months before the plan's publication, formalized the loose advisory partnership originally formed between CMATT and Combined Joint Task Force 7 by combining both efforts no later than 15 June 2005.

The unveiling of the campaign plan in April marked the start of phase two, during which American troops would train their counterparts to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations, hand over security responsibilities when MNC-I judged the Iraqis were ready, and begin redeploying by 30 November. This timeline allowed little room for miscalculation. Beyond the tight schedule for producing substantial improvement in the capability of Iraqi forces, phase two was problematic because the U.S. Army had not yet shown that its counterinsurgency methods were effective in Iraq.

Casey knew that the ultimate responsibility for ending the insurgency lay not with the U.S. military, but with the Iraqis themselves. The Iraqi

126. MFR, MNF-I HQ, 22 Apr 2005, sub: MNF-I Campaign Plan for 2005–Transition to Self-Reliance, 1, Casey Papers, CMH.
127. MFR, MNF-I HQ, 22 Apr 2005, sub: MNF-I Campaign Plan for 2005–Transition to Self-Reliance, 2.
128. Bfg, 9 Jul 2005, sub: MNC-I OPORD 05–02 Update, "Updated Effects Based Operational Design (5th Line of Operations (Force transformation) Added)," slide 41, handwritten marginalia, Hist Files, CMH.

government, rather than coalition military forces, therefore assumed the central role with the initiation of phase three in December 2005.[129] During the following seven months, Iraqi security forces would aid Baghdād's efforts to tamp down violence, meet the security needs of the population, increase the pace of reconstruction, and promote nationalist rather than sectarian agendas. Under phase four, slated to begin just before the November 2006 midterm elections in the United States, the Iraqi government would enter into a traditional security cooperation relationship with the Bush administration. Such an agreement would contain specific provisions to govern the number of U.S. military trainers remaining in Iraq and to determine if U.S. combat units would remain in Iraq or relocate to a nearby country to assume strategic overwatch postures. It also would lay out the process by which the U.S. Embassy in Baghdād would assume oversight of the train-and-equip program upon MNF-I's departure.[130]

The April 2005 campaign plan differed from its predecessor because success depended on the Iraqi government and security forces, rather than coalition troops, achieving key goals. The National Assembly had convened in mid-March to select a prime minister and senior cabinet officials.[131] After lengthy and impassioned debate, two-thirds of the lawmakers elected Jalal Talabani as president and Adil Abdul-Mahdi and incumbent Ghazi Ajil al-Yawar as vice presidents. On 13 April, President Talabani announced Ibrahim al-Ja'fari, a member of the Shi'i-dominated Da'wa Party, as the prime minister designate. Rather than give the impression that the incoming government would merely rubber-stamp a unilateral American directive, MNF-I withheld the revised plan's formal release until just before al-Ja'fari announced his cabinet appointments. While the National Assembly tentatively approved the nomination of al-Ja'fari and his cabinet members during the late April to mid-May timeframe, those individuals represented a wide range of agendas and interests that were potentially at odds with the goals articulated in the MNF-I campaign plan.[132]

129. MFR, MNF-I HQ, 22 Apr 2005, sub: MNF-I Campaign Plan for 2005–Transition to Self-Reliance, 5.

130. Several months afterward, MNF-I amended the campaign plan by adding an open-ended fifth phase, focusing on troop withdrawals and transitioning control to the embassy, beginning in January 2007. MFR, MNF-I HQ, 22 Apr 2005, sub: MNF-I Campaign Plan for 2005–Transition to Self-Reliance, 5; Bfg, 9 Jul 2005, sub: MNC-I OPORD 05-02 Update, "Updated Effects Based Operational Design (5th Line of Operations (Force transformation) Added)," slide 9.

131. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 9 Mar 2005, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2005/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

132. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 13 Apr 2005, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2005/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.



Iraqi President Jalal Talabani (*center*) and Prime Minister Designate Ibrahim al-Ja'fari (*right*) answer questions at a 7 April 2005 press conference in Baghdād. (*S. Sgt. Angelique Perez, U.S. Air Force*)

CONCLUSION

After considering the input from his staff before updating the August 2004 campaign plan, Casey penned a report to General Abizaid laying out his vision for 2005. It began with a 1917 quote from British Army officer T. E. Lawrence, drawn from his experiences serving alongside the Arab forces fighting the Ottoman Empire during World War I: "Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them."[133] This sentiment, however appealing to an American military commander eager to shift greater defense responsibilities to the Iraqis, did not reflect the tactical realities that Lawrence had faced during that conflict. The Arab irregulars that Lawrence had advised stood no chance of defeating the Turkish Army without help from British conventional forces. Casey's reference to Lawrence's hands-off advice is a stark example of how the uncritical acceptance of a narrow range of sources shaped American perceptions of how to engage with local forces.

Given that the perceptions of the MNF-I commander influenced strategic decision making to a significant degree, lending such credence to the

133. T. E. Lawrence, "Twenty-Seven Articles," *Arab Bulletin* 60 (20 Aug 1917): 347–53, https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100048503667.0x0000aa, quoted in Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 51.

observations of a junior British officer advising Bedouin irregulars engaged in combat against Turkish conventional forces made for an uncertain foundation for the way forward. Other books by British officers, who served multiple assignments with indigenous troops over lengthy military careers, offered potentially more useful insights. These works included *A Soldier with the Arabs* by John Bagot Glubb, who had led and trained Jordan's Arab Legion between 1939 and 1956, and the extensive discussion on training, leading, advising, and motivating a multiethnic military organization in Field Marshal William, Viscount Slim's *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1924–1945*.[134] The former detailed the challenges of commanding an Arab army whose political masters were unable or unwilling to provide it with the means to fight effectively. The latter featured a lengthy treatise on rebuilding local partner forces following a traumatic battlefield setback at the hands of Japanese troops in Burma during 1942, a situation not unlike that which faced MNF-I following the April 2004 uprising.

The tendency to lend great weight to subjective information had influenced campaign plan development following the January 2005 elections. MNF-I believed that successive offensives targeting enemy urban enclaves during the previous fall had eliminated insurgent bases. In reality, the enemy had relocated to areas where the coalition presence was irregular, such as south of Baghdād, in remote portions of Al Anbār, and west of Mosul.[135] The Americans also believed that sectarian violence had diminished significantly because the Sadrists were no longer openly confronting coalition forces. But sectarian violence continued, albeit at a level that the Americans could overlook, as Sadrists accumulated power by other means, including establishing ties with senior members of the incoming government.

Viewing developments through a lens that favored accomplishment of American strategic goals did not equate to the absence of major threats. This attitude influenced MNF-I's assessment of the Iraqi military and its

134. The methods employed by John Bagot Glubb were amply validated on modern battlefields: "The conduct of the Arab Legion against the nascent Israeli Army in 1948 may well have been the best performance of any Arab military against any foe in the post-World War II era." Kenneth M. Pollack, *Armies of Sand: The Past, Present, and Future of Arab Military Effectiveness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 462. For an equally insightful examination of Field Marshal William, Viscount Slim's ability to reshape a defeated multiethnic army-level formation into a victorious force capable of defeating the same enemy that initially bested it, see Maj. N. R. M. Borton, "The Fourteenth Army in Burma, a Case Study in Delivering Fighting Power," *Defence Studies* 2, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 27– 52, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14702430208405039, Hist Files, CMH.

135. Rpt, MNF-I HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 27 Jun 2005, Campaign Progress Review Dec 2004–Jun 2005, 2, Casey Papers, CMH.

capabilities. Convinced that advisers were the sole reason that Iraqi troops performed within expectations at Sāmarrāʾ, Al Fallūjah, and Mosul—rather than the fact that Iraqi troops were given a very limited supporting role—Americans surmised that more advisers would produce desired results on a wider scale within the allotted timelines.

The adoption of the partnership-based transition concept, however, represented relatively uncharted territory for modern American forces. The U.S. Army had not used this method since the Vietnam conflict, and even in that period American commanders frequently questioned its efficacy. In fact, General William C. Westmoreland, Casey's equivalent in Vietnam, "concluded that the extended integration of American and South Vietnamese units was counterproductive, reducing the Vietnamese elements to combat auxiliaries."[136] Westmoreland's disapproving assessment stemmed in part from the United States' tendency to bridge the capabilities gap that existed between both armies by furnishing fire support and logistical sustainment to its partners, which fostered South Vietnam's tendency to rely on the largesse furnished by its allies rather than address its systemic shortcomings.

MNF-I focused its security force assistance initiatives almost entirely at the tactical level. For reasons beyond their control, the Americans exerted the least influence on a critical part of the scheme: ministerial development. The simple truth that most officials with experience in managing unit support and sustainment and addressing unit payroll or equipment procurement issues were departing with the Allawi government, to be replaced by others with little or no experience and uncertain motives, posed a significant obstacle to meeting the campaign timelines dictated by Rumsfeld. The Pentagon leadership had not yet seriously considered how that development would impact the incoming government's ability to conform with the wishes of the Bush administration.

Finally, General Casey put great store in MNF-I's ability to wage an effective counterinsurgency fight, even though he knew that the troops under his command were ill-trained in those skills. Teaching counterinsurgency to the Iraqis, while simultaneously learning it themselves, would be difficult for American soldiers. And the Iraqis were less-than-suitable students, as they lacked familiarity with the professional framework—a decentralized organization capable of exercising initiative at low levels—needed to master Western-style counterinsurgency operations.[137]

136. George L. McGarrigle, *Taking the Offensive: October 1966 to October 1967*, *Combat Operations*, United States Army in Vietnam (Washington DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1998), 162.

137. Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 225.

5
Time of Transition: May–November 2005

Although the majority of Iraqis who were eligible to vote had done so during the 30 January election, their courage did not produce immediate results. Negotiations over the incoming cabinet's composition effectively had paralyzed the Iraqi Transitional Government until 28 April, which had affected U.S. interactions with Iraqi security agencies. Outgoing ministers may have made decisions, but the Americans had no guarantee that their replacements would honor those commitments. Incoming bureaucrats had no experience, which meant that problems that had been resolved months before would crop up again. To minimize disruption, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) had accorded a higher priority to mentoring Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior leaders.[1]

The approval of a transitional cabinet ignited a new round of bickering when the National Assembly attempted to form the Constitution Drafting Committee. It took five weeks for the Kurdish and Shi'i blocs to agree on Sunni representation in the group. Keenly aware that Sunnis needed to feel they were key players in the new government, President George W. Bush named Zalmay Khalilzad, a Sunni Muslim of Afghan descent, as the new U.S. ambassador to Iraq.[2] By early July, however, two Sunni committee

1. Bfg, Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq (MNSTC-I), 15 Aug 2005, sub: MOD & MOI: From Partnership to Self-Reliance, slide 1 notes, MNSTC-I DCG Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).
2. "Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad United States Ambassador to Iraq, Baghdad, Iraq," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 11 Nov 2006, https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship-resource-center/civic-integration/outstanding-americans-by-choice/dr-zalmay-khalilzad-united-states-ambassador-to-iraq-baghdad-iraq, Historians (Hist) Files, CMH.

members had walked out because of threats against them and their families. On the nineteenth, insurgents demonstrated that those threats had not been idle warnings when they assassinated Sheikh Mijbil al-Issa, a Sunni delegate to the group. As a result, other Sunni committee members refused to participate in the process until the government could assure their safety.[3]

The disparate interests of the negotiating teams from various ethnic and religious communities also held back progress. One of the major debates was over federalism, with the Kurds pushing for autonomous regions, the Sunnis strongly opposing the idea, and Shi'i representatives wavering on the topic. The talks reached an impasse. With the United States' blessing, the committee dissolved, and the Kurds and Shi'a began meeting without the Sunnis to finalize a draft constitution, which eventually would be subject to a popular referendum.[4] The ethnic and sectarian divide at the political level did not bode well for forming cohesive, integrated security forces from the disparate parts of the Iraqi population.

EARLY BUILDING BLOCKS

General George W. Casey Jr., MNF-I's commander, sought to inject momentum into the first phase of the 22 April 2005 campaign plan by authorizing three new initiatives collectively aimed at enhancing the Iraqi Army's ability to perform counterinsurgency operations. The first involved the mid-May 2005 formation of an integrating agency within Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I), first called the Iraqi Assistance Group and later known as the Iraq Assistance Group (IAG), which would have responsibility for overseeing all facets of the advisory program.[5] (*See Chart 5.1.*) In simpler terms, the

3. "Sunnis Suspend Work on Constitution After Killings," PBS *NewsHour*, 20 July 2005, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/middle_east-july-dec05-iraq_07-20, Hist Files, CMH.

4. Between 60 and 70 percent of eligible adults registered to vote in the predominantly Sunni provinces of Diyālá and Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn. Registration in Al Anbār swelled to nearly 85 percent despite Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's vow to kill anyone who voted. Jonathan Morrow, "Iraq's Constitutional Process II: An Opportunity Lost," U.S. Institute of Peace, 1 Dec 2005, https://www.usip.org/publications/2005/12/iraqs-constitutional-process-ii-opportunity-lost, Hist Files, CMH.

5. Discussion of creating the Iraq Assistance Group (IAG) originally began in mid-January 2005. Personnel from Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq were assigned to the new organization between March and May 2005, when it was then transferred to Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I). MNC-I dropped the provisional designation of "Iraqi Assistance Group" in late December 2005, when it revised the organization's title to "Iraq Assistance Group." MFR, Iraq Assistance Gp HQ, Multi-National Corps–Iraq, 20 Dec 2005, sub: Transition Team Program, Hist Files, CMH.

IAG would serve as the nexus for training, equipping, and employing all types of U.S. military assistance teams, which recently had been rebranded as military transition teams (MiTTs), after Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld suggested that the term "assistance teams" implied long-term dependence. The IAG's writ included the advisers assigned to the Iraqi Army, Air Force, and Navy as well as the police. Its mission statement proclaimed its readiness to execute "the full range of tasks necessary to receive, train, employ, sustain, and recover 'advisory-ready' transition teams throughout their lifecycles to meet the combatant commander's requirements in support of Iraqi Security Forces."[6]

The new organization's charter placed great emphasis on upgrading and standardizing a hodge-podge of related programs that had been developed over the previous eighteen months. At the same time, its expanded span of control transformed it from a purely U.S. Army entity into a joint organization. Placing the IAG under MNC-I rather than the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) also lifted the burdens associated with training, equipping, employment, and sustainment from MNSTC-I's shoulders, allowing both the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team and the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team to focus on administrative, construction, installation management, procurement, and logistical responsibilities.[7] The IAG's mandate did not extend to every advisory program at first; as a result, it initially oversaw only 80 of the 230 MiTTs in Iraq. The number of teams under IAG's purview grew from 80 to 180 after it took over what would become known as National Police and Department of Border Enforcement MiTTs in the spring of 2006, followed by those advising echelon-above-division headquarters and transportation regiments.[8]

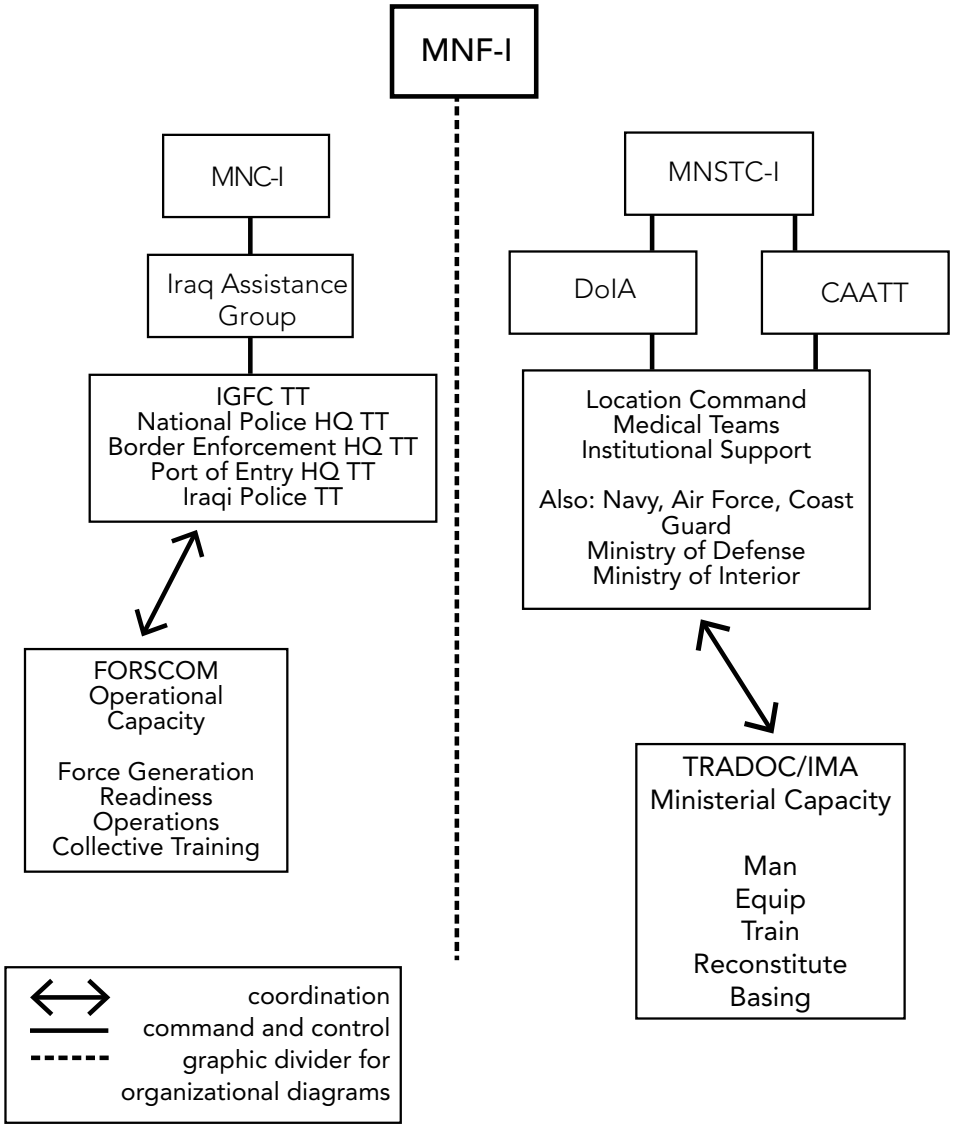
Brig. Gen. Richard J. Sherlock Jr. of the 98th Division, an enthusiastic proponent of the initiative, received command of the IAG. He acquired Col. Casey P. Haskins from MNF-I as his chief of staff and several members of MNSTC-I as action officers. One of the first challenges General Sherlock tackled involved developing a logistical concept to sustain the advisory teams embedded with Iraqi Army units. That chore began with

6. This mission statement was modified five times between August 2005 and September 2006. Talking Points, Iraq Assistance Gp, 18 Oct 2006, sub: Iraq Assistance Group and Transition Teams Messages, Q's and A's (As of 18 October 2006), Hist Files, CMH; Interv, Steven E. Clay, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI), with Maj. Gen. John P. McLaren, former Asst Div Cdr for Ops, 80th Div (Institutional Training), 14 Nov 2006, 9, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI (hereinafter OLE).

7. Interv, Clay with McLaren, 14 Nov 2006, 5, 9, and 11.

8. Exceptions to the IAG mandate included the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Joint Headquarters, any U.S. Special Operations Forces personnel advising Iraqi security forces, and the pair of Iraqi Army divisions mentored by non-U.S. coalition forces.

CHART 5.1—IRAQ ASSISTANCE GROUP, MAY 2005–JUNE 2009



Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Source: MFR, Iraq Assistance Gp HQ, 20 Dec 2005, sub: Transition Team Program, Casey Papers; Talking Points, Iraq Assistance Gp, 18 Oct 2006, sub: Iraq Assistance Group and Transition Teams Messages, Q's and A's (As of 18 October 2006), Historians Files; both at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

drawing up standard equipment lists using input provided by Brig. Gen. James H. Schwitters, the commander of the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team.

The IAG's link with MNC-I was valuable in other ways. For example, MNC-I's commander, Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, and his staff could provide easy access to Coalition Forces Land Component Command/Third U.S. Army personnel managers and logisticians. As the Army component of U.S. Central Command, the Coalition Forces Land Component Command/Third U.S. Army had leverage over requisitioning equipment and mandating predeployment training, so it played a large part in transforming the concept of a standardized equipment list into reality as well as ensuring that personnel reporting to MNSTC-I knew how to operate the items they had been issued.[9] That homogenization allowed IAG to furnish 240,000 separate items of equipment to MiTTs during the first year of its existence.[10]

The IAG also updated the predeployment instructional program for MiTTs. Until then, rather than attending a specialized course tailored for their mission requirements, soldiers chosen for advisory duty had undergone a modified version of generic training that was used to prepare U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers for deployment. Based on his own experience, combined with input from the IAG staff, Sherlock approved the new program because it adapted to the needs of soldiers working with the Iraqi Army. The revised program eventually produced better informed and acclimated advisers, all of whom now had a standard frame of reference.[11] That process, however, took over a year to complete. In addition, the changes would not be subjected to exhaustive scrutiny before the 98th Division handed over its responsibilities to the 80th Division (Institutional Training) in summer 2005.[12]

The three-month program of instruction started in the United States with a forty-one-day session oriented on common skills. This first phase initially was not too different from the previous training provided to mobilized reservists, as it lacked instruction about the latest equipment and cultural and language classes. That situation eventually would change, but

9. Email, Col. Casey P. Haskins to Mark J. Reardon, 7 Dec 2009, sub: RE: For COL Haskins via the DMI Website, Hist Files, CMH.
10. Interv, Clay with McLaren, 14 Nov 2006, 8.
11. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Brig. Gen. Richard Sherlock, Asst Div Cdr, 98th Inf Div, 16 Nov 2006, 13, OLE.
12. The 80th Division (Institutional Training) soldiers did not think much of the first phase of instruction because they did not have access to the latest types of secure radios and vehicles. One soldier described it as "30 days of training crammed into 84 days." Interv, Christopher K. Ives, CSI, with Lt. Col. Paul Ciesinski, former 3d Bde, 3d Iraqi Army (IA) Div Mil Transition Team (MiTT) Leader, 13 Oct 2006, 4–5, OLE.



Soldiers conduct predeployment sniper familiarization training at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, despite seasonal weather conditions. (*S. Sgt. Matt Scotten, Indiana Army National Guard*)

only after the 80th Division talked to the Army Staff about equipment and instructional shortfalls. The soldiers who prepared for deployment in May through August did not learn how to operate the equipment they would use while assigned to a MiTT until after their arrival at Camp Taji.[13]

The attempt to resolve that problem began by relocating the course from a reserve facility to an active-duty installation, a shift that took place when the final members of the 80th Division contingent completed predeployment training at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Although Army Reserve soldiers still taught the initial phase, moving the school to Fort Carson, Colorado, provided students and instructors with ready access to newer equipment. However, the training program remained there for less than 120 days before shifting to Forts Hood and Bliss in Texas and Camp Shelby, Mississippi.[14]

13. Interv, Ives with Ciesinski, 13 Oct 2006, 6, 8–9.
14. Maj. Michael D. Jason, "Integrating the Advisory Effort in the Army: A Full Spectrum Solution," *Military Review* 87, no. 5 (Sep-Oct 2008): 32n5; Interv, Christopher K. Ives, CSI, with Col. Jeffrey W. Terhune, former Iraqi Ground Forces Cmd MiTT Ofcr in Charge, 22 Mar 2007, 1–3, OLE.

The next segment in the newly drafted curriculum took place in Kuwait, where contractors and Third U.S. Army soldiers taught theater-specific skills such as convoy defense and counter–improvised explosive device drills. The final ten days of detailed instruction would occur in Iraq, but IAG first had to bring together a suitable facility, experienced faculty, and a formal program of instruction.[15] A search revealed some unused buildings at Camp Taji, which promptly were dubbed "The Phoenix Academy" in reference to the mythical creature that rises from the ashes of its previous incarnation. A group of 98th Division personnel served as the original cadre of instructors. One of their initial responsibilities was writing their own lesson plan.[16]

Casey's second initiative called for formalizing and expanding partnerships between American and Iraqi combat units. Although the decision placed unexpected requirements on the fifteen American brigades and regiments taking part in Operation Iraqi Freedom's third troop rotation, the transition teams generated by those organizations filled the widening advisory gaps that had been created by the Iraqi Army's expansion outpacing MNSTC-I's growth.[17] In addition, the U.S. battalions and brigades possessed specialized capabilities such as fire support coordination, intelligence collection, engineer assistance, and medical treatment, which served the needs of the Iraqi Army in ways that advisory teams belonging to MNSTC-I could not replicate.[18]

MNF-I did not dictate how MiTTs would be organized and supported by their parent organizations, so some participating units interpreted how to fulfill their responsibilities differently from what Casey had envisioned. Some battalions reassigned an entire platoon to advisory duty while others opted for creating ad hoc elements drawn from multiple sources. Most brigade and division commanders did not overrule the various courses of action by imposing uniform standards. Their reluctance to do so stemmed from the realization that some battalions were operating in areas that posed

15. Memo, Multi-National Corps–Iraq HQ, 9 Mar 2005, sub: CONUS Training Program for Transition Team Personnel, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
16. The incoming 80th Division significantly modified the initial lesson plan as a result of its own experiences in Iraq. Interv, Clay with Sherlock, 16 Nov 2006, 14; Interv, Ives with Ciesinski, 13 Oct 2006, 8; Interv, Clay with McLaren, 14 Nov 2006, 7.
17. These include the Stryker brigade and armored cavalry regiment assigned to Multi-National Force–North West, two U.S. Marine regimental combat teams and two Army brigades in Multi-National Force–West, five Army brigades with Multi-National Division–Baghdad, and four Army brigades assigned to Multi-National Division–North Central.
18. U.S. Dept. Def (DoD) News Release No. 1298-04, "DoD Announces OEF/OIF Rotational Units," 14 Dec 2004, http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2004/nr20041214-1823.html, Hist Files, CMH.



Capt. Melissa Van Buhler, the judge advocate of the 4th Sustainment Brigade, gives a class on the rules of engagement at the Phoenix Academy. (*S. Sgt. Monika Comeaux, U.S. Army*)

a far riskier threat whenever all available resources were not committed to tactical operations.

The 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry Regiment, for example, left it up to company commanders to organize their MiTTs. Two of the battalion's four subordinate companies dedicated an entire platoon to the advisory mission, whereas the others formed composite teams by reassigning soldiers from all available platoons. The composite teams experienced major problems from the onset because recently assigned soldiers first had to learn the strengths and weaknesses of their comrades before tackling mission-specific responsibilities. Unforeseen issues also cropped up when the battalion neglected to issue a standardized equipment list for company-level MiTTs. Making matters worse, once the MiTTs arrived in Iraq, they found themselves constantly warding off attempts by their parent units to siphon personnel and equipment away from the MiTTs to satisfy needs they deemed more important.[19]

19. M. Sgt. Carl A. Ashmead, "Military Training Teams in Iraq: Operation Iraqi Freedom 08/01/05 to 06/11/06, 11Z5V2S, First Sergeant, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry" (personal experience paper [PEP], Sergeants Major Academy, 18 Sep 2006), 1–2, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1121513.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

Lt. Col. Oscar J. Hall IV's 2d Battalion, 34th Armored Regiment, which had arrived in Diyālá Province during phase one, provided a contrasting glimpse into that experience. Normally assigned to the 1st Infantry Division, the battalion deployed as part of the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized).[20] Although the 3d Brigade Combat Team had arrived in Iraq before MNF-I promulgated its partnership mandate, it had informed the 2d Battalion, "You are not to do any American-only operations. You will have Iraqis out on all your operations."[21] Beginning in February 2005, each company in the 2d Battalion had had an Iraqi platoon attached when the Americans went out on a mission. As the Iraqis had exhibited more aggressiveness and skill, the ratio reversed, with two or more Iraqi companies conducting an operation accompanied by a U.S. platoon. Colonel Hall fully supported the integration, but not all of his contemporaries shared that enthusiasm. Some battalions preferred to take one or two individual Iraqi soldiers along on an operation in order to report that they indeed had conducted a combined mission.[22]

In May 2005, Hall received orders to form a MiTT headed by Maj. Randy Judd, his executive officer. Judd drew a mix of eighteen enlisted soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and company grade officers from the battalion's operations and intelligence staff. He dedicated ten of them to training the headquarters of the partner Iraqi battalion, while the remainder augmented the unit depending on mission complexity. In addition to advising Iraqi troops in the field, Hall's battalion took the partnership concept one step further by providing classes on marksmanship and weapons maintenance. The 2d Battalion, 34th Armored Regiment, also taught advanced first aid to the Iraqis, because they did not have company-level medics, and transported seriously wounded Iraqi soldiers to U.S. treatment facilities whenever there was the possibility of loss of life, limb, or eyesight.[23]

The partnership directive placed U.S. maneuver elements in closer contact with IAG-controlled transition teams. Colonel Hall, therefore, made it a point to support all MiTTs deployed into his area of operations. Before the spring of 2005, U.S. advisers assigned to Iraqi units had had little interface with Americans in the MNC-I chain of command. In fact, embedded advisers still had trouble negotiating for help from American units. The

20. Memo, Col. Bart Howard, former Bde Cdr, 1st Bde, 1st Inf Div, for Mark J. Reardon, 12 Sep 2013, sub: 1/1 ID Fort Riley Colonel Bart Howard 2004–2006 Timeline, Hist Files, CMH.
21. Interv, Laurence Lessard, CSI, with Lt. Col. Richard Creed, former Ops Ofcr, 2d Bn, 34th Armd Rgt, 13 Mar 2007, 12, OLE.
22. Interv, Lessard with Creed, 13 Mar 2007, 12.
23. Interv, Lessard with Creed, 13 Mar 2007, 13.

2d Battalion's operations officer, Maj. Richard Creed, explained, "Back then, rotary wing aviation wouldn't fly to support a MiTT and the Air Force didn't fly to support a MiTT. . . . Who would recover a downed aircraft if someone got shot down? The Iraqis? They didn't want to take that tactical risk."[24] Though the partnership program represented a step in the right direction, it did not provide Casey with an optimal solution.

A program entitled "the bridging strategy" formed the final leg of the campaign plan's transition-oriented triad.[25] The previous partnership program was MNF-I's attempt to jump-start the campaign plan, but for the longer term, the command envisioned enhanced transition teams, consisting of thirty or more soldiers, filling the advisory vacuum that would be created when U.S. partnership units went home. With the bridging strategy, set to begin in early spring 2005, the enhanced MiTTs would inherit the responsibility of calling in close air and other types of fire support, which in turn would drive General Sherlock's effort to standardize and upgrade advisory team equipment. The enhanced teams would have better links to U.S. intelligence sources, from which they would glean data for use by their Iraqi counterparts.[26]

Rather than wait for the arrival of additional personnel needed by the IAG, Casey ordered Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, the commander of MNSTC-I, to comb through his headquarters to generate more teams as soon as possible. Indeed, in March 2005, MNF-I placed such a high priority on fielding them that it persuaded Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula to assign nineteen special forces operational detachments alpha (also known as alpha teams) to temporary advisory duties in order to produce the minimal required number of MiTTs as soon as possible.[27] That initiative, when coupled with the additional resources provided by the unit partnership program, allowed MNSTC-I to assign 402 of the 718 incoming 80th Division personnel to Petraeus's chronically understaffed headquarters rather than MiTTs. The remainder filled not only all of the adviser slots

24. Interv, Lessard with Creed, 13 Mar 2007, 12.
25. Interv, William W. Epley, CMH, with Brig. Gen. Dana J. H. Pittard, Cmdg Gen, Iraq Assistance Gp, 24 Jun 2007, 6, Hist Files, CMH.
26. Anthony H. Cordesman and Patrick Baetjer, *Iraqi Security Forces: A Strategy for Success* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 180–81.
27. The teams, which were not placed under the IAG, were assigned to Iraqi Army units in northern Iraq between March and December 2005. MFR, MNSTC-I/NATO Training Mission–Iraq (NTM-I) Cmdg Gen, 28 Mar 2005, sub: Visit to ISF in Mosul, 10, Lt. Col. Jeanne H. Godfroy Collection, CMH; Memo, HQ, Multi-National Force–Iraq, 23 Sep 2005, sub: The September Assessment, 12, Hist Files, CMH; Interv, Ives with Ciesinski, 13 Oct 2006, 10.

with the 3d and 5th Iraqi Army (IA) Divisions, but also half of the advisory positions allocated to the Iraqi Intervention Force division.[28]

Those workarounds resulted in an infusion of American advisers, but insurgent coercion made it extremely difficult for MNF-I to hire an additional 1,200 Category 1 (Iraqi or other non-U.S.) personnel to serve as interpreters with MiTTs. Success depended not only on team members being able to communicate effectively with Iraqi counterparts, but also, in large part, on translators fostering or sustaining good rapports between Iraqi commanders and their supporting MiTTs. The MNF-I commanding general did not have the option of placing the campaign plan on hold to address that personnel shortfall, so some transition teams initially remained understaffed and therefore exerted less influence on their counterparts than Casey desired.[29]

The insurgency contributed to other challenges facing the MNF-I campaign plan in unforeseen areas and at inopportune times. Responding to these situations sometimes resulted in a significant reshuffling of coalition forces, which had a disruptive impact on partnerships. For example, in an effort to tamp down terrorist infiltration across the Syrian border before the October 2005 constitutional referendum, General Casey sent additional U.S. forces to northern Iraq.[30] American troops occasionally swept through Tall' Afar, located 62.7 kilometers west of Mosul, but never maintained a permanent presence there. Their absence resulted in al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi choosing Tall' Afar as a base of operations as well as a transit point for foreign fighters arriving from Syria.[31]

Soon after assuming responsibility for securing Main Supply Route Tampa, the key supply artery running from Kuwait to Baghdād, Col. H. R. McMaster's 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) received orders to relocate to Al Kasik Military Base, near Tall' Afar. Although some unanticipated redeployments wrought havoc with the MNF-I partnership program, the transfer of the 3d ACR bolstered the numerically weak coalition forces that were operating alongside two Iraqi Army divisions in Nīnawā Province. Leaving the 3d Squadron, 3d ACR, and the attached 2d Battalion, 70th Armored Regiment, behind, the 3d ACR's remaining units headed northward. The lead echelon,

28. Interv, Clay with McLaren, 14 Nov 2006, 4.
29. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, *Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War, 2003–2006* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 384–85.
30. George W. Casey Jr., *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom, July 2004–February 2007* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012), 70.
31. George Packer, "The Lesson of Tal' Afar," *New Yorker*, 10 Apr 2006, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/04/10/the-lesson-of-tal-afar, Hist Files, CMH.

consisting of the 2d Squadron, 3d ACR, reached its new operating area well in advance of the remainder of the regiment, which reassembled in northern Iraq during the second half of May.[32]

As soon as the regiment established itself at Forward Operating Base Sykes, a few kilometers south of Tall' Afar, it began conducting patrols and collecting intelligence. McMaster realized that a lasting solution would be impossible without the 3d IA Division, so even as the regiment continued its preparations for eliminating insurgent enclaves, it devoted considerable effort to preparing the 3d ACR for the difficult task of maintaining security once the enemy was expelled from Tall' Afar. Colonel McMaster spent several months developing relations not only with the Iraqi division leadership, but also with the 98th Division MiTTs (and their 80th Division replacements) and special forces personnel at Al Kasik Military Base, in order to identify where his troopers, MiTT advisers, and special forces personnel should concentrate their efforts. The 3d ACR commander committed his own headquarters to the task of teaching the Iraqi division staff how to exercise more effective command and control along with improving sustainment capabilities. The regiment's subordinate elements, together with portions of the special forces team, beefed up the MiTT presence at battalion and brigade levels. In addition to their other responsibilities, the special forces trainers taught advanced reconnaissance techniques to newly created Iraqi scout platoons.[33]

CHARTING A NEW PATH FORWARD

As the 3d ACR laid the groundwork for extending coalition control over western Nīnawā Province, Islamic Da'wa Party activist Ibrahim al-Ja'fari had been sworn in as the Iraqi prime minister on 2 May. When the secret police had begun rounding up Shi'i activists following Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in the fall of 1980, al-Ja'fari had fled his native land for Tehran, where he remained until the conflict ended eight years later. In 1989, he moved to London to work as a spokesperson for the Da'wa Party until coalition forces toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003.[34] Al-Ja'fari had returned to Iraq,

32. Unit History, 3d Armd Cav Rgt, 8 Dec 2009, http://www.hood.army.mil/3d_acr/Unit%20Lineage/Regimental%20History.aspx, Hist Files, CMH.
33. Memo of Instruction, 3d Armd Cav Rgt, 6 Aug 2005, sub: 3rd ACR and 3rd Iraqi Army Division Partnership Training Guidance, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.
34. The Da'wa Party allied with the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq to select Ibrahim al-Ja'fari. Nimrod Raphaeli, "Ibrahim al-Ja'fari: Iraq's Designated Prime Minister–A Biographical Note," Middle East Media Research Institute, Rpt No. 211,

where he subsequently served as rotating chairman of the U.S.-backed Iraqi Governing Council, followed by an appointment as one of the two vice presidents in the Iraqi Interim Government.

Al-Ja'fari's incoming cabinet, which was the first government not chosen by Americans, numbered thirty-two ministers, including seventeen Shi'a, eight Kurds, six Sunnis, and one Christian. There were three deputy prime ministers—one each for Shi'a, Sunnis, and Kurds.[35] Acknowledging the role played by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq in selecting him as prime minister, al-Ja'fari chose Bayan Jabr as minister of interior.[36] A top deputy of the Supreme Council and former Badr Brigade militia commander, Jabr also had served as the Iraqi Governing Council's minister of construction and housing.

A few other holdovers from previous administrations remained in office during this transition, but lingering questions about misappropriation of government funds resulted in Hazim al-Shalaan stepping aside as defense minister.[37] Saadoun al-Dulaimi, a Sunni Arab who had been an officer in Saddam's army before fleeing to Saudi Arabia in 1986, took his place on 1 June.[38] During a meeting just before that transition, Ministry of Defense Secretary General Bruska Shaways and General Babekr al-Zibari both had assured General Petraeus that al-Dulaimi wanted to complete what had been started by his predecessor and did not intend to make drastic changes.[39]

The new defense minister began his tenure by backing the implementation of General Babekr's plan to standardize Iraqi military organization, staffing, and equipment procedures. Orders to amalgamate the Iraqi National Guard and Regular Army were approved several weeks before al-Dulaimi assumed formal control of the Defense Ministry on 1 June. In fact, near-term changes,

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28 Feb 2005, https://memri.org/reports/ibrihim-al-Jafari-iraqs-designated-prime-minister-biographical-note, Hist Files, CMH.

35. "Iraq: Parliament Approves Key Cabinet Posts, But Gaps Remain," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 9 May 2005, https://www.rferl.org/a/1058785.html, Hist Files, CMH.

36. The head of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, subsequently arranged for the Ministry of Interior to hire large numbers of Badr Brigade militia. "Gangs of Iraq: Interview Bayan Jabar," PBS *Frontline*, 21 Nov 2006, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gangsofiraq/interviews/jabr.html; "Iraq's Death Squads: On the Brink of Civil War," *Independent*, 26 Feb 2006, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-s-death-squads-on-the-brink-of-civil-war-6108236.html, Hist Files, CMH.

37. Patrick Cockburn, "What Happened to Iraq's Missing $1Bn?," *Independent*, 19 Sep 2005, https://web.archive.org/web/20080517061005/http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article313538.ece, Hist Files, CMH.

38. "Profile: Iraqi Defence Minister," BBC News, n.d., http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/middle_east/4529447 (accessed 4 May 2011), Hist Files, CMH.

39. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 5 May 2005, sub: Meeting with Ministry of Defense Personnel, 1–2, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

such as discarding the terms "ING" and "RA" from official documentation and formally renumbering all battalions and brigades, were accomplished during the second half of May 2005 (*Table 5.1*). Cross-levelling equipment and personnel, however, would require much more time, effort, and funding, in large part because MNSTC-I had not overseen the creation of the Iraqi National Guard units.[40] Making matters more complicated, MNF-I continued to task Iraqi units with missions throughout this process, which limited opportunities for mitigating the temporary readiness and administrative issues created by amalgamation.

The transitional government's swearing-in also set Petraeus's staff into motion on an updated campaign plan. By 22 July, the MNSTC-I J–5 (Plans) had developed a draft, setting out the Iraqi Army's objectives and priorities for 2006. The document reflected MNSTC-I's awareness that the Iraqi military still lacked the means to wage a unilateral battle against terrorists and extremists. Although the plan included programs instituted during 2005, it focused far more attention on achieving the conditions necessary for the Iraqi Army to undertake independent counterinsurgency operations by the end of 2006. It provided the Ministry of Defense with a blueprint for potential future force structure and equipment requirements, contingent on the Iraqi government agreeing with its recommendations.

In the past, American priorities had focused on fielding Iraqi units to augment coalition counterinsurgency efforts. With MNF-I's emphasis squarely on transitioning security responsibilities, the development, staffing, and operation of the Iraqi Joint Headquarters—capable of serving as the conduit between the Ministry of Defense and the Iraqi Army, Air Force, and Navy—recently had emerged as the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team's near-term priority. MNSTC-I also laid the foundation for an army command and control element, designated as the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC), which theoretically would be capable of planning, organizing, and directing tactical operations in response to Joint Headquarters directives. The IGFC's responsibilities remained limited until MNF-I transferred authority for overseeing Iraqi division operations to it in the spring of 2006. Even then, the prime minister retained approval authority for orders that would impact the use of military forces in the Baghdād area. (*See Map 5.1.*)

40. For example, as Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus informed Saadoun al-Dulaimi, "The 2d Division shortages are due in a large part to the fact that the former Iraq National Guard (ING) units were recruited and trained differently and MNSTC-I does not have good visibility on what was issued to those units." MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 29 May 2005, sub: Meeting with Minister of Defense, 2–3, Godfroy Collection, CMH.

TABLE 5.1—RA AND ING AMALGAMATION, MAY 2005

1st IA Division formerly 1 IIF Division (RA)	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st IIF Bde	1st Bde (1/1 IIF)
1st Bn	1st Bn
2d Bn	2d Bn
4th Bn	3d Bn
2d IIF Bde	2d Bde (2/1 IIF)
3d Bn	1st Bn
8th Bn	2d Bn
9th Bn	3d Bn
6th IIF Bde	3d Bde (3/1 IIF)
22d Bn	1st Bn
23d Bn	2d Bn
24th Bn	3d Bn
7th RA Bde	4th Bde (4/1)
16th Bn	1st Bn
17th Bn	2d Bn
18th Bn	3d Bn

2d IA Division formerly 2d ING Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
20th ING Bde	1st Bde (1/2)
103d Bn	1st Bn
108th Bn	2d Bn
110th Bn	3d Bn
21st ING Bde	2d Bde (2/2)
101st Bn	1st Bn
106th Bn	2d Bn
11th RA Bn	3d Bn
22d ING Bde[a]	3d Bde (3/2)
102d Bn[a]	1st Bn
107th Bn	2d Bn
112th Bn	3d Bn
23d ING Bde	4th Bde (4/2)
104th Bn	1st Bn
105th Bn	2d Bn
111th Bn[a]	3d Bn

3d IA Division formerly 3d RA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
4th RA Bde	1st Bde (1/3)
10th Bn	1st Bn
109th Bn	2d Bn
12th Bn	3d Bn
5th RA Bde	2d Bde (2/3)
13th Bn	1st Bn
14th Bn	2d Bn
15th Bn	3d Bn
8th RA Bde	3d Bde 3/3
19th Bn	1st Bn
20th Bn	2d Bn
21st Bn	3d Bn

4th IA Division formerly 4th ING Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
30th ING Bde	1st Bde (1/4)
201st Bn	1st Bn
202d Bn	2d Bn
203d Bn	3d Bn
210th Bn	4th Bn
31st ING Bde	2d Bde (2/4)
207th Bn	1st Bn
208th Bn	2d Bn
209th Bn	3d Bn
212th Bn	4th Bn
33d ING Bde	3d Bde (3/4)
211th Bn	1st Bn
214th Bn	2d Bn
215th Bn	3d Bn

TABLE 5.1—RA AND ING AMALGAMATION, MAY 2005 (CONTINUED)

5th IA Division formerly 5th RA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
3d IIF Bde	1st Bde (1/5)
5th IIF Bn	1st Bn
6th IIF Bn	2d Bn
7th IIF Bn	3d Bn
32d RA Bde[a]	2d Bde (2/5)
204th ING Bn	1st Bn
205th ING Bn	2d Bn
206th ING Bn	3d Bn
213th ING Bn	4th Bn
9th RA Bde	3d Bde (3/5)
25th Bn	1st Bn
26th Bn	2d Bn
27th Bn	3d Bn

7th IA Division formerly 7th RA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st DOB Bde	1st Bde (1/7)
1st Bn	1st Bn
2d Bn	2d Bn
3d Bn[a]	3d Bn
61st RA Bde[a]	2d Bde (2/7)
505th ING Bn[b]	1st Bn
506th ING Bn[b]	2d Bn
3d Bn[a]	3d Bn
62d RA Bde[a]	3d Bde (3/7)
500th ING Bn[b]	1st Bn
504th ING Bn[b]	2d Bn
508th ING Bn (-)[b]	3d Bn

6th IA Division formerly 6th ING Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
40th ING Bde	1st Bde (1/6)
302d Bn	1st Bn
303d Bn	2d Bn
307th Bn	3d Bn
308th Bn	4th Bn
41st ING Bde	2d Bde (2/6)
301st Bn	1st Bn
305th Bn	2d Bn
306th Bn	3d Bn
309th Bn[a]	4th Bn
310th Bn[a]	5th Bn
Muth Bde	3d Bde (3/6)
1st Bn[c]	1st Bn
2d Muth Bn	2d Bn
304th Bn	3d Bn
Babylon Bn	4th Bn
S Baghdad Bde	4th Bde (4/6)
1st Muth Bn	1st Bn
507th Bn	2d Bn
3d Muth Bn	3d Bn
2d DOB Bde	5th Bde (5/6)
1st DOB Bn[a]	1st Bn
2d DOB Bn[a]	2d Bn
3d DOB Bn[a]	3d Bn
Amarah Bn	4th Bn

TABLE 5.1—RA AND ING AMALGAMATION, MAY 2005 (CONTINUED)

8th IA Division formerly 8th ING Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
50th ING Bde	1st Bde (1/8)
404th Bn	1st Bn
405th Bn	2d Bn
N/A	3d Bn
51st ING Bde	2d Bde (2/8)
402d Bn	1st Bn
408th Bn	2d Bn
406th Bn	3d Bn
52d ING Bde	3d Bde (3/8)
403d Bn	1st Bn
407th Bn	2d Bn
4th ING Bde[a]	4th Bde (4/8)
401st Bn[a]	1st Bn
508th Bn (-)[b]	2d Bn

9th IA Division (Mech) formerly 9th RA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Mech Bde	1st Mech Bde (1/9)
1st Tank Bn	1st Bn (T55)
1st Mech Bn	2d Bn (BMP/MTLB)
2d Mech Bn	3d Bn (BMP/MTLB)
2d Armor Bde	2d Armor Bde (2/9)
1st Mech Bn[a]	3d Bn (BMP)
1st Tank Bn[a]	1st Bn (T72)
2d Tank Bn[a]	2d Bn (T72)
3d Mech Bde[a]	3d Mech Bde (3/9)
1st Tank Bn[a]	1st Bn (T55)
1st Mech Bn[a]	2d Bn (BMP/MTLB)
2d Mech Bn[a]	3d Bn (BMP/MTLB)

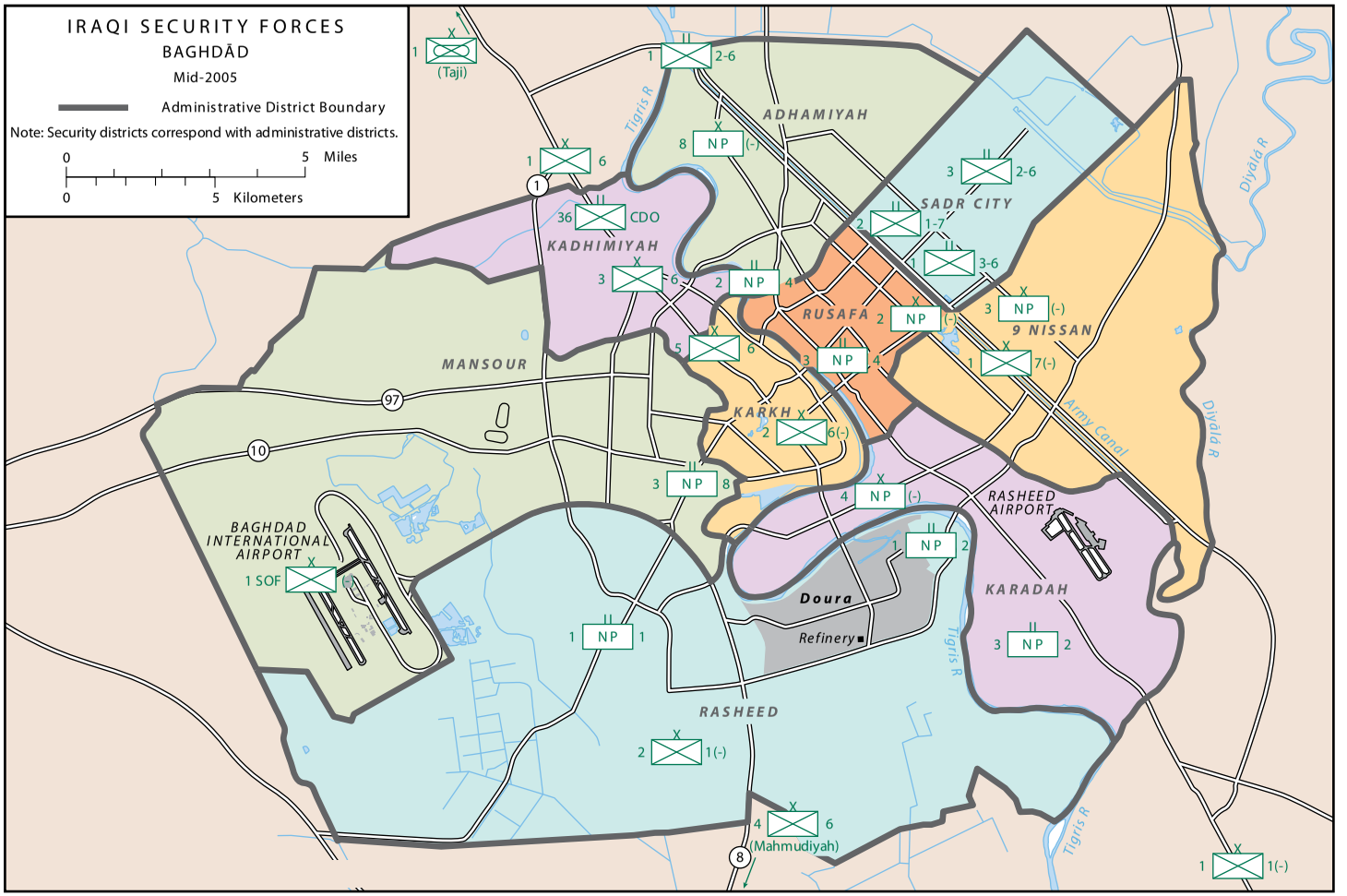
10th IA Division formerly 10th ING Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
70th ING Bde	1st Bde (1/10)
601st Bn	1st Bn
602d Bn	2d Bn
610th Bn[a]	3d Bn
71st ING Bde[a]	2d Bde (2/10)
603d Bn	1st Bn
608th Bn[a]	2d Bn
72d ING Bde[a]	3d Bde (3/10)
604th Bn	1st Bn
609th Bn[a]	2d Bn
73d ING Bde	4th Bde (4/10)
605th Bn	1st Bn
606th Bn	2d Bn
607th Bn[a]	3d Bn

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Notes: a. forming, *b.* reconstituting, *c.* to be formed

Source: Bfg, Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq (MNSTC-I)/Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team (CMATT) to MNSTC-I/NATO Training Mission–Iraq Cmdg Gen, 8 Aug 2005, sub: Iraqi Division and Brigade Locations; Memo, MNSTC-I/CMATT for MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 23 Sep 2004, sub: ICDC and New Iraqi Army Renumbering - 2005, an. A; both in Historians Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

Map 5.1


IRAQI SECURITY FORCES
BAGHDĀD
Mid-2005
Administrative District Boundary
Note: Security districts correspond with administrative districts.
0 5 Miles
0 5 Kilometers
ADHAMIYAH
SADR CITY
KADHIMIYAH
RUSAFA
9 NISSAN
MANSOUR
KARKH
BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
RASHEED AIRPORT
KARADAH
Doura
Refinery
RASHEED
Tigris R
Diyalá R
Army Canal
(Taji)
CDO
1 SOF
(Mahmudiyah)
NP
97
10
8

The IGFC consisted of two major elements: a staff of 600 and a support battalion of the same size. Finding qualified personnel to fill these positions took considerable time and effort. The presumptive IGFC commander, Lt. Gen. Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji, selected the initial staff of approximately fifty officers and enlisted soldiers—primarily Sunnis and Kurds—from the Saddam-era mechanized forces. MNSTC-I provided a MiTT on short notice by reassigning advisory personnel originally designated to support the oil infrastructure battalions. The ad hoc training team, however, lacked the necessary experience and professional background to do more than assist the newly formed IGFC headquarters in developing some basic processes.

Although forming the IGFC well in advance of its operational use offered greater efficiency from an American perspective, it did not work out that way in practice. The first group of fifty handpicked officers and enlisted personnel initially worked well together. But as the size of the staff expanded and the workload grew more complex, some of the original members were unable to keep up with the larger responsibilities. Also, the organization's harmony degraded as the Shi'a and Kurds formed segregated cliques, and the original cadre of Sunnis felt increasingly marginalized. With no divisions to oversee formally, the IGFC personnel refocused their attention on intrigue within their own headquarters.

Making matters worse, the Joint Headquarters and Ministry of Defense still had to approve IGFC requests for personnel, equipment, ammunition, and vehicles. As one American recalled, "The staff officers were very frustrated because they worked hard but there was nothing they could do by themselves. They always had to go higher and/or adjacent and/or lower to accomplish something that, for us, an E–4 supply specialist or a training sergeant could do by himself."[41]

The ad hoc team remained in place until early fall, when U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort McPherson, Georgia, assembled a dedicated fifteen-person MiTT for the IGFC, using individuals drawn from U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command project offices. Following its predeployment training, which stressed the same skills as a battalion-level advisory team rather than specialized knowledge appropriate to managing a corps-level headquarters, the MiTT deployed to Baghdād in October 2005. For the next several months, the old team remained in place, despite its shortcomings, augmented by junior personnel from the replacement

41. Interv, Ives with Terhune, 22 Mar 2007, 9.

group, while the newly arrived team's senior members visited far-flung Iraqi Army units.[42]

The IGFC experience confirmed what division and brigade advisers had known all along: senior Iraqi officials were conditioned to reach out directly to trusted commanders rather than to staff officers.[43] This habit started at the top of the institution and permeated downward. Looking back on this period, General Casey observed, "We had an initial view that we could continue to build ministerial capacity through the transitions. This did not turn out to be the case. In fact, we lost ground in many ministries during the al-Ja'fari government."[44] Given that a new prime minister and defense minister would take over in the wake of the December 2005 elections, persuading the Iraqis to replace personal intervention with Western staff methods would require months, if not years.[45]

MNSTC-I modified the table of organization and equipment of each infantry division as part of an attempt to convert Regular Army, Iraqi Intervention Force, and former Iraqi National Guard infantry battalions to a common design.[46] The new light division model consisted of a headquarters and support company; two to four infantry brigades, each with three battalions; a motor transport regiment; and military police, signal, intelligence, engineer, and bomb disposal companies.[47] In addition to generating the remaining elements of the mechanized division, MNSTC-I sought to either convert an infantry division into a motorized formation or perform a similar conversion process on one light infantry brigade within each of three different divisions.

With improved sustainment a priority for the light division, MNSTC-I recommended reorganizing its transportation regiment with a regimental headquarters, convoy security company, support company, and four truck companies for a total of 424 heavy and medium vehicles. The increase in vehicles permitted movement of a full brigade without degrading support to the remainder of the division. Training and equipment issues, however, necessitated a multistage process that extended the program's timelines. Although two regiments were operational, with a third in the midst of organizing, the plan did not envision generating a fourth regiment before

42. Interv, Ives with Terhune, 22 Mar 2007, 4–7.
43. Interv, Ives with Terhune, 22 Mar 2007, 8.
44. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 55.
45. Cordesman and Baetjer, *Iraqi Security Forces*, 182.
46. Iraqi Army Plan 2006, MNSTC-I J–5 Plans and Programs, 22 Jul 2005, ver. 1.3, 9, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
47. Iraqi Army Plan 2006, MNSTC-I J–5 Plans and Programs, 22 Jul 2005, ver. 1.3, an. C.



Iraqi T72 tanks arrive at Camp Taji after being ferried from Kuwait using U.S.-supplied heavy equipment transports. (*U.S. Army*)

year's end. Four more regiments would become operational during 2006, with the ninth taking the field in early 2007.

American attempts to enhance the Iraqi Army's logistical capabilities, however, encountered many obstacles. Conceding that Iraqi divisions were still bereft of adequate medical assets, the 2006 plan noted that "properly cared for soldiers will have strong motivation and high morale, which facilitates soldier retention. . . . [Therefore,] life support for our soldiers must be a top priority."[48] Although those words reflected the best of intentions, MNSTC-I lacked the authority to correct long-standing medical shortfalls affecting the Iraqi Army. In the face of a nationwide shortage of health care providers, for example, the Ministry of Health consistently resisted any suggestion to create military medical units. Although the coalition's impressive medical capabilities in Iraq could address most battlefield wounds, casualties requiring specialized surgery, treatment for major burns, physical therapy, and long-term hospitalization routinely were transferred to hospitals in Germany or the United States. Iraqi soldiers with wounds

48. Iraqi Army Plan 2006, MNSTC-I J–5 Plans and Programs, 22 Jul 2005, ver. 1.3, 5.

requiring specialized or long-term medical treatment had no option but to rely on care provided by the Ministry of Health.

MNSTC-I looked again at the long-deferred issue of fire support and explored the feasibility of providing the Iraqis with field artillery. Petraeus's staff recommended an incremental approach, starting with a single self-propelled artillery battalion assigned to the 9th IA Division. A draft table of organization and equipment depicted the battalion with three firing batteries of six tubes apiece and a combined headquarters and service battery with supply, maintenance, signal, transportation, and medical platoons in addition to a fire direction center, fire support officers, and survey section. The battalion, equipped with U.S.-manufactured M109 155-mm. self-propelled howitzers or comparable Soviet-made equipment, would provide dedicated support to its parent division and oncall support to the other Iraqi units.

The proposal contemplated a fielding program, beginning with cadre and specialty courses in December 2005, followed by training for enlisted soldiers from March to May 2006 and equipment training from May to July 2006. Provision of equipment and facilities would take place concurrently, with the battalion projected to be combat-ready by October 2006. The initiative ultimately came to naught for several reasons. First, critics pointed out that coordination measures needed to integrate Iraqi and American artillery would make the fire support process more cumbersome than the current system. Secondly, the question of whether a coalition or Iraqi headquarters would oversee the field artillery battalion's employment remained unresolved. Lacking firm backing from MNF-I, Petraeus's staff shelved the project until a more appropriate opportunity appeared.[49]

MNSTC-I efforts to create divisional support elements, including engineer, signal, and intelligence companies, had more success. Operational restrictions on the participation of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) military personnel in these endeavors, however, increased the costs and coordination efforts required for some types of training. For example, German instructors providing combat engineer training were limited to doing so at a United Arab Emirates base in Abu Dhabi, which added substantial travel time for Iraqi students.[50] The nucleus of Iraqi Army officers and noncommissioned officers from the first engineer company to be formed spent April and May in Abu Dhabi learning the basics. That initial contingent, accompanied by the remainder of the company, later returned to

49. Bfg, MNSTC-I J–5 to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Sep 2005, sub: Iraqi Artillery Battalion Force Development & Generation, slides 2–7, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

50. "German Troops to Train Iraqi Engineers," *Deutsche Welle DW-World*, 12 Oct 2004, http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,1423950,00.html, Hist Files, CMH.

Abu Dhabi to receive a second phase of instruction. Under the observation of their German trainers, the cadre passed on what they had learned to 140 other soldiers from their unit. Successive cadres from each of the nine engineer companies continued to cycle through Abu Dhabi for the next five months to complete their training.[51]

REBALANCING THE BOOKS

By late August 2005, accusations of corruption leveled against the former defense minister, Hazim al-Shalaan, were credible enough to justify further investigation.[52] The Board of Supreme Audit, in a confidential report delivered to Prime Minister al-Ja'fari, identified widespread fraud and waste in weapons-procurement contracts supervised by the ministry. Minister al-Dulaimi confirmed most of the audit board's findings. Col. John R. Martin, a deputy to General Petraeus, told correspondents that senior American and British advisers had warned the interim government of "their concerns about the lack of transparency in MoD [Ministry of Defense] procurement, the uncoordinated manner in which MoD procurement was proceeding and the possibility for—and rumors of—corruption."[53] The admonitions went unheeded, but as Martin explained, "At the end of the day, however, this was Iraqi money being spent by Iraqi officials of a sovereign country's ministry."[54]

Some of the questionable deals resulted in the procurement of useful, if overpriced, equipment. Other contracts—involving shoddily refurbished attack helicopters, crates of defective ammunition, and a fleet of leak-prone armored personnel carriers—were complete wastes of funds. Because the contracts in question lacked refund clauses, officials from the Defense Ministry were forced to negotiate further with European and Pakistani arms firms in hopes of persuading them to accept the return of unsuitable items in exchange for operable small arms, radios, and other supplies.[55] Few, if any, of the merchants agreed to reimburse the Iraqi government for the substandard items they delivered. Furthermore, the procurement of poor

51. Sgt. Lorie Jewell, "Iraqi Engineer Regiment Focuses on Training," *Advisor* 2, no. 34 (20 Aug 2005), Hist Files, CMH.
52. Robert L. Pollock, "The Chalabi Comeback," *Wall Street Journal*, 29 Aug 2005, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB112527821423925235, Hist Files, CMH.
53. Hannah Allam, "Audit: Fraud Drained $1 Billion from Iraq's Defense Efforts," *McClatchy News*, 11 Aug 2005, https://www.mcclatchydc.com/latest-news/article24448240.html, Hist Files, CMH.
54. Allam, "Audit: Fraud Drained $1 Billion from Iraq's Defense Efforts."
55. Allam, "Audit: Fraud Drained $1 Billion from Iraq's Defense Efforts."

equipment resulted in higher-than-normal rates of unserviceability in some Iraqi units, with the commensurate negative impact on readiness.

As a result of the scandal, Minister al-Dulaimi reported that he had dismissed nine senior officials, including the ministry's chief procurement officer, Ziyad Cattan. The finance minister confirmed that the contracts in question had been administered by Cattan during Minister al-Shalaan's tenure.[56] Both Cattan and al-Shalaan fled to Jordan after the Iraqi government announced it would issue warrants for their arrest. Minister of Finance Ali Abdul-Amir Allawi told British reporters, "Huge amounts of money have disappeared. In return we got nothing but scraps of metal."[57] The incident served as a dramatic reminder that pushing for greater Iraqi involvement in the procurement process, without implementing jointly agreed oversight mechanisms, involved significant risk.

Media coverage of the scandal gradually waned as the October constitutional referendum approached. MNF-I projected a greater role for the Iraqi Army during the fall polling in comparison to the January elections, in large part because the Bush administration did not plan to send a flood of last-minute reinforcements to Iraq. On 2 September, General Vines told reporters attending an MNC-I press conference, "U.S. Forces in the area will only be increased by about 2,000 troops for the [15 October] referendum and [December] elections."[58]

MSNTC-I underwent a change of command six days later when Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey replaced Petraeus.[59] The fact that another three-star general took over signaled the importance the secretary of defense continued to place on the development of Iraqi security forces. When General Dempsey met with General Casey on 12 September, he informed the MNF-I commanding general that the Iraqi military still had only 96 of its 112 authorized battalions (*Map 5.2*). The growth in authorized battalions—from 76 in December 2004 to the current 112—reflected the creation of a mechanized force, the fielding of the 7th IA Division, and the addition of fourth brigades in selected units.[60] Of the ninety-six battalions then in existence, many required significant equipment upgrades because they had

56. Dexter Filkins, "The Conflict in Iraq: Missing Money; Mystery in Iraq as $300 Million is Taken Abroad," *New York Times*, 22 Jan 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/22/world/middleeast/ mystery-in-iraq-as-300-million-is-taken-abroad.html, Hist Files, CMH.
57. Cockburn, "What Happened to Iraq's Missing $1Bn?"
58. Sgt. Sara Woods, "ISF to Provide Most Election Security, with About 2,000 More U.S. Troops," *Advisor* 2, no. 36 (3 Sep 2005): 1, Hist Files, CMH.
59. Sgt. Lorie Jewell, "A New Era: MNSTC-I Command Changes Hands," *Advisor* 2, no. 37 (10 Sep 2005): 1, Hist Files, CMH.
60. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 15 Nov 2004, sub: Command Brief 2005, slide 18, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.



Map 5.2

been formed using National Guard, rather than Regular Army, tables of organization and equipment. The substandard equipment procured by the former minister of defense also needed replacement.

Dempsey updated Casey on his command's near-term plans. In addition to completing the training of sixteen infantry battalions, MNSTC-I would focus resources on creating three explosive ordnance disposal companies, forty-two battalion headquarters and support companies, and a mechanized battalion. In the coming months, the command likewise had to generate strategic infrastructure battalions, which would be deployed to protect oil production facilities and pipelines. MNSTC-I believed that these static units would be capable of carrying out their responsibilities without dedicated advisers, which had the added benefit of alleviating growing MNSTC-I personnel needs. General Dempsey predicted that, barring major changes to the operational situation or fielding schedule, the Iraqis would have the equivalent of ten full divisions by January 2007.[61]

In the immediate aftermath of the al-Shalaan and Cattan scandal, Casey and Dempsey discussed the question of future funding. Casey gave MNSTC-I permission to take an active role in monitoring Ministry of Defense expenditures. The MNF-I commander followed up that action by placing the Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office teams, previously assigned to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior, under Dempsey's jurisdiction. Those teams of financial experts had been charged with overseeing the allocation of funds and contracts for both ministries, which gave MNSTC-I visibility over the Iraqi government's distribution of security-related expenditures.[62] As a result, Dempsey informed reporters on 24 September that MNSTC-I "own[ed] the process of developing the Iraqi Security Forces . . . from foot soldier and policeman, all the way up to the ministries. One organization [would] have a total view of the entire process."[63]

Financial concerns also caused the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team to take a direct role in generating strategic infrastructure battalions. Those units were transferred from the Ministry of Oil to the Ministry of Defense following a series of insurgent attacks that inflicted sustained monthly losses of potential oil revenue averaging $250 million, or 15 percent of the total oil revenue for 2005.[64] In addition to employing patently ineffective tactics, Ministry of Oil officials colluded with unlawful businessmen to

61. Bfg, MNSTC-I/NTM-I to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Sep 2005, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slides 5–17, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
62. Fred W. Baker III, "Rebuilding in Iraq Shifts to Self-Sustaining Iraqi Effort," American Forces Press Service, 4 Mar 2007, http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10349&Itemid=128, Hist Files, CMH.
63. Sgt. Lorie Jewell, "MNSTC-I CG Addresses Troops," *Advisor* 2, no. 41 (24 Sep 2005): 1, Hist Files, CMH.
64. Total oil revenue for 2005 was $20 billion. A loss of $250 million per month for twelve months was the equivalent of a $3 billion (or 15 percent) loss in total annual oil revenue.



Fires burn off the remaining spilled oil after insurgents attack an oil pipeline near Bayjī. (*Tech. Sgt. Lee Harshman, U.S. Air Force*)

siphon off oil for sale to foreign buyers in Turkey and Syria. The Ministry of Defense would assume oversight of the strategic infrastructure battalions because all concerned parties agreed that the Iraqi Army, as compared to the police, possessed greater integrity, firepower, and equipment to better safeguard oil pipelines. Guaranteeing the uninterrupted flow of oil to legitimate international markets increased government revenues that, in turn, could significantly augment the existing Ministry of Defense budget.[65]

It took considerable time and effort to convert former Ministry of Oil units into more robust military organizations. The Ministry of Defense initially organized four new strategic infrastructure battalions, recruited from local tribes, to protect oil and electrical lines between Bayjī and Kirkūk. The ministry also used the proven British pacification tactic of hiring likely troublemakers as security personnel. Each infrastructure outfit consisted of four companies, each with 129 soldiers organized into three platoons, and a headquarters company with the battalion staff as well as communications, supply, transportation, maintenance, and medical platoons. Rather than construct new bases, the Iraqi Army planned to house the units at existing military facilities located near oil refineries and pipelines.

65. Draft Iraqi Army Plan 2006, Iraqi Ground Forces Cmd, 22 Jul 2005, ver. 1.3, 13, 2005 Folder, Casey Papers, CMH.



Soldiers from a strategic infrastructure battalion patrol a pipeline north of Tikrīt. (*101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army*)

External evaluators monitored the operations of the first group of infrastructure battalions to determine if their revised organization and training sufficed. At the end of a ninety-day trial period, MNSTC-I and the Ministry of Defense jointly pronounced the design and instruction as satisfactory. The decision to forego assigning permanent advisory teams remained unchanged. Three strategic infrastructure brigades, comprising a total of eleven battalions, were slated for fielding by early 2006. Each brigade headquarters consisted of ninety-five staffers, organized into personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, and communications sections, a security detail, and support elements assigned to the headquarters company.[66] The fiscal benefits of deploying military units to protect Iraq's chief export required some time to accrue, however, so the United States continued to subsidize much of the Iraqi Army's near-term growth.

66. Draft Iraqi Army Plan 2006, Iraqi Ground Forces Cmd, 22 Jul 2005, ver. 1.3, 13.

TRAINING THE FORCE, MAINTAINING THE FORCE, AND SECURING THE REFERENDUM

Several NATO-sponsored programs began producing tangible benefits during this period. On 1 October 2005, Prime Minister al-Ja'fari attended the reopening of the Joint Staff College in Ar Rustamiyah, which had provided professional military education to Iraqi officers from 1928 until it shut down just before the coalition invasion in 2003. The NATO Training Mission–Iraq, along with the Ministry of Defense, reestablished a seven-and-a-half-month junior officer course and a nine-and-a-half-month course for mid-level officers at the renovated institution. Before the first students arrived, the training mission provided a fifteen-week "Train the Trainers" course for the initial twenty-four Iraqi faculty members at the college.[67] The Iraqis eventually furnished the bulk of the faculty; meanwhile, NATO Training Mission–Iraq personnel offered mentorship and guidance as their counterparts sought to master the college's management and curriculum development.[68]

In another positive development, MNSTC-I efforts to create more Iraqi training units appeared to be on the verge of fruition, with the addition of two training battalions, one each at Kirkush Military Training Base and An Numaniyah Air Base, on track for early 2006 (*Map 5.3*). These battalions were the first step of an effort to transform the under-resourced Iraqi Training Brigade into a more versatile organization. Courses offered to enlisted personnel and noncommissioned officers would include five weeks of basic recruit training; a seven-week course covering the duties of noncommissioned officers; five-week specialty courses for medical, transportation, and maintenance soldiers; and four weeks of occupational instruction for military police, administration, supply, armor, and signal personnel.[69] The expansion of the Iraqi Training Brigade's capabilities also meant that U.S. personnel no longer had to train individual recruits.

Although the Americans would oversee this training, Iraqi soldiers would not be receiving instruction comparable to their U.S. counterparts. By way of comparison, for example, U.S. Army recruits attended eight weeks of basic training that included one hundred hours of rifle marksmanship.

67. Sgt. Lorie Jewell, "Iraqi Joint Staff College Experiences a High-Profile 'Rebirth,'" *Advisor* 2, no. 42 (1 Oct 2005): 2, Hist Files, CMH.
68. NATO Training Mission–Iraq Public Information Ofc, "Full Operational Capability at Ar Rustamiyah–A Milestone for the Iraqi Leadership of JSC and IMAR as Well as for NTM-I," 10 Mar 2008, Hist Files, CMH.
69. Sgt. Lorie Jewell, "KMTB's Iraqi Training Brigade Set for Expansion," *Advisor* 2, no. 47 (5 Nov 2005): 4, Hist Files, CMH.



Map 5.3

Light infantry soldiers received four more weeks of specialized instruction, and cannoneers, tank crews, and cavalry troopers received an additional five to seven weeks. By comparison, American soldiers in technical fields, such as communications, maintenance, intelligence analysis, and linguistics, received twelve to fifty-two weeks of additional instruction after basic training.[70] Multiple factors drove the disparity in allotted training time

70. Conrad C. Crane et al., *Lessons in Lethality: The Army's Cycle of Basic Combat Training, 1918–2019* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, 2019), 57, 65, 67, 71, 73.

for U.S. and Iraqi troops—the Iraqis were fighting a war and thus needed immediate replacements for casualties, their force structure was constantly expanding, and they experienced considerable personnel losses because of desertion. The compressed schedules produced more soldiers in a shorter period, but there was an undeniable impact on quality. Even so, increasing the throughput of recruits allowed a more rapid expansion of the army, which supported the U.S. goal of transitioning security responsibilities as soon as possible to Iraqi forces.

The expansion of training capabilities offered welcome but not immediate relief as the Iraqi Army's tempo of operations increased. Repeating the approach used before the January 2005 elections, MNF-I authorized commanders to attack insurgent enclaves that offered a potential threat to the October referendum. In the north, the 3d ACR had launched an offensive on 2 September, code-named Operation Restoring Rights, aimed at eliminating extremist cells holed up in Tall' Afar. The Iraqi contribution of eleven battalions far exceeded the five battalions of Americans taking part in the effort.[71] During the first five days of combat, the combined assault resulted in the death and capture of several hundred enemy fighters. The surviving insurgents fled into Syria, with U.S. units in pursuit, while Iraqi troops established patrol bases within Tall' Afar.

Despite their numerical predominance, the 2d and 3d IA Divisions played a limited direct role in Tall' Afar. Colonel McMaster placed their contribution into perspective:

> [Are they] ready to do that on their own yet? No. . . . They have some additional capabilities they've got to develop . . . [such as] the ability to command and control operations over these wide areas. They need some more mobile protected platforms, you know, so that they can overmatch the enemy in tactical engagements. They need some greater logistical capabilities. And they need to develop some more experienced and effective leadership, junior leadership, sergeants.[72]

His observations could be applied to the entire Iraqi Army.

American units did not always provide their Iraqi counterparts with the experience they needed for the future, which puzzled some transition team

71. Anthony H. Cordesman and William D. Sullivan, "Iraqi Force Development: Coalition Reporting as of the Fall of 2005," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 21 Nov 2005, 20, https://www.csis.org/analysis/iraqi-force-development-1, Hist Files, CMH.
72. DoD Press Bfg, Col. H. R. McMaster, "Overview of Operation Restoring Rights," 13 Sep 2005, http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2106, Hist Files, CMH.



A U.S. Army M3A3 Bradley fighting vehicle patrols downtown Tall' Afar. Iraqi Army forces, with assistance from elements of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 82d Airborne Division, flooded the city, successfully disrupting insurgent safe havens during Operation Restoring Rights. (*PH1 Alan D. Monyelle, U.S. Navy*)

personnel. One of the 80th Division MiTT advisers involved in Restoring Rights observed:

> A company commander from 3d ACR would come to me and say, "We have a mission tomorrow morning and we need nine guys. They don't need their vehicles. They're just going to hop in the back of the Bradleys." My job was to then go over to the Iraqis and ask for the nine guys, tell them what time to show up, get them in the Bradleys and send them off with the American soldiers to go conduct operations. Everything was being done at squad level, maybe platoon level at the most. . . . [I was] sure they were kicking the crap out of the enemy and I didn't have any right to criticize them about that. However, our whole purpose there was to train the Iraqi Army and they [the Iraqi officers] were getting zero leadership experience.[73]

73. Interv, Christopher K. Ives, CSI, with 1st Lt. Jeremy Burke, former 3d IA Div Adviser, 4 Jan 2007, 10, OLE.

The 3d ACR soon received orders to move elsewhere, which triggered a relief-in-place by a tank battalion from the 1st Armored Division. That unit remained for a short time, only to be replaced by the 172d Infantry Brigade Combat Team. These successive turnovers—necessary because of the unpredictability of the tactical situation—made it impossible to apply the partnership program uniformly throughout Iraq. In some parts of the country, an American unit remained associated with the same Iraqi unit for its entire deployment, and although the 3d IA Division had a U.S. partner of some kind during its entire deployment, each changeover created an unavoidable loss of momentum.

In addition to achieving the tactical coup in Tall' Afar, MNF-I showcased numerous handover ceremonies as proof of security progress. During one such event at the Al Muthanna airfield in early October, the 6th IA Division assumed the mission of securing the Karkh, Rusafa, Thawra, and Adhamiyah Districts of Baghdād.[74] On 15 October, the 3d Battalion, 2d Brigade, 5th IA Division, based in northern Iraq near the Iranian border, accepted control of the town of Khānaqīn.[75] This transition was offered as evidence that the campaign plan remained on track, even though the Iraqis often took responsibility for areas in which violent insurgents were fairly inactive. Rather than send displaced U.S. units home, MNF-I shifted them to areas where extremists posed a threat to the constitutional referendum.

MNSTC-I simultaneously achieved several important successes on the logistical front. American staff officers brokered the signing of a national maintenance contract to establish maintenance support centers at Camp Taji, Al Kasik Military Base, Kirkush Military Training Base, Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah, An Numaniyah Air Base, Tallil Air Base, Kaywan Air Base (a military camp commonly known as K–1) near Kirkūk, Al Taqaddum Air Base outside Al Habbaniyah, and the Baghdad International Airport. Each center had sufficient assets to deploy repair teams to other sites without interrupting its own output. However, the contract depended on hiring and training mechanics from local labor pools, a process that turned out to be inordinately lengthy.[76]

74. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 19 Oct 2005, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2005/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

75. The districts have several subdistricts or neighborhoods and often are known by multiple names. For example, Thawra District is made up of nine neighborhoods, numbered one through nine, that encompasses Sadr City and its immediate surroundings. Iraqi Security Forces In-Brief, MNSTC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Iraqi Battalion Assumes Control," *Advisor* 2, no. 44 (15 Oct 2005): 8, Hist Files, CMH.

76. Sgt. Lorie Jewell, "Contract Provides Vehicle Services, Training," *Advisor* 2, no. 46 (9 Oct 2005): 3, Hist Files, CMH.

Other unique challenges confronted civilian firms that had been hired to conduct support tasks. Vehicle maintenance, for example, proved to be more difficult than MNSTC-I originally had envisioned because the Iraqis' fleet of vehicles was made up of a bewildering mix of recent purchases, gifts from donor countries, and equipment left over from Saddam's army. The wheeled fleet included six types of fuel trucks, twenty-one models of light utility vehicles, and fifteen types of medium cargo trucks. The U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that, "according to coalition officials, obtaining repair parts for such a heterogeneous vehicle fleet, especially parts for vehicles of non-U.S. manufacture that are in relatively short supply in the MoD's [Ministry of Defense's] vehicle inventory, is so expensive that it results in the cannibalization of parts from similar vehicles awaiting repair. The result is that some vehicles never get repaired."[77]

The establishment of installation-level maintenance infrastructure was a step in the right direction, but it had little immediate tactical impact. Mounting losses from improvised explosive devices in Diyālá Province, where Iraqi and American troops had carried out a series of operations over the preceding eight months, had prompted one reporter to note, "At least 209 Iraqi soldiers and police have been killed this year in the provincial capital, Baqubah, and a swath of the surrounding province, compared with the deaths of eight American soldiers in the same area."[78] An American staff officer confirmed those figures, explaining that "the Iraqis put quite a few people in their trucks, and those trucks aren't armored."[79] In the absence of a centralized and sustained effort to increase vehicle survivability, U.S. and Iraqi military personnel fabricated ad hoc armored plating kits for the Iraqi Army's commercial pickups and flatbed trucks.

The need to compensate for the rising threat from improvised explosive devices illustrated one of the problems with relying on civilian contractors to perform essential logistical tasks. Even though support contracts offered near-term answers and could be written to cover a variety of needs, including translating technical manuals into Arabic and providing maintenance instruction to Iraqi Army personnel, civilian firms working under the fixed terms of a contract often lacked the flexibility or the resources to respond to battlefield-driven needs.

77. Government Accountability Ofc Rpt GAO-07-503R, 28 Mar 2007, sub: Operation Iraqi Freedom: Preliminary Observations on Iraqi Security Forces' Logistics and Command and Control Capabilities, 7, http://www.gao.gov/texzt/d07503r.html, Hist Files, CMH.
78. Michael Moss, "Lack of Armor Proves Deadly for Iraqi Army," *New York Times*, 30 Oct 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/30/world/middleeast/lack-of-armor-proves-deadly-for-iraqi-army.html, Hist Files, CMH.
79. Moss, "Lack of Armor Proves Deadly for Iraqi Army."



Imitating the ad hoc countermeasures adopted by American troops starting in late 2003, Iraqi units welded steel plates onto commercial vehicles issued by the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq to limit damage from improvised explosive devices. (*Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, U.S. Army*)

ADJUSTING TO PROGRESS

On 15 October 2005, Iraqis in eighteen provinces voted to adopt the constitution by an average margin of 78 percent in favor to 21 percent opposed. Sunnis, who generally were opposed to adopting the constitution, had flocked to the polls in unprecedented numbers in Baghdād, Diyālá, Nīnawā, Al Anbār, and Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn. The provisions of the vote stated that if two-thirds of voters in at least three provinces rejected the proposed constitution, it would be sent back to the government for revision. However, Sunnis only were able to muster the required 66 percent opposition in two provinces (Al Anbār and Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn).[80] The Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq, after determining instances of fraudulent voting did not undermine nationwide polling results, certified the passage of the constitution on 25 October.[81] Its adoption cleared the way for the scheduled

80. "Iraq Voters Back New Constitution," BBC News, 25 Oct 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4374822.stm, Hist Files, CMH.
81. "Iraq Approves Constitution," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 25 Oct 2005, https://www.rferl.org/a/1062397.html (accessed 2 Feb 2024), Hist Files, CMH.

December election of an Iraqi parliament and the formation of a four-year government.[82] Coalition leaders interpreted the constitution's passage as a critical strategic victory, placing less emphasis on the fact that Sunnis had mobilized their voting base in a concerted effort to defeat it. Yet, as one media analyst reminded Americans, "continued Sunni participation in the political process is not enough: there must also be enlightened self-interest on the part of the newly-dominant Shi'a and Kurds."[83]

On 30 October, General Casey shared with subordinates how he wanted events to unfold as phase two transitioned to phase three. In his directive, the MNF-I commander stated up front that he considered the next six months of the campaign to be its most pivotal period. "To be decisive, we must defeat AQI [al-Qaeda in Iraq] while bringing and keeping the Sunni population in the political process in a manner that begins to neutralize the insurgency and while placing Iraqi Security Forces in the lead—*Al Qaida Out, Sunni In and ISF [Iraqi security forces] increasingly in Lead*."[84] He further elaborated on his evolving priorities, saying, "We have made great progress over the last few months toward disrupting and defeating the AQI [al-Qaeda in Iraq] network. We must finish the job by this spring. To do this, I want to deny AQI freedom of movement, sanctuary, external support, and most importantly, the support of the Iraqi people."[85] According to Casey, the prerequisites for accomplishing that goal involved restoring Iraqi control over its national borders, dismantling support networks in the Euphrates River Valley and Tall' Afar–Mosul corridor, destroying the al-Qaeda base in Ar Ramādī, eliminating Zarqawi's command and control cells in Mosul and Baghdād, denying Sunni extremists freedom of movement, and driving a wedge between the populace and the insurgency. He cautioned that these goals had to be accomplished without alienating the Sunni minority. To achieve this, he wanted coalition troops to safeguard the Sunnis' right to vote, aid in reconstruction, and release detainees, so that the coalition would be viewed as a guarantor of Sunni participation in the national political.[86]

The MNF-I commander accurately recognized that the campaign plan's success rested on Iraqi security forces assuming more of the burden, with

82. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 26 Oct 2005, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2005/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
83. "Iraq Voters Back New Constitution."
84. Memo, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cdrs and Staff, 30 Oct 2005, sub: Strategic Planning Directive (Nov 2005–Apr 06)–Making the Elections Decisive, 1, Casey Papers, CMH.
85. Memo, MNF-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cdrs and Staff, 30 Oct 2005, sub: Strategic Planning Directive (Nov 2005–Apr 06), 1.
86. Memo, MNF-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cdrs and Staff, 30 Oct 2005, sub: Strategic Planning Directive (Nov 2005–Apr 06), 2–3.

the ultimate objective being the departure of U.S. troops. He amplified that viewpoint by stating that the "smooth and sustained transition of security responsibility to capable ISF [Iraqi security forces] enabled by coalition forces and transition teams remain[s] a key element of our strategy" and simultaneously warning unit commanders that "the pace of transitions should pick up in the next months."[87]

In keeping with his goal to secure Iraq's borders, Casey sought to hasten the development of Ministry of Interior forces, tasking Dempsey to "develop an action plan to operationalize 2006 as the 'Year of the Police,' with a goal of having the [ministry] capable of leading border security efforts by June [20]06 and beginning to assume the lead in the counterinsurgency effort [from the Army] by the end of 2006."[88] Although international partners had provided the bulk of the 763 personnel dedicated to training the police, Casey's reprioritization of MNSTC-I efforts levied additional mentoring responsibilities on deployed units and generated the need for the Pentagon to provide more personnel.[89] The additional personnel ultimately came from Active Army and National Guard military police brigades, plus European-based organizations such as the Joint Multinational Training Center in Grafenwöhr, Germany.[90]

Casey did not neglect plans for the security ministries, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior. Armed with numerous anecdotal accounts of lost opportunities because of ministerial foot-dragging, the MNF-I commander realized his campaign plan could not afford to lose additional momentum because of mass turnover within the Iraqi civilian leadership. A June 2005 assessment by his staff had noted: "As operational capabilities come together, significant problems remain with institutional development and sustainment. At [the] Ministry level, policy, programming, budgeting, lack of funding, personnel, acquisition, contracting and logistical areas need *support*, or there will be risk to transition in the two Security

87. Memo, MNF-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cdrs and Staff, 30 Oct 2005, sub: Strategic Planning Directive (Nov 2005–Apr 06), 3.
88. Memo, MNF-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cdrs and Staff, 30 Oct 2005, sub: Strategic Planning Directive (Nov 2005–Apr 06), 3–4.
89. The figure applies to international police trainers and liaison officers present for duty. In September 2005, 763 of 779 authorized positions were filled. In addition, 29 of 31 authorized Ministry of Defense advisers and 38 of 51 authorized Ministry of Interior advisers were present for duty. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 27 Sep 2005, sub: BUA Slides, "27 Sep 05," slide 1, MNSTC-I DCG Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.
90. Garry Barrows, "National Police Transition Teams Making a Difference in Iraq," U.S. Army, 27 Apr 2007, https://www.army.mil/article/2891/national-police-transition-teams-making-a-difference-in-iraq, Hist Files, CMH.

ministries."[91] Casey sought to mitigate the inevitable impact of postelection turnover by increasing the ministerial assistance effort. The advisory team for the Ministry of Defense added twenty-one positions, and the Ministry of Interior group grew from thirty-seven to fifty-one individuals. To sell the short-notice request to personnel managers in the Pentagon, MNSTC-I expanded defense advisory team responsibilities to encompass Iraqi Joint Headquarters. Dempsey also applied a similar strategy to justify the cost of the initiative, which amounted to $16.2 million in fiscal year 2006 and $33.7 million in the following fiscal year.[92]

In response to what he interpreted as encouraging signs of Iraq's political maturity, General Casey had redoubled efforts to hand over security responsibilities. His 30 October directive, however, sparked a reaction among senior members of the Ministry of Defense who were frustrated with Americans dictating events in their country. On 6 November, National Security Advisor Mowaffak al-Rubaie sent his thoughts on the campaign plan to Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad. According to Rubaie, many Iraqis felt that the Americans were more interested in pulling out than in fully addressing the problems that had been created by the toppling of Saddam Hussein's brutal regime. The Iraqi official observed that MNF-I's way forward avoided any commitment to defeating the insurgency that had arisen during the coalition occupation. Rather than mount offensive operations against enclaves that produced temporary results, Rubaie argued, the coalition and Iraqi troops should reorient their focus on protecting at-risk population centers and securing areas that had been cleared.

After complaining at length about American policy, Rubaie changed tack by admitting that he understood that American domestic considerations were largely responsible for what he viewed as inadequate security measures implemented by the Bush administration. The solution to that undesirable situation, the Iraqi minister claimed, lay in hiring a large number of tribal irregulars to augment Iraqi government forces operating in regions threatened by foreign extremists. Rubaie's proposal drew mixed reaction within his own government. Some mid-level Iraqi bureaucrats believed that some degree of friction would accompany any attempt to raise irregular

91. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I/NTM-I Cmdg Gen, 15 Aug 2005, sub: MOD & MOI: From Partnership to Self-Reliance, slide 2.

92. New advisers required personal security detachments allocated on the basis of one detachment per two employees and a dedicated translator. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I/NTM-I Cmdg Gen, 15 Aug 2005, sub: MOD & MOI: From Partnership to Self-Reliance, slide 11; Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I/NTM-I Dep Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior: Building Institutional Capacity in the Security Ministries," slides 7–11, MNSTC-I DCG Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

forces. However, those same individuals argued that issues created by tribal leaders pursuing local agendas and the problems that potentially would arise when the irregular forces eventually demobilized were justified in the face of what they saw as a losing situation.[93] On the other hand, senior Iraqi leaders with ties to Shi'i interests did not share Rubaie's viewpoints. For example, Prime Minister al-Ja'fari expressed grave reservations about arming Sunni tribesmen to fight against al-Qaeda.

American commanders also held mixed opinions. General Casey remained skeptical about using irregulars, but General Vines at MNC-I saw potential in the concept. After politely acknowledging receipt of Rubaie's letter, Casey forwarded the proposal to his Strategy, Plans, and Assessment Directorate, where it languished as MNF-I planners concentrated on updating the campaign plan to conform with the guidance in their commanding general's 30 October directive.[94]

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

MNF-I had started cutting off the flow of personnel and supplies from Syria into Al Anbār well before the December elections. Casey had placed emphasis on interdicting support networks that funneled foreign suicide bombers into Iraq. As a result, the number of U.S. troops along the Euphrates River had grown from 3,200 in February 2005 to 14,000 in September. In November, those forces, along with Iraqi soldiers, launched an effort code-named Operation Steel Curtain (*Al Hajip Elfulathi*) against al-Qaeda safe havens in western Iraq's Euphrates River basin.[95]

During 2005, MNSTC-I had generated a divisional headquarters, four brigade headquarters, and ten infantry battalions in Al Anbār. Steel Curtain presented an opportunity to employ these forces—the 1st (formerly Iraqi Intervention Force) and 7th IA Divisions—to gain a foothold in the Al Qā'im region 386.2 kilometers northwest of Baghdād, near the Syrian border.[96] Although lukewarm to the idea of using irregular combatants, MNF-I permitted the Albu Mahal tribe to send a group of 279 fighters, known as the Desert Protectors, to operate alongside U.S. and Iraqi troops. The tribe had broken with the insurgency in May 2005 after Zarqawi had ordered the

93. William Knarr, *The 2005 Iraqi Sunni Awakening: The Role of the Desert Protectors Program* (Tampa, FL: Joint Special Operations University, Oct 2015), 38.
94. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 491–92.
95. Knarr, *2005 Iraqi Sunni Awakening*, 39.
96. Bill Roggio, "Operation Steel Curtain in Husaybah," *Long War Journal*, 5 Nov 2005, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2005/11/operation_steel_1.php, Hist Files, CMH.

assassination of a prominent tribe member who was serving in the Iraqi police. The murder had triggered a series of battles between the Albu Mahal and foreign extremists. Convinced of the tribe's bona fides, MNC-I and the Ministry of Defense had signed a memorandum of understanding that had established the Desert Protectors in September 2005.[97]

On 5 November, 1,000 soldiers from the 1st IA Division's 1st Brigade and three American infantry battalions totaling 2,500 personnel opened an attack on insurgents in Husaybah, located on the Euphrates near the Al Qā'im border crossing. The Desert Protectors were embedded in Iraqi and U.S. units to aid in navigation, open dialogues with the population, and identify terrorist strongpoints.[98] After four days of fighting, coalition forces secured the city of 74,000 inhabitants. On 10 November, U.S. and Iraqi troops launched a second combined operation against neighboring Al Karābilah and uncovered nineteen improvised explosive devices, three booby-trapped homes, and one car bomb. Zarqawi's losses during the fighting included 38 fighters killed and 108 taken prisoner.[99]

The concluding phase of Steel Curtain began on 14 November with a combined assault on Ubaydi, a town located on the southern banks of the Euphrates River, only 19.3 kilometers from Syria.[100] Ubaydi presented a unique tactical problem because it had a mix of radically different terrain: a centuries-old riverside farming village, known as Old Ubaydi, and a modern section consisting of apartment buildings and individual homes, called New Ubaydi. Elements of the U.S. Army's 3d Battalion, 504th Infantry Regiment, secured Old Ubaydi while the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, attacked enemy fighters in New Ubaydi. Hidden gunmen ambushed the marines, triggering a lengthy engagement that ended with eight Americans and all of their adversaries dead.[101] The Iraqis suffered few, if any, casualties during Steel Curtain because they usually were employed to cordon off towns and interact with the civilian population rather than participate in direct assaults. MNF-I declared the operation a success. Although the Desert Protectors were dissolved afterward, a group of Albu Mahal tribesmen

97. Knarr, *2005 Iraqi Sunni Awakening*, 29, 32, 39, 41
98. Knarr, *2005 Iraqi Sunni Awakening*, 43–44.
99. "Steel Curtain Drops on Terrorists Near Syrian Border," Army News Service, 8 Nov 2005, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/11/mil-051108-arnews01.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
100. News Release A051114a, MNF-I, "New Phase of Steel Curtain Begins," 14 Nov 2005, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/11/mil-051114-mnfi01.htm (accessed 26 Feb 2010), Hist Files, CMH.
101. Bill Roggio, "Steel Curtain Unmasked," *Long War Journal*, 27 Nov 2005, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2005/11/steel_curtain_unmask.php, Hist Files, CMH.



Iraqi Army soldiers watch the streets of Husaybah during Operation Steel Curtain. (*Cpl. Neill A. Sevelius, U.S. Marine Corps*)

joined the Iraqi Army, forming the nucleus of the 3d Battalion, 3d Brigade, 7th IA Division.[102]

MNF-I mounted a complementary but far smaller effort on 16 November, involving marines, elements of the U.S. Army's 2d Brigade, 28th Infantry Division, and the 3d Brigade, 1st IA Division. Code-named Operation Lions (*Asad*), it focused on the area surrounding the increasingly restive city of Ar Ramādī, 109.4 kilometers west of Baghdād.[103] Repetitive sweeps over a two-week period netted numerous weapons caches and detainees but had minimal long-term impact.[104] Only a few months later, some of the fiercest fighting of the entire conflict between American troops and insurgents would erupt in Ar Ramādī.

102. Knarr, *2005 Iraqi Sunni Awakening*, 45–46.
103. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 7 Dec 2005, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2005/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
104. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 14 Dec 2005, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2005/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

POLARIZING THE RANKS

As the fight progressed against the insurgents, far more subtle developments were taking place within the Iraqi security forces. Exponential growth, paired with Baghdād's hands-on role in managing that expansion, had prevented the Americans from closely monitoring the ethnic composition of newly minted security organizations. The Facilities Protection Service (FPS), originally formed by Coalition Provisional Authority Order No. 27 to free up American troops from guarding Iraqi government property, was a prime example.[105] The Coalition Provisional Authority had placed FPS elements under the command of the ministries they protected rather than consolidating them as a single organization within the Defense or Interior Ministry. Unfettered by MNSTC-I oversight, the FPS had expanded from 4,000 members in September 2003 to 122,000 personnel in July 2005. By the fall of 2005, some Americans suspected there were links between the FPS and emerging sectarian death squads, whose members wore police uniforms and operated FPS vehicles.[106]

Ethnically homogenous Iraqi Army units were concentrated in specific regions, with predominantly Shi'i Iraqi Army units grouped around Baghdād and the south while units deployed in the north were mainly Kurdish. The commanding general of Multi-National Force–North West, Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, noted:

> The 2d Iraqi Army Division leadership is 100 percent Kurdish and its subordinate brigade level leaders are 80 percent Kurdish. The 3d Iraqi Army Division senior leadership is 75 percent Kurdish and the brigade level leaders are 65 percent Kurdish. This situation does not lend itself to building cohesive teams that are representative of the people of Iraq. The high percentage of Kurdish leaders makes those Iraqi Divisions vulnerable to political pressure from

105. The Facilities Protection Service relied on the Americans for construction and equipment, but it controlled its own recruiting and training. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 9 Jul 2005, sub: FPS Conference Closing Remarks 9 July 2005, 1–3, CG Meeting Talking Points/Misc TP Folder; Coalition Provisional Authority Order 27, 4 Sep 2003, Establishment of the Facilities Protective Service, http://govinfo.library.unit.edu/cpa-iraq/regulations/20030904_CPAORD_27_Establishment_of_the_Facilities_Protection_Svc.pdf; both in Hist Files, CMH.

106. Senior U.S. military personnel were quoted as stating they had "Negative. None. Zero" control over the Facilities Protection Service. Ellen Knickmeyer, "Iraq Begins to Rein in Paramilitary Force," *Washington Post*, 14 May 2006, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/14/AR2006051400254.html, Hist Files, CMH.

> Kurdish leadership whose agenda is not always in line with Iraq's national interest.[107]

Ethnic overrepresentation impacted Iraqi Army readiness in unforeseen ways. When the Sunni-majority 2d Motor Transport Regiment learned it would transfer to Mosul, for example, all of its soldiers, plus the MiTT translators, refused to go to a Kurdish-majority area. The American advisers eventually persuaded them to accept deployment orders, but the negotiations took considerable time, which pushed back the unit's scheduled transit window by several months.[108] In another example, MNF-I directed the headquarters of the majority-Kurdish 4th IA Division to relocate to Tikrīt in preparation for taking control of Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn Province. The division MiTT spent weeks preparing the division staff only to learn that the division commander successfully had lobbied the Ministry of Defense to cancel the movement to the Sunni Arab stronghold. The matter required the intervention of the MNF-I commanding general before the division headquarters relocated as originally intended.[109]

Although U.S. commanders were able to identify some negative trends and sectarianism within the Iraqi Army, these were difficult to detect within Ministry of Interior elements because of the standing prohibition against placing Americans in local police stations. On 14 November 2005, American soldiers from the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) freed 164 people (the majority of whom were Sunni) who had been held in an undisclosed detainment center in the Iraqi capital.[110] Dating from the time of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, the building had underground detention cells and appeared to be under the ministry's control.[111] The incident was the first solid indication that Shi'i militia leader Muqtada al-Sadr and other like-minded individuals had infiltrated Iraqi government security forces and were a growing insider threat.

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107. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 474.

108. Interv, Epley with Pittard, 24 Jun 2007, 26–27; Lt. Col. Voris Weldon McBurnette, ed., *The 108th Training Command: A History Embracing & Shaping the Future* (Charlotte, NC: Palette Communications Inc., 2010), 110–11.

109. M. Sgt. David L. Stewart, "Military Transition Team–4th IA Division, OIF III, Tikrit, Iraq, 03/22/05 to 11/08/05, 11Z5, Senior Enlisted Advisor, HHC, 42nd Infantry Division" (PEP, Sergeants Major Academy, 20 Sep 2006), 5–6, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1112113.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

110. United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, "Human Rights Report, 1 May–30 June 2006," n.d., 16, http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20May%20Jun%20 2006%20EN.pdf (accessed 15 Oct 2023), Hist Files, CMH.

111. Peter Kenyon, "Iraq Launches Probe into Alleged Prisoner Abuse," National Public Radio, 15 Nov 2005, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5014048&ps=rs, Hist Files, CMH.

Three weeks later, American and Iraqi forces found 625 prisoners packed into another unauthorized jail. In a different part of the facility, which was situated in Baghdād near the Tigris River, they found thirteen additional captives who required hospitalization because of severe mistreatment.[112] These discoveries sparked a public outcry from Sunnis who felt that Ministry of Interior personnel routinely carried out illegal abductions and tortured prisoners.[113] Other Iraqis charged that the ranks of the police force included large numbers of Shi'i militia who were waging a terror campaign in Sunni areas.[114] A subsequent investigation exposed a highway patrol unit for committing extrajudicial murders, leading to the arrest of its members and its disbandment.[115]

Ambassador Khalilzad also issued a rare public rebuke, citing the detention center abuse cases as unacceptable and demanding a government inquiry into the matter.[116] Prime Minister al-Ja'fari, pressured by both Khalilzad and Casey, ordered a nationwide probe of detention centers after the second disclosure of wrongdoing.[117] However, senior Iraqi officials continued to display great reluctance to rein in radical Shi'i elements within the security forces.[118] Frustrated American military personnel continued to engage uncooperative counterparts on this topic, but they belatedly discovered that:

> [The] Ministry of Interior and its forces have been co-opted or infiltrated by insurgents as well as members of the Supreme Council

112. Edward Wong, "Iraqi Prison Raid Finds a New Case of Mistreatment," *New York Times*, 12 Dec 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/12/world/middleeast/iraq-prison-raid-finds-a-new-case-of-mistreatment.html, Hist Files, CMH.
113. Kenyon, "Iraq Launches Probe into Alleged Prisoner Abuse."
114. Kirk Semple, "Iraqi Ministry Denies Captives Were Abused," *New York Times*, 13 Dec 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/13/world/middleeast/iraqi-ministry-denies-captives-were-abused.html, Hist Files, CMH.
115. Rpt, Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, 27 Jun 2006, sub: Year of the Police In-Stride Assessment October 2005 to May 2006, 6, Year of the Police Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
116. Ellen Knickmeyer, "U.S. Envoy Calls Torture at Two Iraqi Prisons Severe, Extensive," *Washington Post*, 14 Dec 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/13/AR2005121300429.html, Hist Files, CMH.
117. Ellen Knickmeyer, "Abuse Cited in Second Jail Operated by Iraqi Ministry," *Washington Post*, 12 Dec 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/11/AR2005121101 002.html, Hist Files, CMH.
118. That reluctance stemmed in part from Iranian involvement in atrocities against Sunnis. A senior U.S. officer later explained, "The atrocities were part score settling for Iran. Victims were often former members of Saddam's government, or Iraqi pilots who had bombed Iranian territory during the Iran-Iraq War, or even university professors who were critical of the Iranian Revolution." H. R. McMaster, *Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2020), 230.

> for [the] Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Badr Organization, and to a lesser extent al-Sadr's Jaysh al Mahdi. These groups exploit [ministry] forces to further insurgent, party, and sectarian goals. As a result, many Iraqis do not trust the police. Divisions falling along militia lines have led to violence among the police.[119]

Although these incidents served to expose sectarianism among the police, the wrongdoings of the FPS, which guarded twenty-six government ministries and eight independent directorates located in fifteen of the eighteen provinces, remained publicly unacknowledged until the following spring.[120]

CONCLUSION

The adoption of the partnership program represented a lack of available alternatives rather than a proven means for infusing the train-and-equip program with the level of energy required to meet aggressive drawdown timelines. Historical experience did not provide much hope that it would work well. During the Vietnam conflict, the Americans were lukewarm about the prospect of achieving long-lasting success through partnership operations, as evidenced by their abandoning the DONG TIEN (Progress Together) program after an initial trial before reluctantly resurrecting it when other methods proved just as unsuccessful. The main complaint about partnership efforts stemmed from the fact that any improvement proved ephemeral. A U.S. Army official history also noted: "In general, American commanders . . . viewed such tasks with distaste, regarding them as secondary duties that consumed valuable time and resources and duplicated the efforts of the advisory teams. And in the end, their ability to influence the Vietnamese [was] no greater than that of the individual adviser."[121] While U.S. unit commanders in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM were not prone to make similarly candid observations, the uneven manner in which partnership programs were implemented indicates some brigade and battalions remained unconvinced about their effectiveness.

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119. Rpt, Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, 27 Jun 2006, sub: Year of the Police In-Stride Assessment Oct 2005 to May 2006, 6.
120. Robert M. Perito, "Reforming the Iraqi Interior Ministry, Police and Facilities Protection Service," U.S. Institute of Peace, 28 Mar 2007, https://www.usip.org/publications/2007/03/reforming-iraqi-interior-ministry-police-and-facilities-protection-service, Hist Files, CMH.
121. Jeffrey J. Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years*, United States Army in Vietnam (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1988), 391–403.



An Iraqi infantry platoon poses for a picture at Al Kasik Military Base. Even after two years of American efforts to equip the Iraqis, the soldiers still wear a variety of webbing equipment and helmets. Only six of the fifteen are wearing body armor, albeit of four different types.
(*3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, U.S. Army*)

Two other problems plagued the train-and-equip effort. For the second year in a row, MNSTC-I had prioritized development of the police, which siphoned significant time, resources, personnel, and intellectual energy from projects involving the Iraqi Army. This trend would continue with the implementation of Casey's "Year of the Police" program in 2006. Second, a considerable number of Iraqi soldiers were not getting supplied, fed, paid, or promoted, which MNF-I acknowledged was because of indifferent ministerial performance. Few, if any, of the affected individuals were willing to fight—and possibly die—for a government that neglected them. This situation also stemmed in part from the Coalition Provisional Authority having overlooked the impact of ministry turnover while brokering the transfer of sovereignty in June 2004. Ironically, the Defense Department's preference for a rapid disengagement following the March 2003 invasion, which had sparked the decision to prioritize fielding the New Iraqi Army over building a robust defense ministry, also had contributed to the difficulties the MNF-I had faced while attempting to execute its drawdown plan in 2005.

6
Sectarian Divides Emerge: December 2005–August 2006

Given the outcome of the January 2005 polling, American officials were confident that U.S. and Iraqi troops could safeguard the December 2005 elections to seat a permanent government. The Sunnis' willingness to set aside their weapons and use the ballot box to address their grievances, along with their offers to help fight al-Qaeda in Al Anbār, buttressed that viewpoint. Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) had lingering misgivings about tensions between the Shi'i-dominated government and the Sunnis, but it did not foresee a major clash erupting between these factions. In fact, MNF-I's concerns were focused on the northern city of Kirkūk, where frictions between a mixed Arab, Kurdish, Turkmen, and Assyrian population were peaking.[1] With security improving and some Sunnis opting to work within the system rather than against it, General George W. Casey Jr., the MNF-I commander, felt secure enough to report that "recent coalition and ISF [Iraqi security forces] operations have restored Iraqi control to the Syrian border, disrupted AQI [Al-Qaeda in Iraq] facilitation networks, and set conditions for future success."[2]

As the election deadline approached, a growing number of senior leaders in George W. Bush's administration were optimistic about Iraq.[3] Those

1. Rpt, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 20 Dec 2005, Campaign Progress Review Jun 2005–Dec 2005, 15, Casey Papers, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).
2. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, *Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War, 2003–2006* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 510.
3. The White House and the Defense Department embraced a more optimistic view than the State Department during this period. Timothy Andrew Sayle et al., *The Last Card: Inside*

perceptions were driven by General Casey's upbeat assessment and by the positive reports from pollsters asking Iraqis about the future of their country. However, as a postelection study would note, "After 35 years of Baʿthist rule, Iraqis' long-standing fear of responding candidly to questions posed by government representatives . . . skewed polling feedback."[4] Absent an honest attempt to replace sectarian priorities with a national agenda, the central government in Baghdād stood little or no chance of totally extinguishing the grievances that fed the insurgency.

From MNF-I's viewpoint, however, the positive political momentum justified pressing greater responsibilities onto Iraqi troops sooner rather than later. MNF-I therefore called for withdrawing some U.S. troops, believing that more rapid movement toward full Iraqi sovereignty would motivate the Iraqi Army.[5] Reasoning that a reduced threat equated to lower risk, Casey advocated for the withdrawal of two brigade combat teams following the December 2005 elections, a move that he claimed would push Iraqis toward assuming greater security responsibilities.[6] This proposal would decrease the number of maneuver brigades deployed in Iraq prior to the 2006 U.S. congressional elections and would eliminate the need to send units to replace them. Bush approved the recommendation and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld announced the departure of two brigade combat teams by early 2006 during a 23 December press conference held at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdād.[7]

George W. Bush's Decision to Surge in Iraq (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), 30–31, 145.

4. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 513.

5. In his memoir, General George W. Casey Jr. elaborated, "The image of U.S. forces departing Iraq would demonstrate to the ISF [Iraqi security forces] and the Iraqi people that the United States was indeed serious about following the UN [United Nations] mandate to return security responsibility to the Iraqis as they became more capable, and ultimately departing Iraq." George W. Casey Jr., *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom, July 2004–February 2007* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012), 83.

6. Although the withdrawals might encourage the remnants of insurgent groups in those areas to resume violence, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) prepared contingency plans for such an eventuality. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 510; John Hendren, "Rumsfeld: U.S. to Trim Troops in Iraq," *All Things Considered*, NPR (National Public Radio), 23 Dec 2005, https://www.npr.org/2005/12/23/5068172/rumsfeld-u-s-to-trim-troops-in-iraq, Historians (Hist) Files, CMH.

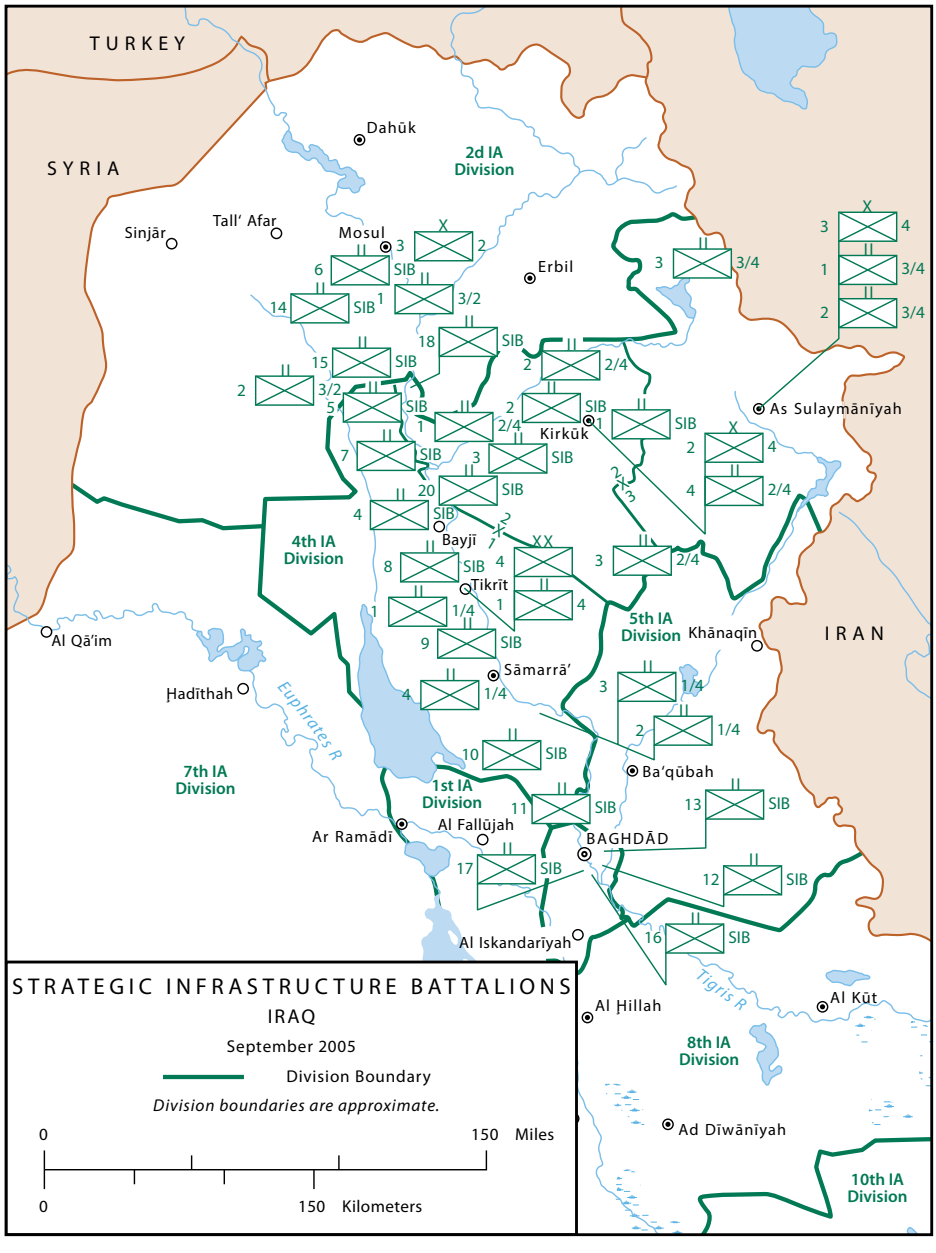
7. Borzou Daragahi and Greg Miller, "U.S. Announces GI Cuts in Iraq," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 Dec 2005, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2005-12-24-0512240173-story.html, Hist Files, CMH.

LEVERAGING A SYMBOLIC MOVE

Preparations for the withdrawal of two brigades began many months before the units actually departed. Setting the conditions for the redeployment to occur involved not only convincing the Iraqi government that it possessed the resources it needed to replace American troops, but it also meant that the Iraqi people had to be convinced that their government was stable enough to assume additional responsibilities. The latter task included placing greater emphasis on safeguarding sources of revenue and expanding the Iraqis' counterterrorist capabilities. Nine weeks after the approval of the latest pipeline protection concept, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) submitted an updated strategic infrastructure proposal calling for four brigades and eighteen battalions by the end of 2006. To offset their lack of logistical support and American advisers, these units would partner with Iraqi Army divisions. The 1st and 2d Strategic Infrastructure Brigades, with five and four battalions respectively, fell under the 4th Iraqi Army (IA) Division, while the 6th IA Division received operational control of the two battalions belonging to the 3d Strategic Infrastructure Brigade. The yet-to-be-created fourth brigade, with a proposed structure of six battalions, would deploy under 4th IA Division oversight north of the massive refinery at Bayjī (*Map 6.1*).[8]

In addition, the Americans placed more emphasis on safeguarding the second largest contributor to Iraq's government coffers: customs fees collected by the Department of Border Enforcement. In October 2005, General Casey had ordered MNSTC-I to prioritize securing the Iraq-Syria border in an effort to stop the flow of suicide bombers crossing into Al Anbār and Nīnawā Provinces. MNSTC-I assembled a team from Multi-National Corps–Iraq, augmented by customs and border patrol subject matter experts from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to carry out that mission. When human smuggling and illegal trade across Iraq's western border ebbed, the Americans turned their attention to the Port of Al Başrah, with the number of border transition teams climbing from fifteen to twenty-five throughout this period. Efforts along the Iran-Iraq border were somewhat less extensive

8. After stipulating that the new units initially would receive fewer items than authorized to avoid depleting vehicle and equipment stockpiles, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) approved the generation of all but one battalion. MFR, Maj. Jeffrey C. Groskopf, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) J–5, n.d., sub: MTOE for SIBs, tab A, SIB Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.



Map 6.1

for two reasons: limited available resources and U.S. leadership's sensitivity to the Iranians' perceptions about American activity in that region.[9]

9. Securing the borders was problematic before late 2005 because of competing MNSTC-I priorities and because the Coalition Provisional Authority originally had transferred control of those responsibilities from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Interior. Interv, John H. McCool, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI),

Rather than adopt a purely defensive posture, MNF-I had pumped money into Iraqi special operations forces to the tune of $237 million during 2005. The 2,200-strong Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) Brigade boasted a newly reorganized 2d ISOF Battalion (previously known as the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force), which was tasked with executing high-value counterterrorist operations. The 36th Commando Battalion, redesignated as the 1st ISOF Battalion, aided its sister unit as required. Both special operations battalions were supported by dedicated sustainment and training components as well as a clandestine reconnaissance company that was destined to expand to battalion size in the coming months. Preparations also were made to form a new commando battalion with four subordinate companies that would forward-deploy in outlying provinces rather join the remainder of the special operations forces at Area IV, a compound near Baghdad International Airport.[10] In anticipation of turning over control of Iraq's military to the central government sometime in late 2006, the Americans drew up plans for a counterterrorism headquarters, which would be commanded by a two-star Iraqi general. The command would serve as a conduit for orders flowing from the central government to special operations forces. In the last step of the handover, the U.S.-led Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula would transfer responsibility for recruiting, training, and resourcing special operations forces to the Iraqis.[11]

As Casey's exit strategy gained momentum, MNF-I tackled the long-standing problem of quantifying the Iraqi Army's progression by borrowing concepts from the U.S. Army's own training and evaluation standards—the mission-essential task list—to create a new system dubbed the Transition Readiness Assessment matrix.[12] Apart from not inviting the Iraqis to take part in that project, a major problem stood out from the beginning: the U.S. Army had designed the mission-essential task list for use in peacetime and for units getting ready to deploy, not for use in a combat theater. It also was tailored more for conventional warfare than for counterinsurgency. Another shortcoming of the scheme was its focus on tactical performance and not on the ability of headquarters elements to support maneuver units during combat operations, thus overlooking the difficulties Iraqi forces faced with medical aid, fire support, and reinforcements.

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with Col. William B. Hickman, former MNSTC-I Director of Ops and J–3, 22 Sep 2006, 5–6, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI (hereinafter OLE).

10. David Witty, "The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service" (Washington, DC: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 2015), 6–8, Hist Files, CMH.

11. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 10.

12. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 390.

Other unmeasurable issues, such as unit morale and sectarian prejudices, also threatened the validity of the Transition Readiness Assessment matrix. Although MNF-I monitored classified reports by national intelligence assets concerning the beliefs of senior Iraqi officers, that information could not be factored reliably into readiness reporting. General Casey had to settle for subjective ballpark appraisals of the battlefield capability of Iraqi battalions, brigades, and divisions.[13]

In addition to handling the difficulties that were sure to arise from unquantifiable information and the grafting of standards that originally were devised for American troops onto a foreign army, MNF-I placed such increasing emphasis on the Iraqis making consistent progress that some U.S. brigade commanders concluded that their own postdeployment leadership evaluations would be influenced disproportionately by the performance of their partners.[14] Those perceptions—real or imagined—weighed heavily not only on U.S. commanders, who had been charged with producing objective assessments of Iraqi performance, but also on their subordinates, who made up the transition teams and worked with partnered units on a daily basis.[15]

THE COST OF MINISTERIAL TURMOIL

Bureaucratic inaction rather than enemy pressure threatened to undo recent gains in Al Anbār. As disquieting as the sectarian influences emerging within the Ministry of Interior were, poor staff work within the Ministry of Defense jeopardized coalition efforts to upgrade and expand Iraqi security forces. On 5 December 2005, Maj. Gen. John M. Urias, commander of the Joint Contracting Command–Iraq/Afghanistan, informed Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the MNSTC-I commander, that the ministry had not yet selected a company to take over the contract—which would end in eleven days—that provided life support (that is, basic needs such as food and hygiene facilities) for 4,000 Iraqi soldiers at Al Kasik Military Base. A quick check by the MNSTC-I staff revealed that life support contracts for Camp Taji, New

13. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 514.
14. Interv, William W. Epley, CMH, with Brig. Gen. Dana J. H. Pittard, Cmdg Gen, Iraq Assistance Gp, 24 Jun 2007, 10, Hist Files, CMH.
15. A memoir written by a former U.S. adviser to the 1st Iraqi Army Division disclosed that a Marine regimental combat team commander made it clear in early 2006 that "Marine battalion commanders who did not advance Iraqi units in their sectors would not be promoted." Interestingly enough, the policy produced the results sought by the regimental combat team commander. Owen West, *The Snake Eaters: An Unlikely Band of Brothers and the Battle for the Soul of Iraq* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 214.

Al Muthanna Air Base, and Camp Habbaniyah also would expire soon.[16] Additionally, five battalions of Iraqi troops stationed at Al Asad Air Base and in Al Qā'im, Hit, Ḥadīthah, and Rawah were in danger of losing their contracted logistical support. More than 700 Iraqi troops stationed at a pair of combat outposts near Al Qā'im, for example, had been subsisting on combat rations and bottled water donated by their American partner unit.[17]

General Dempsey urged the minister of defense to correct the situation, adding, "It is imperative that you establish a team within the Office of Contracts that regularly inspects every base to ensure that the contractors are meeting their contractual obligations. It is completely unsatisfactory to risk your soldiers' health and military readiness by allowing contractors to serve them substandard or inadequate amounts of food."[18] The MNSTC-I commanding general further cautioned the minister, "These life support issues must be addressed immediately. Otherwise, you face a potential exodus of soldiers and will jeopardize the security of Iraq during the upcoming critical election and transition period."[19]

Dempsey updated Secretary Rumsfeld on 7 December 2005. The briefing shed light on an initiative that had been overshadowed by the need to field more infantry units for the past eighteen months—the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team's shift from generating combat units to developing institutional support capabilities. The MNSTC-I commander reemphasized the pressing need to change course by noting that, out of a total strength of 102,199, the Iraqi Army had only 8,638 combat support, combat service support, and training personnel.[20] By comparison, the United States' 88,000-strong XVIII Airborne Corps had nearly four times as many logistical personnel and could call upon other logistical assets within the overall force, including national-level sustainment agencies. Dempsey's immediate priorities thus focused on generating four strategic infrastructure battalions and six logistical, training, and support command battalions while adding only three more infantry battalions to the overall force structure.[21]

16. Memo, Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, for Saadoun al-Dulaimi, Iraqi Minister Def, 9 Dec 2005, sub: MNSTC-I, encl. 1, Executive Summary, Dempsey MNSTC-I Memos to Iraqis Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
17. Memo, Maj. Gen. John M. Urias, Joint Contracting Cmd–Iraq/Afghanistan Cmdg Gen, for Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 5 Dec 2005, sub: Joint Contracting Command-Iraq/Afghanistan, Dempsey MNSTC-I Memos to Iraqis Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
18. Memo, Dempsey for al-Dulaimi, 9 Dec 2005, sub: MNSTC-I.
19. Memo, Dempsey for al-Dulaimi, 9 Dec 2005, sub: MNSTC-I.
20. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 7 Dec 2005, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slides 3–6, Update to SecDef 7 Dec 05 Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
21. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 7 Dec 2005, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slides 3–6.

Dempsey then provided an evaluation of the Iraqi Army using the newly adopted Transition Readiness Assessment matrix. The evaluation process categorized unit readiness at four levels: Level 4—new unit formed, Level 3—unit capable of fighting alongside MNF-I forces, Level 2—unit able to control its own area of responsibility with coalition support, and Level 1—unit can conduct operations independent of coalition forces. Equipment and personnel strengths factored into the overall rating, with Level 2 requiring a unit to have at least 85 percent of its authorized allowance in both areas. The transition of control of a unit from the coalition to the Iraqi Army and Ministry of Defense took place only after it attained a Level 2 rating.[22]

Dempsey explained that underdeveloped logistical and communications systems, along with a shortage of trained leaders, degraded readiness levels. Overall Iraqi Army officer and noncommissioned officer strengths in December 2005 amounted to 66 percent and 60 percent of respective authorizations. Although graduates from NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)-administered military academies and training schools were projected to raise both figures to 100 percent by June 2006, those projections did not factor in losses from desertion or casualties.[23] Nor did they account for unforeseen force structure challenges that frequently exerted a significant negative impact on Iraqi military personnel readiness as a result of political figures advocating for the creation of more security units in order solidify their power base or curry favor with special interest groups.

The MNSTC-I commander did not consider any of the Iraqi Army's ten divisions capable of independent operations. Two divisions were at Level 2 and five at Level 3, while three others remained at Level 4 because they were still forming. Out of thirty-six combat brigades, eight attained Level 2 readiness, leaving twenty-three others rated at Level 3 and five listed as still forming. The Iraqi Army's 112 combat and support battalions included 1 special forces battalion rated at Level 1 and 37 infantry battalions listed at Level 2. Fifty-seven battalions were rated at Level 3 while nine were still forming.[24] Dempsey concluded by reminding Rumsfeld that the pressing need to address corruption and favoritism threatened to divert attention

22. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032, "Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistics Capabilities," 28 Oct 2006, 7, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA460534.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
23. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 7 Dec 2005, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slides 9–10.
24. Training units and the subordinate elements of the 3d Mechanized Brigade of the 9th IA Division (Mechanized), which existed only on paper, received no rating. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 7 Dec 2005, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slides 6–7.



Iraqis line up to vote in Baghdād during the December 2005 parliamentary elections. (*S. Sgt. James H. Christopher, U.S. Army*)

from the other issues.[25] The secretary appeared to acknowledge his concerns while reiterating that MNSTC-I would have to find ways to accelerate the development of the Iraqi security forces.[26]

The day after the update, Secretary Rumsfeld hosted a press conference at which the topic of Iraqi military readiness figured prominently. His remarks reflected the prevailing belief among senior administration officials that creating an effective Iraqi military, capable of safeguarding the democratization process, would lead to an American withdrawal sooner rather than later. Rumsfeld told one reporter, "The reality is that the Iraqi security forces are improving in capability and experience every day, every week, every month. . . . We were expecting an increase in violence during the election period, because obviously the terrorists have a great deal to lose if the election is successful, as it will be. But thereafter the hope is that the conditions will permit some drawdown of troops."[27]

The media blitz continued as the secretary made several television appearances. Speaking on PBS's *NewsHour* with anchor Jim Lehrer, Rumsfeld reiterated his belief that the Iraqi military would continue to improve. "They

25. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 7 Dec 2005, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slide 1.
26. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 7 Dec 2005, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, handwritten comment on slide 13.
27. U.S. Dept. Def (DoD) News Bfg, Sec Def Donald H. Rumsfeld and Chairman Joint Chs Staff Gen Peter Pace, 8 Dec 2005, sub: Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Pace Stakeout



The Iraqi Army dedicated weeks of its time and a significant portion of its tactical resources to prepare for the parliamentary elections on 15 December 2005. (*S. Sgt. Kevin L. Moses Sr., U.S. Army*)

are going to be very much in charge of the election on Dec[ember] 15 in terms of the security for that. They're operating, I suppose, [in] maybe half of Baghdad right now on their own. They've taken over a province. And so that is a process that will go on. And as that happens, we will be able to pare down our forces if the conditions permit."[28] The secretary predicted a reduction of 18,000 in the 155,000 coalition personnel in Iraq, but he reminded viewers that it depended on the operational environment and capability of the Iraqi security forces.

Rumsfeld's statements echoed a speech President Bush had given to midshipmen and faculty at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. "We all remember the reports of some Iraqi security forces running from the fight more than a year ago," the president said. "Yet in the past year, Iraqi forces have been made real progress. . . . As the Iraqi forces gain experience and the political process advances, we will be able to decrease our troop levels in Iraq without losing our capability to defeat the terrorists."[29] The president's remarks had reinforced the basic premise of the *National Strategy*

at Capitol Hill, http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=1369, Hist Files, CMH.

28. Interv, Jim Lehrer, PBS *NewsHour*, with Donald H. Rumsfeld, Sec Def, 8 Dec 2005, https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip_507-r20rr1qd4j, Hist Files, CMH.

for Victory in Iraq, which had been released the previous month. According to the strategy, the coalition would adjust its "posture and approaches as conditions evolve and Iraqi capabilities grow" and that troop levels in Iraq would decrease over time as the Iraqis took on more responsibilities.[30]

ONCE MORE TO THE POLLS

At first glance, the 15 December election validated the positive views of American officials.[31] Iraqis flocked to the polls in unprecedented numbers to choose their first permanent government under the new constitution. Government sources reported that 77 percent of eligible voters had participated, a figure that significantly eclipsed the previous record of 58 percent turnout. The formidable number of Iraqi and American troops securing the polling places had ensured that the insurgents' attempts to disrupt voting were even less successful than their earlier efforts.

A second, equally important factor stemmed from the Sunni minority's decision to become involved in the political process rather than comply with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's demands for a boycott. In volatile Al Anbār Province, voter turnout increased from 2 percent in January to 86 percent in December 2005.[32] In the Sunni provinces of Nīnawā and Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn, it grew respectively from 17 percent and 29 percent in January to 70 percent and 98 percent in December.[33]

Secretary Rumsfeld saw the turnout as evidence of the impending "defeat for those behind the beheadings and suicide bombers."[34] While American political figures viewed the results with relief, coalition military commanders remained a bit more cautious. In response to a media question about the

29. George W. Bush, "President Outlines Strategy for Victory in Iraq" (remarks, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, 30 Nov 2005), https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/11/20051130-2.html, Hist Files, CMH.
30. National Security Council, *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*, Nov 2005, 12, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/documents/Iraqnationalstrategy11-30-05.pdf (accessed 20 Aug 2023), Hist Files, CMH.
31. Rpt, MNF-I HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 20 Dec 2005, Campaign Progress Review: Jun 2005–Dec 2005, 13, 21–22.
32. DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2006 (Section 9010)*, Rpt to Cong., Feb 2006, 4, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2006/iraq-stability-security_2006-02.pdf (accessed 27 Jun 2019), Hist Files, CMH.
33. DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Feb 2006, 7.
34. Robin Wright, "Experts Cautious in Assessing Iraq Election," *Washington Post*, 16 Dec 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/15/AR2005121502018.html, Hist Files, CMH.

effect of the election on the insurgency, General Casey replied, "What do I expect the insurgency to do after the elections[?] The answer is, on the terrorist and foreign fighter side, I expect them to attempt to resume attacks against civilians and us and Iraqi security forces, and attempt to discredit the process, and attempt to demonstrate that they are still strong and a factor to be reckoned with."[35]

The ballots cast throughout Iraq and by Iraqis abroad in mid-December were tabulated by 25 January 2006. The United Iraqi Alliance (dominated by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Badr Organization, and the Islamic Da'wa Party) won 128 seats, while Kurdish-affiliated parties gained 53. Sunni candidates garnered 56 seats out of the 275 available in the parliament.[36] Extensive talks commenced as the rival political factions sought to gain control over influential cabinet posts. Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Ja'fari and Interior Minister Bayan Jabr stood little chance of remaining in power, given the discovery of secret prisons and the rise in extrajudicial killings.[37] Yet the likelihood of a prime minister with broad popular support taking office seemed remote as Kurds, Sunnis, and Shi'a each sought to prevent rivals from gaining political advantage. Although the sectarian wrangling exerted little direct impact on MNF-I, a prolonged debate that left ministerial positions unfilled threatened to impede the development of the Iraqi security forces.

Some Iraqi officials did not share the positive outlook that had led the Bush administration to authorize the withdrawal of two brigade combat teams in the immediate aftermath of the voting. Closer analysis of the election results suggested that although a permanent government would be formed after a lengthy period of negotiation, the end result probably would not satisfy any of the parties involved. The Shi'a, for example, had begun to mirror the fractious Sunnis as fissures appeared in what many Americans mistakenly regarded as a monolithic ideological bloc. Muqtada al-Sadr—who, like the Sunni Arabs, had realized that opposition to elections was counterproductive—had sponsored a Sadrist party that secured thirty-two seats, giving him significant leverage in the forming of a governing coalition. The United Iraqi Alliance's position as the front-runner depended on

35. DoD News Bfg, Gen George Casey, 16 Dec 2005, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/12/mil-051216-dod02.html, Hist Files, CMH.
36. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 25 Jan 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
37. Bayan Jabr became the finance minister in the new government, where he retained control over the Ministry of Interior's budget. Robert M. Perito, "The Iraq Federal Police: U.S. Police Building Under Fire," U.S. Institute of Peace Special Rpt 291, 18 Oct 2011, 6, https://www.usip.org/publications/2011/10/iraq-federal-police, Hist Files, CMH.

theocrats from the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Da'wa Party, the Al-Fadhila (Islamic Virtue) Party, Sadrists, and a smattering of Shi'i independents reaching agreement on apportioning cabinet posts before broaching that same topic with the Kurds and Sunnis.

Keenly aware that the Iraqi leadership might take months to form a permanent government, the Bush administration extended the tours of several key U.S. leaders. In early January, the Department of Defense announced General Casey's acceptance of President Bush's request to remain the MNF-I commander through 2007. Administration officials explained that "General Casey had mastered the complicated nuances of Iraqi tribal and regional politics during his tenure, and had developed an exceptional working relationship with Zalmay Khalilzad, the United States ambassador to Iraq."[38] Ambassador Khalilzad also remained.

Setting the conditions for Iraq's transformation into a "federal, democratic, pluralist, and unified" nation not only represented the culmination of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546 seven-step process but also had served as justification for MNF-I to overhaul the April 2005 campaign plan.[39] During that process, General Casey adopted much broader categories. The new campaign plan had three phases: (1) postelection stabilization (2006 to early 2007); (2) restoration of civil authority (2007 to early 2008); and (3) support to self-reliance (2008 to early 2009). Although transition had figured prominently in the previous plan, the new plan would have to foster stability and security in the wake of the successful elections, which meant that MNF-I would have to place security cooperation, improving governance, promoting economic development, and maintaining effective strategic communications on an equal footing with facilitating the disengagement of U.S. forces.[40]

The MNF-I mission had evolved from transitioning the coalition-led counterinsurgency campaign to Iraqi security forces in April 2005 to a joint political and military effort with the U.S. Embassy that was designed to help the Iraqis develop representative and effective institutions by spring 2006.[41]

38. Eric Schmitt, "At Request of Bush, Commander in Iraq Will Stay On for Year," *New York Times*, 15 Jan 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/15/politics/15military.html, Hist Files, CMH.

39. John D. Negroponte, U.S. Representative to the United Nations, "Explanation of Vote on UN Security Council Resolution 1546 on Iraq" (remarks, U.S. Mission to the United Nations, New York, NY, 8 Jun 2004), U.S. Dept. State Archives, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/33323.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

40. Bfg, MNF-I to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 10 Mar 2006, sub: Draft Joint Campaign Plan 2006 (Iltizam Mushtarak–United Commitment), slide 6, Hist Files, CMH.

41. Bfg, MNF-I to MNF-I Cdrs Conf, 22 Apr 2006, sub: Joint Campaign Plan 2006 (Iltizam Mushtarak–United Commitment), slide 6, Hist Files, CMH.

The next steps in Iraq's path to democracy called for provincial elections by late summer or early fall, followed by a constitutional amendment referendum several months later, and neutralization of the insurgency by the end of 2007.[42]

Other changes during this period exerted a more immediate impact on the train-and-equip effort. First, Lt. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli replaced Lt. Gen. John R. Vines as the commander of Multi-National Corps–Iraq on 19 January 2006 when V Corps assumed responsibilities from XVIII Airborne Corps. That handover was the most visible of numerous transitions that took place over several months, as seventeen brigade and regimental combat teams deployed to the region for the rotation starting in late summer 2005.[43] The arrival of these new units initiated the second iteration of partnerships between U.S. and Iraqi units.

The second change involved launching MNSTC-I's Year of the Police, a program designed to align police capabilities with the needs of the counterinsurgency campaign. The most ambitious aspect of the program was the consolidation of the U.S.-created public order battalions and the Iraqi-organized special police commando units under a new organization officially called the Iraqi National Police, commonly referred to as simply the National Police (NP).[44] The public order battalions became the 1st NP Division, and the commando units formed the 2d NP Division. The latter outfit would change more than just its name, as Interior Minister Jabr would replace its original complement of Sunni army officers with Shi'i militia fighters. MNF-I envisioned the National Police as a force that could bridge the capabilities gap between local police and the Iraqi Army, deploying as

42. Bfg, MNF-I to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 10 Mar 2006, sub: Draft Joint Campaign Plan 2006 (Iltizam Mushtarak–United Commitment), slide 8; Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 96.

43. One U.S. Army brigade remained in Kuwait until called forward, thirteen were assigned to two multinational divisions in Iraq, and one worked for I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) in Al Anbār. Two U.S. Marine Corps regimental combat teams also were assigned to I MEF. Press release, Sgt. Joe M. Battle, V Corps Public Affairs Ofc, 19 Jan 2006, sub: V Corps Officially Assumes Coalition Mission in Baghdad Ceremony, http://www.vcorps.army.mil/News/2006/jan19_MNCI_TOA_release.pdf; Rpt, Dept. Army, "Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Supplemental Budget Estimate, Operation and Maintenance, Army, Justification Book - Amendment," vol. 1, Mar 2007, 4, https://www.asafm.army.mil/Portals/72/Documents/BudgetMaterial/20082009/fy07%20supplemental/sup07-oma-v1.pdf; both in Hist Files, CMH.

44. Nine 400-person public order battalions originally were fielded in 2004 as part of the 4,920-strong Civil Intervention Force, which was intended to be the Ministry of Interior's counterpart to the Iraqi Intervention Force. Michael Eisenstadt, "The Iraqi Security Forces (Part I): Background and Status," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 26 Oct 2004, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iraqi-security-forces-part-i-background-and-current-status, Hist Files, CMH.

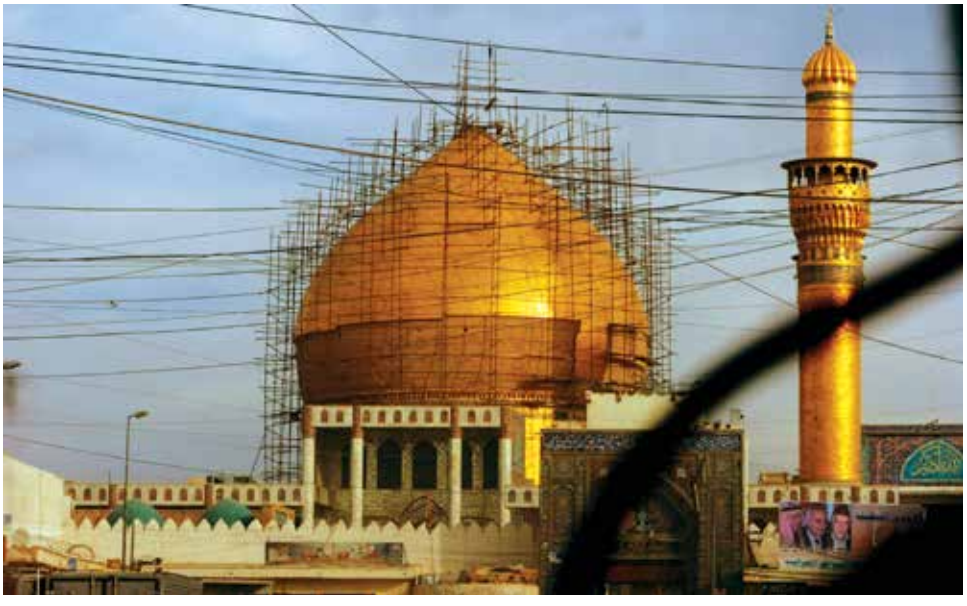
needed to reinforce the former and calling for assistance from the latter when the situation required more combat power.[45]

The formation of the National Police was a positive achievement, but it simultaneously posed a complicated challenge to MNF-I. The election results had transformed the Sadrists from the coalition's most dangerous foe during the April 2004 uprising into a core member of the dominant political coalition within the Iraqi government. Future coalition military action against Sadr's fighters, regardless of the original provocation, carried the potential that the Iraqi government might intervene in Sadr's favor. In an interview with Army historians long after the fact, General Vines described the unwelcome development in stark terms. "Moving [against Sadr] would be perceived as attacking the legitimacy of the government. . . . It would be the equivalent of [U.S.] police coming down and arresting the Republican National Committee."[46] Yet, at the time, American military leaders had not publicly voiced any concerns that Iraq's political divisions would affect the performance of its security forces.

EXPLOITING THE GAP

Rather than admit defeat following his failure to disrupt elections, Zarqawi adopted a new strategy: ratchet up the low-level sectarian violence that had emerged in the wake of Saddam Hussein's fall in March 2003.[47] Sunnis were well aware of depredations being committed by Ministry of Interior units, which allowed Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) to justify its actions by claiming it merely was retaliating against government-sanctioned death squads. Zarqawi chose Sāmarrāʾ, a city with a Sunni-majority population and the site of one of the four holiest places in the Shi'i world, as his target. The extremist leader's motives remained opaque, but it appeared he wanted to inflame tensions between Shi'i and Sunni Arabs in the hope that the U.S. government would pull out its troops rather than allow them to be caught up in a bloody civil war. With U.S. military forces gone and the Iraqi security

45. Perito, "Iraq Federal Police," 6.
46. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 516.
47. It took some time before the White House realized that the 2006 Sāmarrāʾ bombing had amped up sectarian violence that had been ongoing since 2003. Interv, Russell L. Riley, Seyom Brown, and Barbara Perry, George W. Bush Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, with Steven J. Hadley, former White House National Security Advisor, 31 Oct–1 Nov 2011, 54, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/stephen-j-hadley-oral-history, Hist Files, CMH.



The Al-Askari Mosque in Sāmarrā' under renovation in December 2005 (*Sfc. Mark Wojciechowski, U.S. Army*)

forces sundered by sectarianism, AQI would gain a free hand in reshaping the fractured nation's future.[48]

Zarqawi put his plan into action in Sāmarrā' on 22 February 2006, with a powerful explosion that shattered the dome of the Al-Askari, or Golden, Mosque. The mosque contained the mausoleums of Ali al-Hadi and Hassan al-Askari, the tenth and eleventh Shi'i imams, as well as the sacred shrine of the twelfth imam, or "Hidden Imam," Mohammed al-Mahdi, making it one of the most significant Shi'i worship sites in the world.[49] The leader of the Golden Mosque's police security detail fled after the blast, leading government officials to suspect his complicity in the attack.[50]

News of the bombing ignited several days of nationwide rioting and violence as infuriated Shi'a exacted revenge against Sunni mosques, businesses, and homes. The Shi'i-dominated national and local police did little to prevent these attacks.[51] Sunni insurgents retaliated by staging

48. Carter Malkasian, *Illusions of Victory: The Anbar Awakening and the Rise of the Islamic State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 33–34.
49. *New World Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Samarra," n.d., http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Samarra (accessed 9 Sep 2023), Hist Files, CMH.
50. "Iraqi Police Capture Key Suspect of Samarra Mosque Bombing," Peoples Daily Online, 7 Sep 2007, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/6256913.html, Hist Files, CMH.
51. Christopher Albritton, "Why Iraq's Police Are a Menace," *Time*, 20 Mar 2006, https://time.com/archive/6939277/why-iraqs-police-are-a-menace/, Hist Files, CMH.

coordinated terror attacks within the capital. On 28 February, a car bomb exploded near a market and the Timimi Mosque in the mainly Shi'i area of Karadah, killing six and wounding eighteen. Minutes later, two additional blasts rocked eastern Baghdād. The first involved a car bomb that exploded outside a post office, slaying four and injuring twelve. Then, a suicide bomber standing in a line of people waiting for gasoline triggered his explosive belt, killing twenty-four. Late that evening, a car bomb killed twenty-three and wounded at least forty-five people near a Shi'i mosque in Al Hurriyah. Six days of violence by both sides inflicted an official total of 379 dead and 458 injured.[52] Unofficial sources estimated 1,300 deaths just among Sunnis, including eight prominent clerics.[53]

The timing of the Sāmarrā' bombing, which occurred during the opening session of parliament, eminently suited Zarqawi's purposes. The destruction of the Al-Askari Mosque triggered an invisible but no less significant conflict within the incoming government as swelling sectarian passions influenced the political negotiations. Fallout from the Golden Mosque bombing also threatened to transform portions of the Iraqi security forces into ineffective partners. Sectarian tensions resulted in Shi'i-dominated police and army units turning a blind eye to militia attacks against Sunnis. Some Shi'i police actively took part in sectarian violence. Sunni military renegades responded by targeting Shi'i civilians and death squads alike. MNF-I's 20 December assessment, which had identified extremists as the deadliest threat to the end state envisioned by the Bush administration, had proven prophetic.[54]

MNF-I ramped up operations in an effort to staunch the violence. In a move reminiscent of Vietnam-era heliborne search and clear tactics, soldiers from two Iraqi divisions, supported by coalition troops, conducted Operation Glory Light on 2 March. The 3d Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th IA Division, and a battalion of the 101st Airborne Division began the week-long action with a combined air assault into Sadr Al Yusufiyah, a sizable town on the Euphrates River that served as a transit point for insurgents moving between Al Anbār and Baghdād. In the wake of the heliborne landing, convoys carrying elements of the 6th IA Division and the 9th IA Division (Mechanized) moved into the area to search, clear, and secure roads and buildings. Over the next several days, the combined force detained sixteen

52. "Iraq Bomb Claims Dozens of Lives," BBC News, 28 Feb 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4757964.stm, Hist Files, CMH.
53. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 534.
54. Rpt, MNF-I HQ to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 20 Dec 2005, Campaign Progress Review Jun 2005–Dec 2005, 4.



Iraqi soldiers patrol the streets of Mosul on 1 March 2006. (*Spc. Clydell Kinchen, U.S. Army*)

suspected terrorists, killed two, and wounded one.[55] Although Iraqi soldiers gained experience from participating in a large-scale air assault, the overall operation expended significant resources for little tangible result.

Sectarian fury had continued unabated during Glory Light as Shi'i militia groups hit back against Sunnis and more bombings rocked the Iraqi capital. The agents of sectarian violence were not content to vent their anger on the general populace. A sniper killed Maj. Gen. Mubdar Hatim Hazya al-Duleimi, a Sunni who had been commanding a division made up mostly of Shi'a, as he drove back to his headquarters at Baghdad International Airport after visiting one of his brigades. His death came at a critical time for the 6th IA Division, which just had assumed operational control over four of its five brigades deployed in and around Baghdād.[56] Some U.S. advisers assigned to the division believed that a subordinate seeking promotion had arranged the

55. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 15 Mar 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm; "U.S., Iraqi Troops Score Successes," American Forces Press Service, 10 Mar 2006, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2006/03/mil-060310-afps01.htm; both in Hist Files, CMH.

56. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 8 Mar 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm; Andrew Tilghman, "High-ranking Iraqi General Killed in Attack on Convoy," *European Stars and Stripes*, 8 Mar 2006, https://www.stripes.com/news/high-ranking-iraqi-general-killed-in-attack-on-convoy-1.45937; both in Hist Files, CMH.

assassination.[57] When the Americans began investigating, a targeted attack with an improvised explosive device (IED) killed one of the division's senior U.S. advisers. MNF-I did not pursue further inquiries as developments in the wake of Glory Light consumed its full attention.[58]

The unchecked violence taking place in Iraq underscored the fact that nearly three months after the December elections, the country's political leaders still were unable to form a government. The political standoff assumed more tangible form with the postponement of the parliament's first meeting on 7 March, which already had been delayed because it would start the clock ticking on the sixty-day mandate to select a prime minister and cabinet.[59] Nevertheless, political wrangling took place at a furious pace behind the scenes as Kurds and Sunnis both sought concessions for acquiescing to a Shi'i ascending to the post of prime minister.[60]

TRYING TO STOP THE TRANSITION FROM DERAILING

Spiraling sectarian violence prompted American leaders to examine what might transpire in a worst-case scenario in Iraq. On 13 March, Casey circulated an information paper discounting the possibility of a nationwide conflict pitting Shi'a against Sunnis. He downplayed recent developments as "a battle between Sunni insurgents and the Shia militia . . . supported by regional actors" rather than the opening clashes of a civil war as some media reports claimed.[61] The MNF-I commanding general's greatest near-term concern involved AQI gaining greater influence by helping Sunni rebels combat their Shi'i opponents. To prevent that from materializing, Casey prioritized the targeting of al-Qaeda fighters to ensure the Iraqi Army

57. Interv, Mark J. Reardon with Col. (Ret.) Edmund J. Degen, former 6th Iraqi Army (IA) Div Dep Adviser, 17 Jan 2019, Hist Files, CMH.

58. A second targeted attack almost killed a U.S. adviser who ordered a raid against a Sadrist enclave. The Americans also believed that the brigade commander who took over the division arranged the deaths of two subordinates who tried to expose his corrupt practices. Interv, John Hamilton, U.S. Army Air Def Center and Sch, with Capt. Kenneth Frank, former adviser, 6th IA Div, 23 Oct 2007, 6–7, OLE.

59. Jim Lehrer, "On the Brink of Civil War," PBS *NewsHour*, 7 Mar 2006, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/jan-june06/iraq_3-07.html, Hist Files, CMH.

60. "Key Political Players in Iraq," CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), 3 Jan 2007, http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/iraq/new_government.html, Hist Files, CMH.

61. "Former Iraqi PM: 'We Are in Civil War,'" CBS News, 19 Mar 2006, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/former-iraq-pm-we-are-in-civil-war/, Hist Files, CMH; Email, Gen. George W. Casey, MNF-I Cmdg Gen, to Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Donovan et al., MNF-I Chs Staff, 13 Mar 2006, sub: FW: Civil War, with attached Info Paper, "SPA Strategy," 11 Mar 2006, 1, Casey Papers, CMH.



Soldiers from the 4th Iraqi Army Division and their U.S. advisers pose for a photo during Operation Swarmer. (*Sgt. Waine D. Haley, U.S. Army*)

remained a cohesive force capable of constraining sectarian violence and thwarting more high-visibility attacks like those in Sāmarrāʾ. MNF-I needed to achieve both objectives if ongoing efforts to form a permanent central government were to be successful.

Casey summarized the options available to coalition forces in four succinct terms: (1) bug out, (2) duck, (3) intervene, and (4) pick a side. Bugging out, that is, leaving the country altogether, would generate tremendous discontent within the United States while also diminishing allied confidence in America's willingness to fulfill future strategic commitments. Ducking, or standing aside and letting the violence take its course, raised the possibility of Americans being accused of failing to safeguard innocents. Intervening involved mounting combat operations against all belligerents for the purpose of separating the warring parties and reducing violence, with an attendant rise in American casualties all but guaranteed. Finally, the notion of picking a side assumed that the United States would side with the Shi'a against Sunni insurgents and foreign extremists. Although offering greater leverage over a Shi'i-dominated central government, doing so would reinforce claims that the United States sought to divide and conquer rather than bring democracy to Iraq.[62]

62. Casey expressed his preference for some form of intervention rather than departing or sitting on the sidelines. While the MNF-I commander did not render a detailed judgment



Soldiers from the 3d Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, and the 4th Iraqi Army Division exit a CH–47 Chinook helicopter northeast of Sāmarrā' during Operation Swarmer. (*S. Sgt. Alfred Johnson, U.S. Army*)

With Iraqis locked in discussions over the incoming cabinet, MNF-I split its attention between neutralizing insurgent cells complicit in the Golden Mosque bombing and accelerating the formation of a national unity government by securing Baghdād.[63] The latter effort, code-named Operation Scales of Justice, involved 55,000 U.S. and Iraqi security personnel, including three American and five Iraqi battalions that transferred to Baghdād from other areas in Iraq.[64] Sweeping neighborhoods for extremists, however, did not produce substantial results. While the reinforcements succeeded in reducing the level of violence in five districts by an average of 20 percent, attacks in the Adhamiyah, Kadhimiyah, and New Baghdad (also known as 9 Nissan) Districts rose during the same period.[65]

on the impact of each option on the Iraqi Army, he did note that military units composed of Sunnis would probably desert if the Americans openly favored the Shi'a. Email, Casey to Donovan et al., 13 Mar 2006, sub: FW: Civil War, with attached Info Paper, "SPA Strategy," 11 Mar 2006, 3–6.

63. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 90–91.

64. Bfg, MNF-I, 26 Jan 2007, sub: History of the Baghdad Security Plan–14 March 2006 thru Present (26 Jan 2007), slides 2–3, Commander's Initiative Group Folder, Hist Files, CMH.

65. MNF-I Press Bfg, Mar 2006, sub: Scales of Justice Daily Attack Assessment, Mar 2006, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2006/03/the_battle_for_baghd.php, Hist Files, CMH. The slide mistakenly divides the Rasheed into two smaller areas—Doura and Al Bayaa.

In conjunction with Operation Scales of Justice, MNF-I mounted another combined air assault on 16 March 2006 in southern Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn Province. Dubbed Operation Swarmer, it involved elements of the 4th IA Division aided by three U.S. battalions. The raid targeted individuals believed responsible for both the destruction of the Al-Askari Mosque and the murder of a prominent Al Iraqiya television correspondent. As during the previous air assault operations, additional Iraqi troops conducted a ground infiltration soon after the helicopters delivered the first wave of soldiers, who were predominantly U.S. infantry.[66] After six days, U.S. Central Command reported that Swarmer had resulted in the capture of 104 suspected insurgents, including the alleged ringleader of the Golden Mosque bombing and 6 people implicated in the reporter's death.[67]

Those parts of Iraq with more homogeneous populations were not experiencing such high levels of violence, so the transfer of security responsibilities continued unabated. The 8th IA Division led off when it had assumed control of the heavily Shi'i provinces of Ad Dīwānīyah and Wāsit on 27 January.[68] In a ceremony held at the Qayyarah West airfield the following day, the 1st Battalion, 3d Brigade, 2d IA Division, had taken over a sector south of Mosul.[69] On 20 March, the 1st Mechanized Battalion, 1st Mechanized Brigade, 9th IA Division, took charge of an area located north of Baghdād from the American 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized).[70] On 1 April, the 3d Battalion, 2d Brigade, 5th IA Division, accepted responsibility for the southern half of Diyālá Province.[71]

The handovers suggested consistent if sluggish progress, though American officials acknowledged that the postelection impasse threatened to undo recent gains. At Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina, on 6 April, President Bush told listeners, "I know you know Condi [Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice] was over there the

66. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 22 Mar 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
67. Bill Roggio, "Swarmer & Media Coverage," *Long War Journal*, 18 Mar 2006, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2006/03/swarmer_the_media.php, Hist Files, CMH.
68. Gerry J. Gilmore, "Iraqi Army Division Takes Security Lead in Two Provinces," American Forces Press Service, 28 Jan 2006, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2006/01/mil-060127-afps03.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
69. "Iraqi Army Assumes Control of Two Areas," Army News Service, 1 Feb 2006, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2006/02/mil-060201-arnews01.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
70. "Iraqi Brigade Takes Control of Battle-space," American Forces Press Service, 25 Mar 2006, https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2006/03/iraq-060325-afps01.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
71. Pfc. Paul J. Harris, "Iraqi Army Assumes Battlespace," American Forces Press Service, 1 Apr 2006, Hist Files, CMH.



Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki speaks during Army Day, a celebration marking the 86th birthday of the country's army on 6 January 2006, at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the International Zone. At left is Minister of Defense Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji. (*Sgt. Curt Cashour, U.S. Army*)

other day and her message was, let's get moving. The people want there to be a unity government . . . and so we are working with them to get this unity government up and running."[72] In a Baghdād press conference that same day, MNF-I spokesperson Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch echoed the president, saying, "Candidly, there'd be much less opportunity for sectarian violence if the Iraqis could form a national unity government sooner rather than later. . . . All optimism is that together they will form this government. And when the government is formed . . . then the incentive for the insurgency to incite sectarian violence goes away. So the sooner that happens, the better."[73] Although well-intended, both statements indicated that the U.S. civilian and military leadership still did not understand that the causes of sectarian violence in Iraq went beyond national governance.

72. George W. Bush, "President Bush Discusses Global War on Terror" (remarks, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, NC, 6 Apr 2006), http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/04/20060406-3.html, Hist Files, CMH.
73. "Iraqis Urged to Form Government, Security Forces Diminish Terrorists' Supplies," MNF-I Public Affairs Ofc, 7 Apr 2006, http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=82&Itemid=128 (page discontinued; accessed 24 Mar 2010), Hist Files, CMH.

Months of negotiating in Baghdād ended on 22 April when the dominant parties agreed to name Nouri Kamel al-Maliki as the prime minister designate.[74] A behind-the-scenes operator for most of his life, Maliki possessed personal and ideological credentials acceptable to most Shi'a.[75] Born in Abu Ghraib in 1950, he earned a master's degree in Arabic language and literature from Baghdad University, where he joined the Da'wa Party, opposed to Saddam Hussein's rule. In October 1979, Maliki fled Iraq after a government tribunal sentenced him to death. He returned in 2003 and served on the National De-Ba'thification Commission, won a seat in the Transitional National Assembly, and took an active role in drafting the new constitution.[76]

The Iraqi parliament confirmed thirty-four of Maliki's thirty-seven cabinet choices, but left the key positions of defense minister, interior minister, and minister of state for national security unfilled. The prime minister announced that until the legislature designated someone to assume those positions, he would head the Ministry of Interior and Salam al-Zawbai, a Sunni politician designated as a deputy prime minister, would serve as the interim defense minister. Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, a Kurd, temporarily filled the national security post.[77]

In a bid to convince the Americans he disapproved of organized sectarian violence, Prime Minister Maliki proclaimed on 30 May that no militias would be exempt from government plans to dissolve irregular armed groups. Although this appeared to be a tough stance on the issue, the Iraqi government had not made any serious efforts to reduce the militias since late 2003.[78] Maliki further watered down the declaration by holding out the prospect of a more lenient stance toward those who had battled against Saddam, such as the Peshmerga and Badr forces. That caveat would render moot Multi-National Force–West's nascent efforts to persuade Sunni tribal militias in Al Anbār to switch sides. In addition, Maliki left open the question of integration into the security forces as an alternative to disbanding these groups.

74. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 26 Apr 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
75. Interv, Robert Siegel, NPR, with David Patel, Stanford University, 24 Apr 2006, sub: Maliki, Iraq's Incoming Prime Minister, *All Things Considered*, NPR, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5360191&ft=1&f=2, Hist Files, CMH.
76. "Key Political Players in Iraq," CBC, 3 Jan 2007.
77. Jim Garamone, "New Iraqi Government Approved," American Forces Press Service, 20 May 2006, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=15715, Hist Files, CMH.
78. Anthony H. Cordesman and William D. Sullivan, "Iraqi Force Development in 2006," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 19 Jun 2006, 57, https://www.csis.org/analysis/iraqi-force-development-2006, Hist Files, CMH.



Elements of the 9th Iraqi Army Division pass through a highway checkpoint en route to Camp Taji on 18 May 2006. (*PH1(AW) Michael Larson, U.S. Navy*)

Even as he took a public stance against militias, Maliki worked behind the scenes with several factions to ensure his political survival. With a parliamentary support base composed of more Sadrists than members of his own Da'wa Party, he relied on Sadr's support to remain in office. Cognizant of the political influence he had accrued since 2003, the radical cleric ensured his supporters received control of the Ministries of Health, Transportation, and Agriculture. That powerful combination gave Sadr the ability to disrupt the political process if Maliki's government did not thwart coalition attempts to interfere with Sadr's agenda. In addition, control of the Ministry of Health, which administered the hospitals that treated wounded Iraqi soldiers, gave Sadrists a means to coerce government security forces. The Americans, for the most part, were not yet aware of this shift in political dynamics. As a result, they viewed the formation of Maliki's cabinet as a vital first step in ending the spiraling violence rather than a way for Sadr to gain greater influence.[79]

Security transitions continued unabated as Maliki sought to consolidate his position. The 101st Airborne Division handed responsibility for Kirkūk to the 2d Battalion, 2d Brigade, 4th IA Division, on 2 May.[80] The 3d Battalion,

79. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 556–57.
80. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 17 May 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

3d Brigade, 3d IA Division, took charge of Sinjār, a town near the Syrian border in northwest Nīnawā Province, on the following day.[81] On 15 May, the 2d Armor Brigade, 9th IA Division, the only Iraqi unit with more-recent-vintage T72 main battle tanks, assumed control of the area surrounding Camp Taji.[82]

Also during May, the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) formally opened its Joint Operations Center in Baghdād. The facility provided the IGFC with a means to coordinate the actions of units in areas turned over by the Americans, while MNF-I continued to oversee operations in regions still under coalition control.[83] The opening of the center was a significant achievement because its mission required the Iraqis to adopt American terminology, report formats, and staff processes, rather than allowing Iraqi commanders to continue their accustomed practices of hoarding information and sharing it only when necessary. The IGFC had been resisting all entreaties from MNF-I and MNSTC-I to occupy the center, arguing that it could not begin using the facility before all communications systems were in place. This standoff lasted until the transition team announced it would convert the facility into an American entertainment center if it stayed vacant. The next day, the IGFC staff moved in.[84] The incident was representative of a general aversion to change; military transition teams serving at the brigade level experienced similar Iraqi reluctance to adopt American command and control methods.[85]

READJUSTING THE TRAIN-AND-EQUIP EFFORT

As the IGFC settled into its unpracticed role as the overseer of Iraqi Army operations, ethnic tensions surfaced within its units. Shi'i irregulars willing

81. Spc. Richard Vogt, "3d Iraqi Division Assumes Responsibility for Sinjār," *Advisor* 3, no. 18 (13 May 2006): 5, Hist Files, CMH.
82. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 17 May 2006.
83. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 10 May 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
84. The Americans were just as likely to resist new methods as evidenced by Multi-National Corps–Iraq intelligence analysts refusing to exchange information with their Iraqi Ground Forces Command counterparts throughout 2006, despite being located only 100 yards apart. Interv, Christopher K. Ives, CSI, with Col. Jeffrey W. Terhune, former Iraqi Ground Forces Cmd (IGFC) Mil Transition Team (MiTT) Ofcr in Charge, 22 Mar 2007, 7–8, 10–11, OLE.
85. In the case of the 3d Brigade, 3d IA Division, the Iraqi commander resisted installing the generators needed to power his tactical operations center, because the noise interfered with informal evening chats with his staff. Interv, Christopher K. Ives, CSI, with Lt. Col. Paul Ciesinski, former 3d Bde, 3d IA Div MiTT Leader, 13 Oct 2006, 12–13, 16, OLE.

to confront government security forces posed yet another challenge for the predominantly Shi'i Iraqi Army. The police were even more susceptible to internecine tensions. A May 2006 Civilian Police Assistance Training Team document acknowledged that those government elements already were "co-opted or infiltrated by insurgents as well as members of the Badr Organization, and to a lesser extent, Jaysh al Mahdi. These groups exploit MOI [Ministry of Interior] forces to further insurgent, party, and sectarian goals. As a result, many Iraqis do not trust the police. Divisions falling along militia lines have led to violence among police."[86]

The rising potential for fratricidal confrontations raised the possibility that Iraqi troops might avoid fighting this new wave of insurgents, just as they had been reluctant to battle against Sadr's Mahdi Army in April and August 2004. However, the Shi'i-majority government had no qualms about arresting Sunni soldiers. On 24 May 2006, the Ministry of Justice charged forty-two Sunni soldiers with extrajudicial killings. They not only had assassinated civilians in response to Shi'i militia attacks but also had killed their own commander when he threatened to expose their atrocities.[87]

MNF-I concerns about tensions between Kurds and Arabs also grew as various ethnic communities increasingly viewed unavoidable incidents and accidents as deliberate attacks. In mid-May 2006, a roadside bomb struck an Iraqi Army convoy near Dhulu'iya, a majority–Sunni Arab city in Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn Province. The Kurdish 1st Battalion, 3d Brigade, 4th IA Division, transported several wounded soldiers to the nearest civilian hospital and began firing indiscriminately into the air to clear a path through a crowd at the entrance. A stray round killed a Shi'i civilian. When troops from the Shi'i 3d Battalion, 1st Brigade, arrived a few minutes later, the ensuing confrontation between the units left one of the Shi'i soldiers dead. The Kurds then attempted to leave but discovered another Shi'i battalion blocking their way. An American force from the nearby coalition base in Balad had to intervene to settle the dispute.[88] The incident highlighted the sectarian makeup of units and the increasing distrust between them.

86. Rpt, Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, n.d., "Civilian Police Assistance Training Team Iraq, Year of the Police: In-Stride Assessment: October 2005 to May 2006," Iraqi Police Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

87. The article identifies the soldiers as members of the "16th Brigade," but that unit designation did not exist at that time. It is more likely the personnel were assigned to the 16th Strategic Infrastructure Battalion. Dexter Filkins, "Armed Groups Propel Iraq toward Chaos," *New York Times*, 24 May 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/24/world/middleeast/24security.html, Hist Files, CMH.

88. Patrick Cockburn, "Iraq's 'Ragtag' Army Units Start Fighting Among Themselves," *Independent*, 14 May 2006, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraqs-ragtag-army-units-start-fighting-among-themselves-478162.html, Hist Files, CMH.



A platoon from the 4th Iraqi Army Division covers a traffic checkpoint outside Tikrīt. Their unarmored commercial vehicles still carry Iraqi Civil Defense Corps unit markings. (*Spc. Teddy Wade, U.S. Army*)

As fissures within the Iraqi security forces became more evident, MNF-I released its updated campaign plan. The 28 April 2006 document noted, "The security environment is changing. . . . AQI will continue to foment sectarian violence through attacks calculated to generate a sectarian backlash that they hope will lead to self-sustaining sectarian violence and potentially civil war."[89] In response to evidence that sectarian seams were appearing within the security forces, the 2006 campaign plan stated, "The [Iraqi Army] must continue to develop and sustain an ethos which over-rides any external influences such as party or tribal loyalties."[90] In other words, MNF-I wanted the Iraqis to solve that problem to avoid getting involved itself. Convinced that overt American intervention would result in one or more factions accusing coalition forces of favoritism, the campaign lacked guidance on how U.S. brigade and division commanders might help partnered forces come to terms with deep religious and tribal influences that fractured fragile attempts at unity.

A MNSTC-I progress assessment published on 15 May sidestepped the sectarian issue and instead focused on how the train-and-equip effort supported the updated campaign plan. The document claimed that the

89. Memo, MNF-I/U.S. Embassy–Iraq (USM-1), 28 Apr 2006, sub: Joint Campaign Plan: Operation Iraqi Freedom–Transition to Self-Reliance, Multi-National Force–Iraq and Department of State, 11, Casey Papers, CMH.
90. Memo, MNF-I/USM-I, 28 Apr 2006, sub: Joint Campaign Plan, 17–18.

Iraqi security forces had the firepower and personnel numbers necessary to conduct counterinsurgency operations, but it conceded that they remained a semistatic force, restricted to protecting urban areas, securing checkpoints, and conducting limited sweeps—the latter only with significant coalition assistance. Although efforts were underway to increase the mobility of the Iraqi Army, regular infantry divisions still lacked an organic capability to deploy brigade-sized formations, partly because of an earlier decision to provide additional vehicles to the sole Iraqi Intervention Force division rather than the entire army.[91]

One initiative designed to enhance the ability of Iraqi units to operate in a more dynamic fashion involved restructuring infantry brigades. The previous organizational model, consisting of three infantry battalions, each with four companies, allowed battalions to rotate subordinate elements through a seven-day leave period during any given month. The new brigade structure had four battalions composed of three companies apiece, which supported a battalion-based leave policy. A brigade thus could deploy three complete battalions at any time rather than four understrength units.[92] Although this restructuring offered theoretical promise, it did not offset the fact that large numbers of Iraqi soldiers habitually deserted when ordered to travel significant distances to fight opponents from the same sect. Nor did it address the frequent problem of some Iraqi companies and battalions going on leave before their sister units had returned to duty.[93]

MNSTC-I also sought solutions to the increasing number of Iraqi Army vehicles falling prey to IEDs. The 15 May report admitted, "Given the brutal nature of the enemy they face, we assess that at this point the Iraqi Security Forces are less protected than we would like against the specific threat of roadside bomb attack."[94] The Iraqis needed vehicles with armor protection—though that would not be a complete solution—as most existing designs of personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles were vulnerable to IEDs. However, their armor plating could deflect or absorb a portion of the blast, which reduced crew and passenger casualties. The unarmored wheeled transport vehicles that made up the bulk of the Iraqi Army's fleet at that time lacked comparable protection.

91. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2006, sub: In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces, 19, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
92. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2006, sub: In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces, 18.
93. Eric Navarro, *God Willing: My Wild Ride with the New Iraqi Army* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2008), 116–22.
94. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2006, sub: In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces, 19.

The Ministry of Defense took the first steps to address the problem by purchasing 600 armored Land Rovers and 600 Polish Dzik armored personnel carriers. They began arriving in late 2005, with the 2d, 3d, and 4th IA Divisions receiving Land Rovers while the Dziks went to the 6th, 8th, and 10th IA Divisions.[95] The Iraqis negotiated a second large purchase with a September 2006 delivery date to provide wheeled armored personnel carriers for the 1st and 5th IA Divisions and to beef up the number of vehicles allocated to the 3d IA Division. A third purchase agreement later sought to provide the 1st or 7th IA Division with battalion sets of Brazilian-made EE9 Cascavels, Russian-made BTR wheeled armored personnel carriers, and fully tracked Russian-built BMP infantry fighting vehicles.[96]

Iraq also acquired 2,797 M1114 up-armored Humvees manufactured in the United States. The 172d Infantry Brigade Combat Team initiated that program by loaning a few of those models to Iraqi forces in May 2006, and other American units would provide the remainder of the vehicles starting in early 2007.[97] Most were intended originally as weapons platforms, also known as "gun trucks," for infantry battalions and transportation regiments rather than patrol vehicles. MNSTC-I noted that distinction. "While the [up-armored Humvee] is a very good force protection enhancement, it is not a good vehicle from which to patrol. In fact, placing the Iraqi Army inside [up-armored Humvees] takes away their greatest strengths—situation awareness and interaction with the local population."[98] American commanders had been dispatching their own troops on patrol in up-armored Humvees for some time, valuing the added protection over other factors, but those vehicles were becoming available for transfer to the Iraqis in part because U.S. forces were starting to acquire mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles, which did a far better job of safeguarding their occupants.

New transportation equipment, particularly models that provided only minimal protection, would not solve the Iraqi Army's IED problem. The force's original explosive ordnance disposal companies were significantly less capable than their American counterparts and habitually had covered only limited stretches of road in the immediate vicinity of installations within their area of responsibility. That practice would not suffice once the Iraqis

95. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2006, sub: In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces, 6.
96. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 27 Nov 2006, sub: APC Timeline by Division, 2006 Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, CMH.
97. Spc. Yolanda Moreno Leon, "Iraqi Army Ready to Roll With Loaner Humvees," 138th Mobile Public Affairs Det, 9 May 2006, http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1629457/posts, Hist Files, CMH.
98. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2006, sub: In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces, 18.

acquired thousands of additional vehicles and operated with much more mobility. MNSTC-I therefore sought to provide each Iraqi division with a deployable engineer company, trained and equipped to deal with roadside bombs. A combined team of Multi-National Corps–Iraq and MNSTC-I experts with detailed experience of conditions in Iraq drew up the table of organization and equipment for the new units. Although a single engineer company could not possibly support a division-size operation, the decision to field a smaller outfit reflected the Americans' recognition that, in the near term, the Iraqi Army only would be capable of mounting brigade- and battalion-level operations.[99]

In the wake of the Golden Mosque attack, renewed emphasis on fielding more robust infantry formations overrode MNSTC-I's efforts to provide the Iraqi Army with better logistical support. At that point, the command had trained just 7,851 support personnel out of 14,763 authorized, which included school instructors. With one-quarter of Iraqi soldiers on leave at any given time, the average troop strength in most logistical units stood at 40 percent. In addition, trained logisticians were not distributed evenly across the force. Although three of the five regional support units attained their initial operating capability during this period, none of the garrison support units reached a similar level of proficiency. The logistical elements in some combat units were in marginally better shape, with four of the nine divisional transportation regiments and two of the five mechanized logistical battalions rated as trained and equipped.[100]

Having contractors provide logistical support made sense when the Iraqis only conducted brigade- and battalion-level operations of brief duration. The greatly increased operational tempo required to sustain Operation Scales of Justice, however, conclusively had demonstrated the limitations of that practice. MNSTC-I planned to reduce Iraqi reliance on contracted maintenance by providing infantry, mechanized, and armor battalions with a standard set of repair parts for vehicles and weapons. That initiative stemmed from the delays experienced by many Iraqi units when requesting repair parts from garrison and regional support units. MNSTC-I reasoned that giving each infantry battalion the capability to "fix forward" would improve the Iraqi Army's logistics posture by reducing the wait for repairs. A related scheme, which involved adding fourteen garrison support units to the seventy-seven that already had been authorized, sought to improve response time for parts requests by reducing the distance between Iraqi

99. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2006, sub: In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces, 11.

100. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2006, sub: In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces, 11.

units and the nearest logistics base. Yet, both programs could accomplish little if mechanics were not available.

In contrast to the tremendous amount of work that still needed to be done to create a functioning logistical system, MNSTC-I and Ministry of Defense efforts aimed at improving the firepower of Iraqi units had achieved better progress. The multinational command provided Iraqi infantry units with American-made M76 and M91 sniper rifles, while the Ministry of Defense purchased one hundred Soviet DShK 12.7-mm. machine guns for each division. Acknowledging that Iraqi units lacked a responsive indirect fire capability against an opponent possessing such weapons, MNSTC-I adopted a program to provide two 60-mm. mortars to each infantry company. New equipment training for the mortars started in April at the Besmaya Range Complex and continued through the end of the year. MNSTC-I continued to block the Iraqis' efforts to acquire field artillery by labeling those weapons as "beyond their requirements for the counterinsurgency fight."[101]

THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

The Iraqi government did not wait long for Maliki's public security commitment to receive its first major test. The shrinking British military presence in Al Başrah and surrounding provinces, coupled with growing efforts by militias and criminals to dominate the oil-smuggling business, resulted in a power struggle among Shi'i factions in the south. Violence escalated within the port city, culminating with a wave of kidnappings and murders in May 2006 that claimed 140 victims, mostly Sunni but also some Shi'i civilians and police, along with nine British soldiers.[102] Meeting with provincial leaders in Al Başrah, Maliki declared that the Baghdād government would "beat an iron fist on the heads of gangs who are manipulating security. . . . Security is first, second, and third [priority]. This must be said."[103] The prime minister appeared live on Iraqi state television on 31 May to declare a month-long state of emergency in the city.[104] Soon after

101. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2006, sub: In-Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces, 16.
102. "Iraqi PM Declares State of Emergency in Basra," Associated Press, 31 May 2006, https://www.foxnews.com/story/0,3566,197663,00.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
103. "Iraqi PM Declares Basra Emergency," Australian Broadcasting Company Online, 31 May 2006, https://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200605/s1652352.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
104. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 31 May 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

he spoke, units of the 10th IA Division, along with police, began establishing checkpoints around Al Başrah.

A mix of self-serving political factors and pragmatic security-related issues motivated the aggressive measures instituted by Maliki. The Iraqi parliament convened on 4 June to choose permanent ministers for the defense, interior, and national security posts. Four days of discussion resulted in the selection of Jawad al-Bulani as the interior minister, Lt. Gen. Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji as the defense minister, and Shirwan al-Waili as the minister of state for national security. Al-Bulani received the backing of the United Iraqi Alliance, the largest Shi'i bloc in parliament. Unlike his predecessor, the new interior minister lacked discernable links to either the Badr Brigades or the Sadrists.[105] General Abdul Qadr and al-Waili boasted close ties to the Iraqi military, with the former relinquishing his duties as land forces commander to head the Ministry of Defense while the latter had served in Saddam-era Army as a construction engineer, rising to brigadier general before retiring in 2000.[106] Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan Majid assumed the duties of land force commander and head of the IGFC as a result of Abdul Qadr's selection.

An unexpected positive development came on 7 June 2006 when an American airstrike killed Zarqawi in his hideout near Ba'qūbah.[107] Following up on news of that success, Prime Minister Maliki articulated his vision for Iraq's future in a letter to the *Washington Post* two days later:

> We are at this juncture thanks to the bravery of the soldiers, police, and citizens who have paid the highest price to give Iraq its freedom. Our national unity government will honor these sacrifices by pursuing an uncompromising agenda to deliver security and services to the Iraqi people and to combat rampant corruption. We believe we will soon reach a tipping point in our battle against the terrorists as Iraqi security services increase in size

105. Omar Fekeiki, "Iraqi Parliament Selects Top Security Ministers," *Washington Post*, 8 Jun 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/08/, Hist Files, CMH.
106. "Iraqi Premier Appoints Interior, Defence, and National Security Ministers," Bahrain News Agency, 8 Jun 2006, https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=112458; "Iraq Appoints Security Ministers: Announcement Comes After Dramatic News of Zarqawi's Death," CNN, 8 Jun 2006, http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/06/08/iraq.politics/index.html; both in Hist Files, CMH.
107. Malkasian, *Illusions of Victory*, 96–97.

> and capacity, taking more and more responsibility away from the multinational forces.[108]

The prime minister went on to explain that security for ordinary Iraqis only could be achieved by reestablishing a state monopoly on weapons and putting an end to unauthorized militias. He promised that, unlike his predecessors, he would implement Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III's 2004 decree to incorporate the militias into the national security services. The new integration program would verify the past allegiance of militia members, disperse those integrated into the security forces to avoid undue influence over one unit, department, or agency, and then monitor their activities. The key to meeting these goals, Maliki elaborated, would be to ensure Iraqi forces were properly equipped and trained to take over all security responsibilities.[109]

The letter from Maliki appeared less than a week after Zarqawi's death and just before a U.S. strategy session convened at Camp David, Maryland, on 12 June. General Casey addressed the gathering at the presidential retreat via video teleconference.[110] Working off a hastily updated version of the MNF-I campaign plan, Casey announced that Phase One (stabilization) had been affected materially by the delays in seating the permanent Iraqi government. This had necessitated extending the overall timeline by six months, with Phase One now projected to end mid-2007. Phase Two—which included the neutralization of the insurgency—would take until mid-2008 to complete, and the Iraqis would not become fully self-reliant before the end of 2009. Although his staff had projected a decrease in American troop strength in Iraq with each phase, Casey did not furnish a revised timeline for the withdrawal of American troops to the Camp David attendees.[111]

Soon after that meeting, fresh events argued for further expansion of the Iraqi military. The death of Zarqawi had had no dampening effect

108. Nouri al-Maliki, "Our Strategy for a Democratic Iraq," *Washington Post*, 9 Jun 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/08/AR200606081532_pf.html, Hist Files, CMH.

109. Maliki, "Our Strategy for a Democratic Iraq." General Dempsey cogently explained, "The more important issue in assessing the cohesion and loyalty of the Iraqi Security Forces is the presence of sectarian *influence* [emphasis added]" rather than sectarian infiltration. Memo, MNSTC-I/NTM-I HQ for MNF-I, 18 Apr 2007, sub: Memorandum to Accompany Edit of Cordesman Manuscript, 2, Hist Files, CMH.

110. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 198.

111. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 105; Bfg, MNF-I to U.S. President, 12 Jun 2006, sub: Joint Campaign Plan: Camp David Briefing, slide 2, Hist Files, CMH.

on sectarian violence.[112] Although sending additional troops to Baghdād brought temporary relief during Operation Scales of Justice, attacks against civilians in key districts had resumed once the police replaced departing military units. In many cases, the police themselves abetted the violence. Additionally, the declaration of a state of emergency in Al Başrah fell far short of official rhetoric. Al Başrah residents informed reporters that "little had changed: Shiite militias and tribes still control the city's streets, political factions still fight for control of the city, and Shiite Muslim militias still threaten Sunni Muslims with death."[113]

OPERATION TOGETHER FORWARD

The fact that Scales of Justice did not tamp down violence in Baghdād sent MNF-I back to the drawing board. On 14 June, Prime Minister Maliki announced Operation Together Forward (*Amaliya Ma'an ila Al-Amam* in Arabic) involving 57,000 Iraqi local and National Police, soldiers, and coalition forces. Although his statement gave the impression that his government had participated in the operation's planning from the very beginning, in reality, the Iraqis were involved only after objecting to the first version of the plan. General Casey recalled, "As we [initially] presented the plan, it became immediately clear that the prime minister was not comfortable with accepting a plan that he and his advisors were not familiar with, especially without his own security team on board. . . . We agreed to have a combined Iraqi-coalition team study and wargame the plan and report back to the prime minister."[114] Maliki was still relatively new to the job, but he had no qualms about challenging MNF-I's decisions on the use of not only Iraqi troops, but American soldiers, as well.

Ten coalition and thirteen Iraqi Army battalions established checkpoints along key routes in southwestern Baghdād in preparation for a series of methodical sweeps through selected neighborhoods starting on 9 July. Once military units cleared a sector, they would hand over security responsibilities to one or more of the twenty-five Iraqi police battalions taking part in Together Forward, then move to the next neighborhood and repeat the process. In addition to killing or capturing sectarian gangs and extremist

112. Bfg, MNF-I, 26 Jan 2007, sub: History of the Baghdad Security Plan–14 March 2006 thru Present (26 Jan 2007), slide 3.
113. Nancy A. Youssef, "In Basra, State of Emergency Provides Little Relief from Violence," *McClatchy Newspapers*, 4 Jul 2006, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2006/07004/v-print/14173/in-basra-state-of-emergency-provides.html, Hist Files, CMH.
114. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 102.



Brig. Gen. Abdul Jalil Khalaf, the commander of the 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, and Col. Robert Scurlock Jr., the commander of the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division–Baghdad, discuss Operation Together Forward with concerned residents of Baghdād. (*M. Sgt. Eric Lobsinger, U.S. Army*)

groups, Together Forward sought to reduce IED attacks by targeting insurgent groups in the Al Bayaa neighborhood near the international airport, the Doura neighborhood of the Rasheed District, as well as the Adhamiyah and Mansour Districts.[115]

Despite the fanfare and high expectations, Together Forward mirrored its predecessor in that the goals desired by MNF-I remained unfulfilled when it ended on 6 August. Insurgent bands and extremist death squads avoided contact with U.S. and Iraqi troops using tactics that had proved effective during Scales of Justice. The average of twenty-four attacks per day in July did not differ significantly from the previous month. Moreover, the rate of execution-style killings began to rise.[116] One major shortcoming stemmed from the fact that MNF-I focused on Sunni and al-Qaeda cells while paying less attention to Shi'i militias. In fact, a number of Shi'i murder gangs and illegal militias were based in neighborhoods that had been placed out of bounds by the Iraqi government. Together Forward therefore interrupted some sectarian attacks only in neighborhoods that the government had

115. Bfg, MNF-I, 26 Jan 2007, sub: History of the Baghdad Security Plan–14 March 2006 thru Present (26 Jan 2007), slide 4.

116. "Together Forward Combines Security Outreach," 13 Aug 2006, http://www.militaryconnection.com/columns/george-casey/together-forward.html, Hist Files, CMH.

deemed in bounds. The results lasted for only a short time and produced little in the way of a lasting impact.

Another reason that Together Forward delivered underwhelming results was that the best-equipped Iraqi Army units did not take part. The 6th and 9th IA Divisions, both based in the vicinity of the capital, contributed the bulk of the battalions to the operation, but they had an average of only 65 percent of their authorized equipment. In comparison, the 1st and 7th IA Divisions in Al Anbār Province had 85 percent of what they rated, the 2d and 3d IA Divisions in Nīnawā Province were at 80 percent, and the 4th and 5th IA Divisions in northwest Iraq had an average of 85 percent. Even the 8th and 10th IA Divisions in the south fared better, with 82 percent of their equipment on hand.[117]

STAYING THE COURSE

In keeping with MNF-I's desire to transition additional security responsibilities to the Iraqis throughout Scales of Justice and Together Forward, handovers between U.S. and Iraqi units had continued virtually unabated in areas outside the capital. The 3d Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3d IA Division, opened the month of June by assuming responsibility for western Nīnawā from the 172d Infantry Brigade Combat Team.[118] The following day, the 1st IA Division took control of Al Habbaniyah in Al Anbār.[119] While that was the first division-level transfer in western Iraq, four Iraqi brigades and nine battalions already had their own battle space in that region.[120] By 22 June 2006, 2 of the 10 Iraqi divisions, 18 of the 36 brigades and 69 of the 112 battalions had taken the lead in their assigned areas of operation.[121] Less than three weeks later, just as Together Forward was getting started,

117. Bfg, Ministry of Defense, 17 Nov 2006, sub: MoD's Training and Resources Committee Report to the High Level Working Group, Divisional Summary slide, 2006 Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH. The data on the slide is current as of 8 June 2006.
118. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 7 Jun 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
119. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 7 Jun 2006.
120. Jerrid Dawes, "Iraqi Army Division Takes Over Battle Space in Al Anbar Province," Multi-National Force–West Public Affairs Ofc, 6 Jun 2006, http://www.usf-iraq.com/news/press-releases/iraqi-army-takes-over-territory-at-camp-habbinyah, Hist Files, CMH.
121. MNF-I and State Department totals for brigades and battalions are identical, but the number of divisions differ. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 28 Jun 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm; Bfg, MNF-I to U.S. President, 21 Jun 2006, sub: Force Structure Assessment; both in Hist Files, CMH.

those figures increased to four divisions, twenty brigades, and seventy-three battalions.[122]

A landmark in the overall transfer of responsibility occurred on 27 June when an Iraqi Army garrison support unit took over logistical activities at Kirkūk's K–1 compound. The Kirkūk group provided support not only to the installation itself, but also for the 4th IA Division and other units operating in the area.[123] Other logistical handovers dealt more with assigning Iraqi commands the responsibility for overseeing contracts, rather than certifying a logistical organization's ability to perform a support mission. On 5 July, the Iraqi Army took control of an $18 million annual maintenance contract from the coalition forces of the regional support unit in An Nu'maniyah. Resourced to support a pair of Iraqi divisions, it was the first of five similar outfits to take on that role.[124]

That same month, the Ministry of Defense agreed to assume responsibility for sixty-two of the ninety-one garrison support unit contracts at some point in the future.[125] The passing the management of contracts from coalition to Iraqi military personnel eliminated the middleman, but that process did not ensure logistical support would become more efficient or responsive. Unlike coalition military units, contractors were less willing to part with their knowledge because they faced the prospect of losing income once the Iraqis learned to perform a task on their own. In addition, the availability of contracted support offered little in the way of incentive for Iraqi military logistical units to become more proficient.[126]

WEST OF BAGHDĀD

General Casey's attention had not been focused exclusively on suppressing sectarian violence in Baghdād. He also saw an opportunity to exploit the

122. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Jul 2006, sub: Force Sizing and Balance, slide 4, Hist Files, CMH.

123. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 12 Jul 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm; Spc. Anna-Marie Hizer, "Iraqis Assume Logistics Support," 133d Mobile Public Affairs Det, 10 Jul 2006, https://freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1663356/posts; both in Hist Files, CMH.

124. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 12 Jul 2006.

125. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032, "Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistics Capabilities," 28 Oct 2006, 9.

126. Statement, William M. Solis, Director Def Capabilities and Management, *Testimony Before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*, 110th Cong. (9 Mar 2007), Government Accountability Ofc Study, GAO-07-582T, *OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM Preliminary Observations on Iraqi Security Forces' Logistical Capabilities*, 5, https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07582t.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

confused situation in western Iraq following the death of Zarqawi. That effort concentrated on the city of Ar Ramādī, where al-Qaeda had relocated after fleeing Al Fallūjah in November 2004. However, the available troops were limited, especially given that both Iraqi divisions stationed in Al Anbār had suffered from major personnel shortfalls because the Ministry of Defense had failed to replace higher-than-usual casualties in a timely fashion. The marines of Maj. Gen. Richard C. Zilmer's I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), which had overall responsibility for the Al Anbār region, already had the Army National Guard soldiers of Col. John L. Gronski's 2d Brigade, 28th Infantry Division, attached, but it still would need significant reinforcement before confronting the terrorist cells. U.S. Central Command released two battalions from the Theater Call Forward Force (a brigade-sized unit based in Kuwait and available for use in Iraq or Afghanistan as required) to replace elements of Gronski's brigade that were due to redeploy.[127] In addition, MNF-I convinced the Ministry of Defense to shift portions of the 2d IA Division from northern Iraq to Ar Ramādī temporarily, though not all those troops made it onto the battlefield. The first setback occurred when the predominantly Sunni Arab 2d Battalion from the 2d Brigade, 2d IA Division, disintegrated after its soldiers learned they were going to Ar Ramādī. The few remaining members refused to fight against fellow Sunnis after arriving.

During this same period, Col. Sean B. MacFarland's 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, transferred from Tall' Afar to Ar Ramādī, leaving one armor battalion behind to secure its northern area of operations.[128] With MacFarland's unit slated to replace Gronski's departing brigade by mid-June, a short period of time elapsed before the newcomers could mount offensive operations.[129] Starting on 17 June, the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, fanned out into neighborhoods north of the Euphrates River with the Bradley-equipped 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, accompanied by the 2d Battalion, 3d Brigade, 2d IA Division. At the same time, the 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, advanced into the southern portion of Ar Ramādī. These units, reinforced by the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, and the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, established combat outposts throughout the city. The 1st IA Division's 3d Battalion, 3d Brigade, aided by

127. The Baumholder, Germany–based 2d Brigade, 1st Armored Division, served as the Theater Call Forward Force during this period. Anthony E. Deane with Douglas Niles, *Ramadi Declassified: A Roadmap to Peace in the Most Dangerous City in Iraq* (Bay Village, OH: Praetorian Books, 2016), 79, 101.
128. Capt. Chad M. Pillai, "Adult Education in Afghanistan: The Key to Political and Economic Transformation," *Military Review* 89, no. 4 (Jul-Aug 2009): 21–24.
129. Deane, *Ramadi Declassified*, 138.

marines, took positions in the fortified towers overlooking the main supply route leading into town.[130] Once the outposts were in place, the combined Iraqi-U.S. force methodically cleared and secured other parts of the urban area.[131]

The fighting in Ar Ramādī intensified throughout July and continued unabated for ten months as coalition troops managed to pinpoint, isolate, and destroy previously unlocated insurgent sanctuaries. During that period, American and Iraqi forces suffered an average combined total of 400 to 600 casualties per month. The unrelenting combat put considerable pressure on Iraqi security forces, who were not accustomed to such a high operational tempo, as well as the Americans. Although the latter encountered a few challenges replacing losses, the Department of Defense policy of rotating troops into and out of combat zones ensured fresh units replaced tired formations starting in late September 2006.[132] In sharp contrast, the Iraqis lacked viable replacement and reconstitution capabilities, which the inflexible monthly leave system exacerbated. The 2d Battalion of the 2d Brigade, 2d IA Division, was a case in point. Without the capability to rebuild the unit in a timely manner, the Ministry of Defense had sent its remnants back north following its wholesale combat refusal.

Iraqi army units already stationed in Al Anbār, such as the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 7th IA Division, also fell prey to internal turmoil after losing key commanders or enduring unexpectedly fierce mortar attacks. The former had an exceptionally detrimental impact because Iraqi units did not have experienced sergeants who were capable of temporarily shouldering unit leadership responsibilities after the loss of commissioned officers. Given the inability of the Ministry of Defense to provide suitable officer replacements in a timely manner, American commanders had to reassign the 7th IA Division units to smaller areas or take them out of the fight on a temporary basis to rebuild their morale.[133]

The negative experiences of Iraqi Army units in Ar Ramādī were both instructive and disquieting. The desertions suffered by the battalion from 2d IA Division served notice that Iraqi soldiers remained uncomfortable with the notion of leaving their home region and familial and cultural ties to conduct combat operations in a new location. The combat refusal

130. West, *Snake Eaters,* 214–15.
131. Malkasian, *Illusions of Victory*, 97–98.
132. While battalion rotations began in late September 2006, Col. Sean B. MacFarland's 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, did not formally hand over responsibility to Col. John W. Charlton's incoming 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division, until 18 February 2007. Deane, *Ramadi Declassified*, 316.
133. Malkasian, *Illusions of Victory, 99*

also demonstrated that sectarian ties posed a lasting threat to mission accomplishment, and there was no quick solution to that deep-seated issue. In addition, the deteriorating performance of 7th IA Division demonstrated that some Iraqi infantry battalions were fragile instruments, easily daunted by officer casualties or the unexpected use of new enemy tactics or weapons. While MNF-I sought to prevent AQI elements operating in Al Anbār from taking advantage of the Golden Mosque's destruction, coalition operations in western Iraq ultimately had little impact on the escalating turmoil in Baghdād.

CONCLUSION

The Sāmarrā' mosque bombing provides a clear example of how enemy forces can disrupt train-and-equip operations by unexpectedly seizing the strategic initiative. That unwelcome development took on a particularly ominous tone because a large-scale effort had just started to root out malign sectarian actors within the Ministry of Interior. The timing, just before the seating of the permanent government, also handed newly installed Prime Minister Maliki a grave crisis before he even had settled into what already was a difficult political situation.

The Sāmarrā' attack forced the Americans and their Iraqi partners to make less than optimal choices. The first issue emerged when the Iraqi prime minister responded by initiating a major expansion of the Iraqi Army, which immediately diluted the focus on what was supposed to be the Year of the Police. Adding more force structure, especially when the army already was under considerable operational duress, heightened the level of internal disorganization. Equipment acquisitions likewise increased the burden on the already-overtaxed logistical system and overwhelmed the inefficient defense bureaucracy. Requiring a large portion of the army to learn how to operate new equipment in the midst of not only combat operations, but also an existential sectarian crisis within the organization, added yet more risk. Yet, MNF-I supported the Iraqi military's expansion and acquisition of new equipment for two reasons. General Casey realized that failing to back a major initiative championed by the newly installed Iraqi head of state would drive a wedge between Washington and Baghdād at a critical time, and building a larger Iraqi security force would facilitate MNF-I's ultimate objective of future American disengagement.

Casey still believed that neutralizing AQI would be the coalition's most viable long-term contribution to quelling sectarianism. In his view, focusing American resources on Al Anbār while assisting the Iraqis in Baghdād would ensure the chance of outright civil war remained low enough to allow the drawdown and the transition of security responsibilities to continue.[134] However, pursuing both operations stretched available combat power. With the Iraqi government and the Pentagon firmly against committing coalition reinforcements, MNF-I had to rely heavily on Iraqi forces to bring a halt to sectarian violence in Baghdād.[135] Making matters more complex, MNF-I had fixed its attention on the exit strategy of turning over territory to largely stationary Iraqi forces, rather than addressing deployment issues that had cropped up during the second battle in Al Fallūjah and in the Mosul counteroffensive in late 2004. The abortive attempts to reinforce the 1st and 7th IA Divisions in Al Anbār, using troops from northern Iraq, had raised a warning flag that the multinational command and the Iraqi Army had not yet resolved this critical shortcoming. The choice facing MNF-I eventually would become clear: it could continue to rely on Iraqi forces to shoulder a major burden of the combat operations or it could support force structure expansion and reequipment plans by tailoring the Iraqi Army's involvement, but it could not do both. Paradoxically, U.S. reliance on an oversubscribed and underprepared Iraqi Army threatened to undermine partnering efforts. As long as American units continued to furnish increased levels of assistance to Iraqis grappling with complex tactical situations beyond their skills and capabilities, they were delaying the day when their counterparts would acquire the ability to do things on their own.

134. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 107.
135. Email, Casey to Donovan et al., 13 Mar 2006, sub: FW: Civil War, with attached Info Paper, "SPA Strategy," 11 Mar 2006.

7
Confronting the Enemy Within: August–December 2006

Even after Operation Together Forward I, sectarian violence in Baghdād did not appear to be diminishing. The lack of demonstrable progress in stabilizing Iraq fed the multifaceted strategy debate that had been brewing for months within official Washington circles. On the domestic political scene, Democratic Party members embraced the vocal stance of Pennsylvania's Representative John P. Murtha against the United States' continued presence in Iraq.[1] A group of retired U.S. Army generals demanded Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld's resignation as a prelude to changing the trajectory of U.S. involvement.[2] The U.S. Department of State's position cycled through the ideas of sending in more troops and sitting on the sidelines until the violence petered out, before settling on advocating withdrawal.[3] The Pentagon was not in favor of deploying reinforcements, citing strong concerns about serious harm to the all-volunteer force.[4] Both U.S. Central Command and Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) recommended staying the course with their current strategy of transition.

By early summer 2006, President George W. Bush had lost faith in the transition strategy and held out no hope that it would succeed. He concluded

1. Maura Reynolds, "Democratic Hawk and War Veteran Wants U.S. Troops Out of Iraq Now," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 Nov 2005, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-nov-18-na-usiraq18-story.html, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).
2. David S. Cloud and Eric Schmitt, "More Retired Generals Call for Rumsfeld's Resignation," *New York Times*, 14 Apr 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/14/washington/more-retired-generals-call-for-rumsfelds-resignation.html, Hist Files, CMH.
3. Timothy Andrews Sayle et al., *The Last Card, Inside George W. Bush's Decision to Surge in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), 1, 38–39, 122–24, 142–45.
4. Sayle et al., *Last Card*, 95, 136.

that implementing the MNF-I plan to pull out U.S. combat troops not only was a grievous strategic error but also sent the wrong message to their Iraqi partners.[5] National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley explained, "We thought we had come off a politically good year. That's what we were hearing from the field at that time, and they thought that the existing strategy would work. We underestimated the impact of sectarian violence."[6] The president realized that not everyone shared his evolving view of the situation, necessitating a sustained effort from the White House to persuade U.S. national security officials to acknowledge the need for a revised course of action. Some early critics accepted the logic of adopting a new approach, while others, reluctant to change the approved course, remained skeptical. The latter included the U.S. country team in Baghdād—the MNF-I commander, General George W. Casey Jr., and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad—plus General John P. Abizaid at U.S. Central Command, all of whom argued against sending more American troops until they had exhausted all other options.[7]

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government followed the debates as they played out in the American news media. Like the U.S. president, Maliki felt that the worsening security situation required a different solution. In late May 2006, the prime minister had toured southern Iraq to assess the security situation, stopping in Al Başrah for an extended discussion with local officials. He attempted to solicit ideas from them that he could implement to address the ongoing civil strife. He returned to Baghdād intent on creating two new organizations: the National Counter Terrorism Command and the National Strike Force. The former would provide the Iraqi government with a unilateral ability to target insurgent leadership and bomb-making facilities. The latter, initially consisting of the 9th Iraqi Army (IA) Division (Mechanized), an Iraqi special operations forces battalion, and a National

5. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, *Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War, 2003–2006* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 578.

6. Interv, Russell L. Riley, Seyom Brown, and Barbara Perry, George W. Bush Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, with former White House National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley, n.d., 52–54, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/stephen-j-hadley-oral-history (accessed 7 Sep 2023), Hist Files, CMH.

7. General John P. Abizaid felt that much of the violence in Iraq stemmed from inserting American troops into a Muslim Arab culture, whereas General George W. Casey Jr. and Zalmay Khalilzad were hesitant to embrace a policy that they felt sure the Iraqi government would reject. However, the Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) commander did cancel the anticipated off-ramping of two brigades on 18 July 2006 and extended the deployment of the 172d Infantry Brigade Combat Team. George W. Casey Jr., *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom, July 2004–February 2007* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012), 142–45; Sayle et al., *Last Card*, 59, 64–65, 76, 214, 248, 332, 352, 355.



U.S. soldiers fire illumination flares from a 120-mm. mortar cannon mounted on a specially modified Stryker chassis equipped with digital communications links to forward infantry units. The Iraqi Army's capabilities were not even remotely comparable. (*Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Lock, U.S. Air Force*)

Police battalion, would give the prime minister a specific group of forces that he could use to address broader threats in a timely manner.[8]

American interest in these initiatives led to a meeting between Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) representatives and Prime Minister Maliki in early June 2006. The Americans pointed out that creating the National Counter Terrorism Command and the National Strike Force would require a substantial financial commitment to invest in a reliable countrywide communications system for command and control. It also would take six to twelve months to turn the prime minister's vision into reality.[9]

Dissatisfied with the prospect of waiting six or more months before anything tangible materialized, Maliki sought to get the most out of his original concept by tacking on a further demand to increase the size of

8. Read Ahead Packet, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) HQ to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 2 Jun 2006, sub: National Capabilities for PM, slides 1–2, PM Brief Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, CMH.

9. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Prime Minister Maliki, 2 Jun 2006, sub: Development of Iraqi Security Forces, slides 3, 5, 8, PM Brief Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

the Iraqi Army. The shift reflected his awareness of the popular criticism of the Iraqi government for being inactive and was fueled further by the poor performance of the police during Operations Scales of Justice and Together Forward. The force structure increases would be focused on areas where the police were thin on the ground or incapable of dealing with rampaging insurgents and militia gangs. As a result, Maliki wanted to generate a second division headquarters in Baghdād and add another battalion to the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) Brigade, two battalions to the 10th IA Division, and a new brigade apiece to the 5th and 7th IA Divisions. The additional force structure would require 9,233 new soldiers and officers, which would place an added burden on systemically under-resourced recruiting and training institutions. MNF-I began to refer to all of these desired changes as the prime minister's "Army Expansion Plan."[10]

RESETTING THE DOCTRINAL APPROACH

While top-level leaders wrestled over strategy, others were reevaluating the doctrine the U.S. Army was applying on the ground, with an emphasis on how combat units performed counterinsurgency operations and how advisers interacted with their counterparts. Attempts to address the former had begun very early in the war. In 2004, the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, had produced the interim Field Manual 3–07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*. It suggested adopting French "quadrillage" methods that had been used during the 1954–1962 Algerian War for National Liberation. This approach relies primarily on garrisoning towns and cities to hold sway over as much of the population as possible, then incrementally expanding control from there, rather than sweeping through areas only to have rebels return to them after the government forces depart.[11] That method seemed logical because both Algerian and Iraqi insurgents relied on urban sanctuaries.[12] However, Field Manual 3–07.22 paid less

10. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Sec Def Rumsfeld, 10 Jul 2006, sub: Force Sizing and Balance, slides 6–7, 9, Sec Def Brief 2 Folder, Hist Files, CMH.
11. Headquarters, Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) (Interim) 3–07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1 Oct 2004), 3–12.
12. Col. Karl Goetzke, "A Review of the Algerian War of National Liberation Using the U.S. Army's Current Counterinsurgency Doctrine" (strategy research project, U.S. Army War College, 18 Mar 2005), 4, http://www.strategicstudies institute.army.mil/pdffiles/ksil50.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

attention than was warranted to eliminating cross-border infiltration and employing indigenous paramilitary units with ties to local communities.[13]

Recognizing that any successful attempt to revise interim counterinsurgency doctrine required a high-ranking sponsor with a proven intellect and firsthand knowledge of the topic, Chief of Staff of the Army General Peter J. Schoomaker had appointed Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus as head of the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth following his departure from MNSTC-I in September 2005.[14] Dual-hatted as both center commander and deputy commanding general for the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Petraeus carried formidable bureaucratic clout within the doctrinal development community.[15] Although the Combined Arms Center had the lead for revising counterinsurgency doctrine, Petraeus collaborated on that task with the U.S. Marine Corps.[16]

Those efforts had made considerable progress when sectarian violence erupted in Iraq following the Sāmarrāʾ bombing in late February 2006. Despite the project's importance, the need for a full debate on key issues pushed the publication of Army Field Manual 3–24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3–33.5, *Counterinsurgency*, back to December 2006. A "clear, hold, and build" construct formed the core of the new doctrine. The offensive *clear* phase eliminated the insurgent presence from the area of operations. During the defensive *hold* phase, indigenous partners took over responsibility for securing the population. In the stabilizing *build* phase, U.S. forces assisted host-nation efforts to build popular support for the government.[17]

Although a number of coalition units already were using a variant of those principles, the manual introduced major new concepts. It placed far more emphasis on protecting the population—to the extent that it rivaled the priority accorded to engaging enemy combatants. To provide that security, the new doctrine advocated deploying troops in threatened villages, towns, and neighborhoods for sustained periods. Building outposts

13. Goetzke, "Review of the Algerian War of National Liberation," 10–12.
14. Although there are multiple proponents for branch-specific squad, platoon, company, battalion, and brigade doctrine, the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center is responsible for developing doctrine that applies to combined arms operations above the brigade level.
15. Interv, Lt. Col. John Stark and Col. E. J. Degen, Ch Staff Army Op Enduring Freedom Study Gp, with Gen. (Ret.) David H. Petraeus, former Combined Arms Center Cmdg Gen, 29 Jan 2016, 43–49, Operation Enduring Freedom Study Gp Folder, Hist Files, CMH.
16. Conrad C. Crane, *Cassandra in Oz: Counterinsurgency and Future War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 50.
17. Headquarters, Department of the Army FM 3–24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Dec 2006), https://iccforum.com/media/background/sanctions/2006-12-15-US_Army_Field_Manual-Counterinsurgency.pdf.

in urban neighborhoods represented a dramatic break from Central Command's longstanding guidance on basing American soldiers away from population centers.[18]

The new counterinsurgency doctrine affected soldiers from both nations. Americans sought to implement it while passing on the basic concepts to the Iraqis. MNF-I had opened the Counterinsurgency Academy (later renamed the Counterinsurgency Center of Excellence) at Camp Taji well in advance of the publication of the doctrine.[19] A thorough scrub of the center's program of instruction ensured that it did not differ materially from the new manual. However, because the center educated only American unit leaders, Iraqi officers would have to learn about the new guidance secondhand from their U.S. advisers or partner units.[20] The hope was that the knowledge would percolate down to the Iraqi soldiers, so that the idea of protecting their fellow citizens from extremists might be much more meaningful to them than simply implementing the latest doctrinal tenet.

Having the right doctrine would be meaningless if the Iraqis were incapable of conducting effective operations of any type. The deployment issues that had affected Iraqi security forces during Operations Scales of Justice and Together Forward I had cast doubt on their ability to do so. In late June, Abizaid dispatched a team under his chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, to Baghdād to determine how best to strengthen the Iraqi forces. After a two-week survey of Iraqi Army training and education institutions, Austin concluded that ongoing programs would provide sufficient personnel and equipment to support the transition-oriented approach for the next six months. His only recommendation was that MNF-I place its full support behind improved advisory team training, support, and employment.[21] His assessment rested on the premise that violence levels remained constant and extremist efforts to subvert Iraqi military personnel did not gain additional traction. The thrust of his review indicated that Central Command remained wedded to the strategy of turning the war over to the Iraqis as soon as possible, whether they were adequately prepared to win it or not.

18. Crane, *Cassandra in Oz*, 101–21.

19. A special forces officer, Col. Edward C. Short, initially oversaw the Counterinsurgency Academy. The first edition of the counterinsurgency handbook, intended for squad leaders through company commanders, came off the printing press in May 2006. As a result, references include FM (Interim) 3–07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations* and FM 90–8, *Counterguerrilla Operations* but not FM 3–24, *Counterinsurgency*.

20. Advisers had mixed opinions on the Counterinsurgency Center of Excellence's usefulness, with some recommending it be eliminated altogether. Owen West, *The Snake Eaters: An Unlikely Band of Brothers and the Battle for the Soul of Iraq* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 220–21.

21. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 581.

The U.S. Army's effort to synch operational practices with changing doctrine required multiple stateside-based commands to relook at their involvement in training advisers. The first step was to consolidate instruction at one location. Fort Riley, Kansas, assumed the mission, more out of unforeseen opportunity rather than conscious planning. In spring 2006, the U.S. Army Forces Command headquarters had rescinded orders sending all of Col. Bart Howard's Fort Riley–based 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized), to Iraq and issued revised instructions directing the brigade to provide a dozen task-organized companies for dedicated convoy escort missions.[22] When Howard offered up his brigade and battalion staffs, who were not deploying with the convoy escort companies, as advisers, U.S. Army Forces Command instead decided to use them to establish a training school for transition teams. Simultaneously, Howard would run the adviser preparation program and command his brigade as it reorganized and retrained for convoy security.

Camp Funston, the site on Fort Riley chosen for the transition team academy, previously had hosted U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard elements for brief periods of training.[23] The U.S. Army Reserve Command originally sent representatives from Col. Raymond L. Lamb's 2d Brigade, 91st Division (Training Support), to Camp Funston in spring 2005 to assist with preparing individuals for deployment to Iraq. Because of their accumulated experience, 2d Brigade's instructors were tabbed to assemble a curriculum for the embryonic transition team academy, freeing up Howard's unit to prepare the facility for use and assemble the resident cadre.[24] Lamb's soldiers not only drew from their own experiences, but also borrowed from classes taught at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, and Fort Carson, Colorado.[25] The first class, which served as a test bed for Lamb's and Howard's combined efforts, got underway in June 2006.[26] Although the curriculum generally was well-received, feedback from the students expressed a preference for more

22. Email, Col. Bart Howard, former Cdr, 1st Bde, 1st Inf Div, to Mark J. Reardon, 12 Sep 2013, sub: 1/1 ID Fort Riley Colonel Bart Howard 2004 – 2006 Timeline, Hist Files, CMH.
23. Mike Heronemus, "Face Change: Camp Funston Grows Quickly," *Fort Riley Post* 49, no. 19 (12 May 2006), http://www.fortrileypost.com/pdf/051206PO.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
24. 1st Inf Div and Fort Riley Public Affairs Ofc, *Duty First: Unofficial 1st Infantry Division Magazine of Soldiers and Families* (Winter 2007): 26, http://www.1id.army.mil/documents/DutyFirst/070717081140.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
25. "MiTT Training Grows at Fort Riley," Army News Service, 20 Oct 2006, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2006/10/mil-061019-arnews02.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
26. The 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) hosted the eleventh through seventy-eighth classes over the next several years. Parker Rome, "Fort Riley Trains Last Transition Team Before Mission Moves to Fort Polk," 5 Aug 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/25521/fort_riley_trains_last_transition_team_before_mission_moves_to_fort_polk, Hist Files, CMH.



A military transition team (MiTT) member assists an "unresponsive person" during simulated combat life saver training at Camp Funston, Fort Riley, Kansas. Because advisory training combined individual skills with specialized instruction, MiTT personnel arrived in Iraq only partially trained for their specific duties. (*U.S. Army*)

instruction on how they should interact with foreign troops—a task that would be at the heart of their mission.[27]

Adviser training at Camp Funston experienced two major changes that fall. Colonel Howard gave up command in mid-October, followed several days later by Lamb's reservists passing their teaching responsibilities to the recently returned 2d Battalion, 34th Armored Regiment.[28] When that battalion's new commander, Lt. Col. David T. Seigel, learned that future classes would increase from 50 to 320 students each, he made major adjustments to Camp Funston's transportation, feeding, and billeting arrangements. In addition, he revised the curriculum after consulting with members of his unit who had amassed considerable experience working with Iraqi security forces.[29]

27. Interv, Laurence Lessard, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI), with Maj. Mark Gilmore, former Mil Training Team 0431 Leader, 15 Nov 2007, 3–4, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI (hereinafter OLE).
28. "MiTT Training Grows at Fort Riley."

Seigel's dual command of his unit and the school signaled a shift in how the Army looked at advising. Previously, it had assigned the mission of instructing advisers to a reserve unit experienced with providing premobilization training for American replacements destined for U.S. units. Not only had responsibility for training passed from reserve to active component soldiers, but it also had been given to a combat arms organization with veterans of multiple tours in Iraq. Furthermore, reserve instructors had operated in temporarily assigned facilities sometimes located hundreds of kilometers from their parent headquarters. The 2d Battalion, 34th Armored Regiment's barracks were located on the same base as Camp Funston, as were its parent brigade and division headquarters. The latter could address problems in timely fashion given it had a direct pipeline to the installation's dedicated support agencies. Those changes largely eliminated systemic distractors such as outmoded equipment, lack of transportation, substandard billeting, and inadequate classrooms. The fact that the Department of the Army invested considerable sums in upgrading Camp Funston also ensured the post installation manager would prioritize Seigel's requests for help. Nevertheless, all these improvements came with a price: while adviser training had been enhanced significantly, assigning that task to the 2d Battalion, 34th Armored Regiment, rendered it nondeployable for the next several years at a minimum.

At long last, the revised program of instruction focused more on the intricacies of advising foreign counterparts than on general preparation for service in a combat zone. One student summarized the difference, "Advisers begin their training with a week-long session on advising host nation security forces in a counterinsurgency. They engage in practical leader meetings to evaluate their ability to influence Iraqis and Afghans. They conduct realistic combat training to prepare them to act as teams. Much of the training is tailored to the specific theater of operations where they will deploy."[30] Role-playing figured prominently, with students facing incidents they were likely to encounter, such as an Iraqi battalion commander arguing with his police counterpart, Iraqi troops abusing detainees, and civilians being upset over property damage caused by Iraqi soldiers.[31] The curriculum

29. Email, Lt. Col. David T. Seigel, former Cdr, 2d Bn, 34th Armd Rgt, to Mark J. Reardon, 13 Apr 2010, sub: U.S. Army Historian Writing on Training Advisers for the Iraqi Army, Hist Files, CMH.

30. Andrew Exsum, "Poking the Advisor Mission in the Eye," Abu Muqawama Blog, Center for a New American Security, 5 Jun 2008, http://www.cnas.org/blogs/abumuqawama/2008/06/poking-advisor-mission-eye.html, Hist Files, CMH.

31. Michael R. Gordon, "Army Expands Training for Advisers Who Will Try to Improve Iraq's Security Forces," *New York Times*, 25 Nov 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/25/world/middleeast/25training.html, Hist Files, CMH.

also included examples of American commanders openly mistrusting their counterparts or misinterpreting counterinsurgency doctrine to the point that it undermined relations with the Iraqi Army.[32] After graduating from Camp Funston, transition team members received follow-on instruction, as had their predecessors, in Kuwait and at the Phoenix Academy at Camp Taji operated by MNSTC-I.[33]

MALIKI WEIGHS IN

After a brief lull, murders and suicide attacks in Baghdād rose once more, resulting in 200 civilian casualties per week by mid-July. MNF-I commissioned a review that ascribed the change to insufficient Iraqi Army participation in Together Forward I. The same study noted that unprecedented demands were placed on the National Police—already in the midst of a massive reorganization effort—during that same period. With 9,500 police taking part in Scales of Justice and 13,500 participating in Together Forward I, the sustained commitment of such a large percentage of the National Police produced low morale and dwindling unit strength. Checkpoints run by police commandos, whose efforts were subverted by militia sympathizers, failed to hinder movements of insurgents and death squads. The MNF-I report did not highlight the fact that Shi'i death squads and militias were operating from neighborhoods placed off limits to coalition troops by the Iraqi government.[34]

The belief that the Iraqi Army needed to take a greater role in securing Baghdād convinced Americans that the prime minister's pleas for additional force structure were worthy of consideration. Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the MNSTC-I commander, presented his take on Maliki's Army Expansion Plan to General Casey on 10 July. General Dempsey agreed with most of the prime minister's objectives, including fielding another brigade for the 9th IA Division (Mechanized) plus two more battalions from the 6th IA Division as soon as possible. In addition, he advocated for creating an eleventh division headquarters, generating a fourth brigade for the 5th and 7th IA Divisions, adding two battalions to the 10th IA Division, and filling Iraqi infantry battalions to 110 percent of authorized strength. The new headquarters,

32. Course book, Combat Adviser Development Course (Iraq), Fort Riley Training Mission, May 2008, 105–14, Hist Files, CMH.
33. Interv, Lessard with Gilmore, 15 Nov 2007, 7.
34. Bfg, MNF-I, 26 Jan 2007, sub: History of the Baghdad Security Plan—14 March 2006 thru Present (26 Jan 2007), slides 4–5, Commander's Initiative Group Folder, Hist Files, CMH.



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, search a ruined house on the outskirts of Baghdād. (*S. Sgt. Kevin L. Moses Sr., U.S. Army*)

designated as the 11th IA Division, would assume control of half of Baghdād, with the 6th IA Division responsible for the other half, thus freeing up the 9th IA Division to serve as the Iraqi Army's operational reserve. The other new units would enhance security in Al Başrah and Al Anbār and serve as regional reinforcements when needed.[35]

Although Dempsey had met with the prime minister and the minister of defense before briefing Casey, his recommendations did not coincide fully with Iraqi views. The Iraqis' priorities were adding a sixth brigade to the 6th IA Division, adding a third battalion to the ISOF Brigade, and generating three rather than one new division headquarters. The two additional division headquarters would provide dedicated higher-level command and control for the strategic infrastructure brigades. The Iraqis also proposed using existing units to form the National Strike Force in early 2007, which now would be composed of a brigade from the 9th IA Division (as opposed to the entire division), a National Police brigade (instead of a battalion), and a special operations battalion.[36] The ministry not only supported adding 10 percent more personnel to chronically understrength infantry battalions, but also went a step further by suggesting the creation of an

35. Talking Points, MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 10 Jul 2006, sub: Office Call w/MNF-I Cdr 10 Jul 2006, CG 2006 Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

36. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 18 Sep 2006, sub: Iraqi Army Expansion Initiatives, slide 10, CG Briefs 2006 Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

armywide replacement pool of 18,000 soldiers, which would be used to fill vacancies created by casualties and other forms of attrition. Both of these proposals, unique in that they did not involve creating new force structure, were designated collectively by MNSTC-I as the Ministry of Defense's "30K Replenishment Initiative."[37]

Unlike in past efforts of U.S.-Iraqi cooperation, MNF-I found most of the Ministry of Defense initiatives acceptable, with the sole exception of the National Strike Force. The program to increase personnel levels in infantry battalions (then at an armywide average of 63 percent) by 10 percent got underway in August 2006. The first batch of 1,840 newly trained soldiers was earmarked for the 6th IA Division, followed by four groups of 750–1,000 personnel destined for the 1st, 3d, 5th, and 7th IA Divisions. Beginning in late February 2007, contingents of 720–960 soldiers would go to the 2d, 4th, 8th, 9th, and 10th IA Divisions. Each division received new soldiers from training centers at Kaywan Air Base (commonly known as K–1) and Tallil Air Base and in Al Habbaniyah, Hammam Al Alil, Kir Kush, An Nu'maniyah, and At Tājī. Iraqi instructors, rather than MNSTC-I personnel, would train the recruits for five weeks (instead of the original thirteen), between October 2006 and July 2007.[38] Freshly minted soldiers would feed into the armywide replacement pool at a rate of 700 per month from August 2006 through the following June. Beginning in July 2007, the replacement pool's allocation would increase to more than 1,800 basic training graduates per month in order to reach the target of 18,000 soldiers by the end of that year.

Faced with limitations on the number of people it could recruit and train, the Ministry of Defense had to manage the projected influx carefully over the next twelve months. It accorded top priority to adding 10,000 soldiers to the 6th and 9th IA Divisions over a thirteen-week period ending in November 2006. The personnel needed for the trio of division headquarters, plus new units for the 5th, 7th, and 10th IA Divisions, were the next priority. The effort to increase unit present-for-duty strength by 10 percent came third in precedence, and the replacement pool package ranked fourth. The

37. During the 10 July meeting, Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey also briefed General Casey on an incident in which 120 Sunni recruits quit when they learned their new assignments were with units deployed against Sunni insurgents. Talking Points, MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 10 Jul 2006, sub: Office Call w/MNF-I Cdr 10 Jul 2006; Draft Memo, unnamed U.S. author with Nouri al-Maliki's signature block (unsigned) attached, n.d., sub: Prime Minister's Vision for the Future of the Iraqi Security Forces, 3, CGs Briefs Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.
38. Recruiting difficulties in some regions—which resulted in significant shortfalls at the Habbaniyah, K–1, Tallil, and Taji Regional Training Centers—pushed back the original timeline for implementing the 30K Replenishment Initiative. Bfg, MNSTC-I HQ to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 28 Oct 2006, sub: Revised for late start timelines for IA growth w-M-7 new dates, 30K Updates Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

quartet of initiatives—which now required a combined influx of 40,000 personnel—were spread across a sixteen-month period, with the greatest overlap occurring between December 2006 and June 2007 (*Table 7.1*).[39]

July 2006 also saw major changes to the composition and leadership of the advisory effort. Brig. Gen. Dana J. H. Pittard, the assistant division commander for maneuver for the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized), replaced Brig. Gen. John P. McLaren (the commander of the 80th Division [Institutional Training], who had superseded Brig. Gen. Richard J. Sherlock Jr.) as head of the Iraq Assistance Group. The U.S. Army Reserve's 108th Training Command (Initial Entry Training) began replacing 80th Division personnel. More than 350 soldiers went to MNSTC-I, with 255 joining the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, led by Brig. Gen. Terry A. Wolff (who had replaced Brig. Gen. James H. Schwitters's successor, Brig. Gen. Daniel P. Bolger), while the remainder were spread between the J–4 (Logistics) and J–5 (Planning) staff elements. Almost 400 108th Training Command soldiers formed transition teams, which were spread among all levels of the 5th IA Division, two brigades of the 3d IA Division, and a brigade apiece within the 1st and 6th IA Divisions. Other transition teams were assigned to National Police units, the 3d Infantry Training Battalion at An Numaniyah Military Training Base (formerly An Numaniyah Air Base), and the Combined Arms School at the Besmaya Range Complex.[40]

OPERATION TOGETHER FORWARD II

Broader policy changes were in the offing at the national level. On 11 July, Prime Minister Maliki met with Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr., then a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Biden bluntly informed Maliki that American public opinion no longer supported the indefinite presence of large numbers of U.S. troops in Iraq. Maliki interpreted that remark as a veiled threat that the United States would pull out of Iraq if he proved to be an uncooperative strategic partner. The next day, Maliki attended a meeting with Secretary Rumsfeld and General Casey and learned that the ongoing violence still had not persuaded MNF-I to shelve plans to

39. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 18 Sep 2006, sub: Iraqi Army Expansion Initiatives, Timeline for Army Growth slide.

40. The 108th Training Command mobilized on 28 April 2006 and began deploying on 18 June 2006. The bulk of the unit arrived that summer, but some personnel did not arrive until October 2006. Lt. Col. Voris Weldon McBurnette, ed., *The 108th Training Command: A History Embracing & Shaping the Future* (Charlotte, NC: Palette Communications, 2010), 74–177.

TABLE 7.1—30K REPLENISHMENT INITIATIVE OF THE IRAQI ARMY[a]

Location	Unit	Training Period	Number of Recruits
Habbaniyah Regional Training Center	1st IA Division	11 October 2006–14 July 2007	3,390
	7th IA Division	11 October 2006–14 July 2007	5,720
Hammam Al Alil and K–1 Regional Training Centers	2d IA Division	3 October 2006–12 May 2007	2,350
	3d IA Division	3 October 2006–12 May 2007	4,050
Kirkush Military Training Base	4th IA Division	3 October 2006–17 March 2007	1,350
	5th IA Division	3 October 2006–17 March 2007	4,320
An Nu'maniyah Iraqi Training Brigade	6th IA Division	3 October 2006–12 May 2007	3,460
	8th IA Division	3 October 2006–12 May 2007	1,650
Tallil Regional Training Center	10th IA Division	3 October 2006–17 March 2007	1,850
Taji Regional Training Center	9th IA Division (Mech)	3 October 2006–17 March 2007	1,860
		Total	*30,000*[b]

Key: See Chart and Table abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Notes: a. Although the initiative would grow to require 40,000 personnel, this chart shows the origins only of the initial 30,000. *b.* This total represents the 12,000 recruits required for the personnel increase and the 18,000 soldiers required for the replacement pool.

Source: Bfg, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) staff to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 21 Sep 2006, sub: 30K Replenishment of the Iraqi Army, 30K Updates Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

redeploy two brigade combat teams to the United States. The two sessions reminded Maliki that three entities with incompatible agendas—the United States, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, and Shi'i militias—potentially controlled his political survival.[41]

The prime minister's concerns about American commitment were lessened one week later when Casey informed Abizaid and General Peter

41. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 581–82.

Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that recent events had altered his position on sending home two brigades.[42] The MNF-I commanding general explained, "I am beginning to see the retaliatory efforts by the Shia extremist groups less as tit-for-tat violence and more as a semi-organized effort to expand geographic control into Sunni areas (primarily in Baghdad, Basra, Diyala, and to a lesser extent, Kirkuk)."[43] As a result, Casey transferred the 172d Infantry Brigade Combat Team from Mosul to Baghdād after Rumsfeld extended the unit's tour of duty to an unprecedented sixteen months. That decision proved so controversial that the secretary of defense visited the 172d's home station in Alaska to explain the decision in person to families.[44]

As the pattern of violence in Baghdād during the summer of 2006 evolved from retaliatory attacks to more sinister efforts designed to alter the ethnic makeup of selected neighborhoods, it forced the Iraqi government and the coalition to respond. Although Operation Together Forward II officially began on 31 July, MNF-I waited nine days before publicly unveiling the new effort. This third attempt to calm the Iraqi capital involved 27,500 National Police members and local police, as well as 25,000 coalition and Iraqi military personnel. The addition of 5,500 U.S. troops did not result in greater saturation but mainly reflected that the effort would last for a much longer period across a larger area of operations.[45]

The initial phase of the operation involved a clockwise series of sweeps, starting in the Rasheed District and ending in Mansour, designed to isolate Sunni insurgents west of the Tigris River that bisected Iraq's capital (*Map 7.1*).[46] The next phase of Together Forward II shifted operational focus northward into the Shi'i-majority Kadhimiyah District. Coalition troops also assisted Iraqi soldiers pushing northeast from the Karadah District to pacify contested portions of the Rusafa and Karkh Districts. During the third phase, the combined forces pivoted north and eastward into the Shi'i-dominated Adhamiyah District. That move placed

42. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 199.

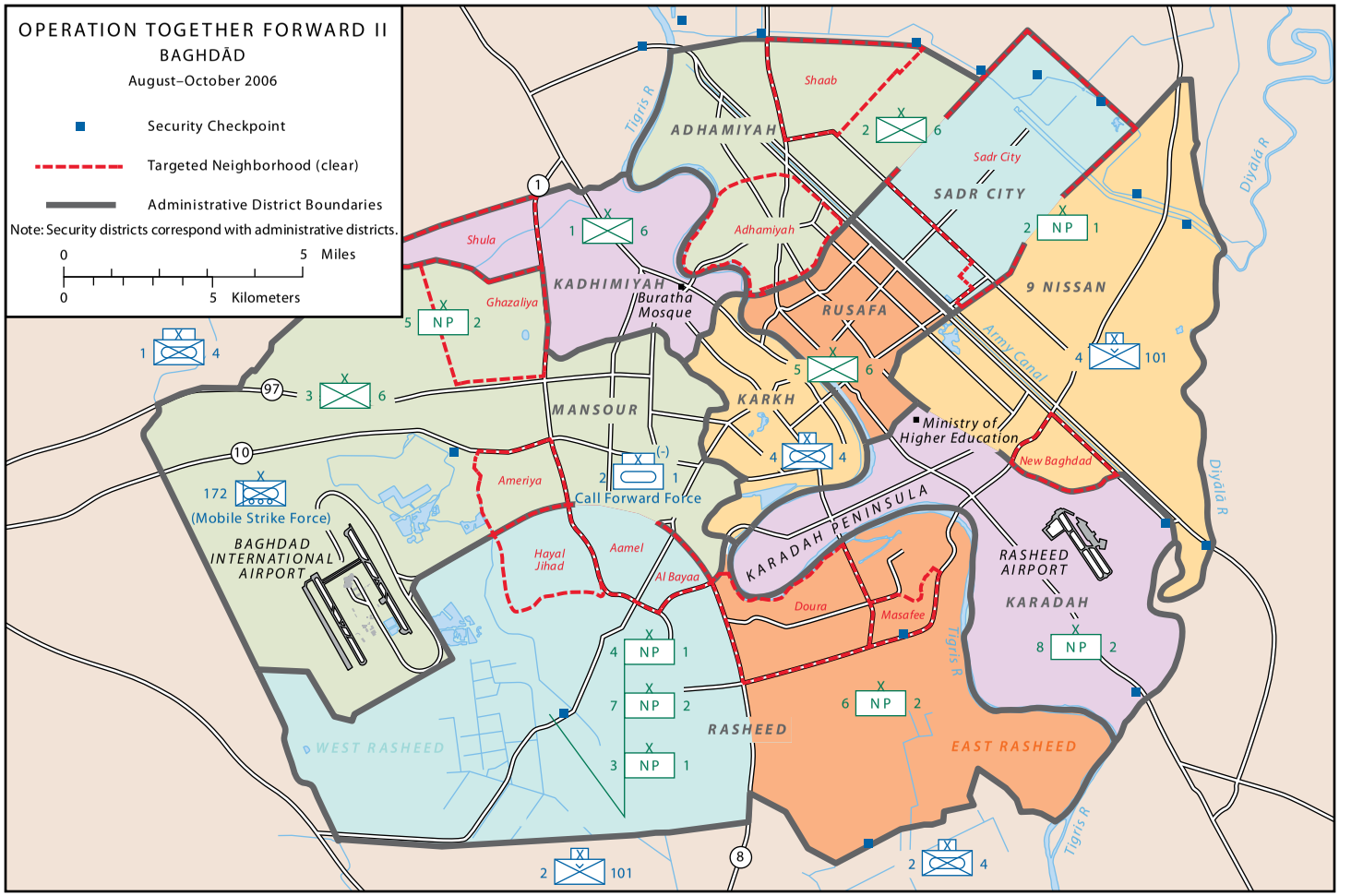
43. Casey used the word *areas* to describe the Sunni-majority enclaves in mixed regions as well as the Shi'i-majority city of Al Başrah and the Kurdish city of Kirkūk. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 582–83.

44. "Rumsfeld to GIs' Families: I'm Not Santa Claus," NBC News, 26 Aug 2006, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/14533814/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/rumsfeld-gis-families-im-not-santa-claus/, Hist Files, CMH.

45. The 1st Armored Division's 2d Brigade Combat Team at Baumholder, Germany, furnished 2,000, and the remaining 3,500 came from Fort Wainwright, Alaska's 172d Infantry Brigade Combat Team. "Operation Together Forward II," Institute for the Study of War, 31 Oct 2007, https://understandingwar.org/research/middle-east/operation-together-forward-ii/.

46. Before February 2007, there were only nine security districts in Baghdād. The tenth was "created" when the Rasheed District was split into eastern and western districts.

Map 7.1


OPERATION TOGETHER FORWARD II
BAGHDĀD
August–October 2006
Security Checkpoint
Targeted Neighborhood (clear)
Administrative District Boundaries
Note: Security districts correspond with administrative districts.
0 5 Miles
0 5 Kilometers
ADHAMIYAH
Shaab
Tigris R
Sadr City
SADR CITY
Diyālā R
Adhamiyah
Shula
KADHIMIYAH
Buratha Mosque
Ghazaliya
RUSAFA
9 NISSAN
Army Canal
MANSOUR
KARKH
Ministry of Higher Education
New Baghdad
Ameriya
Call Forward Force
172
(Mobile Strike Force)
BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Hayal Jihad
Aamel
Al Bayaa
KARADAH PENINSULA
RASHEED AIRPORT
KARADAH
Doura
Masafee
WEST RASHEED
RASHEED
EAST RASHEED
101
97
10
8
1

Iraqi and American units along the northern and western boundaries of Sadr City, where they ended the operation.[47] The MNF-I after action report noted that "the inability of the Iraqi Army to provide additional forces limited [our] capability to clear more than six areas" and led to the decision to halt on the border of Sadr City.[48] In reality, the frustrations experienced by MNF-I were neither unprecedented nor unique. For the past year, the coalition had prioritized Iraqi units assuming security responsibilities for specific districts and provinces rather than preparing them to deploy on short notice to other parts of the country.

Problems within the National Police resurfaced during Together Forward II. On 3 August, the Ministry of Interior withdrew elements of the 2d National Police Division after receiving reports of sectarian behavior. Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Peterson, who led the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, told reporters at a news conference:

> The decision to pull the 8th Brigade was made due to an inspection of the unit in August. The brigade displayed poor performance on specific missions within the Baghdad security plan, the brigade commander had been relieved of his responsibilities, and the commander of the 2nd Battalion was arrested for possible complicity in the raid of a meat processing factory where more than 20 individuals were kidnapped, with seven of them later found killed.[49]

The sectarian prejudices still affecting the National Police partly accounted for the meager results of Together Forward II. Between 8 August and 25 September, the operation detained 125 terrorist suspects and seized 1,600 weapons—a daily average of fewer than 3 arrests and 32 weapons by the 50,000-plus personnel involved.[50] By this time, the reputation of the National Police had deteriorated so much that many Sunnis in Baghdād viewed them as Shi'i death squads. In an attempt to regain the public's trust, the central government replaced suspect police elements with reliable units or used

47. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 30 Aug 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
48. Bfg, MNF-I, 26 Jan 2007, sub: History of the Baghdad Security Plan—14 March 2006 thru Present (26 Jan 2007), slide 5.
49. "Retraining Iraqi Brigade Is Right Decision," American Forces Press Service, 8 Oct 2006, http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6263&Itemid=18, Hist Files, CMH.
50. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 27 Sep 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

Iraqi Army personnel to provide neighborhood security. The latter option did not guarantee success because it placed additional stress on soldiers already involved in clearing operations who were potentially susceptible to extremist subversion or threats during an extended stay in the capital.

The need for more troops for Together Forward II had convinced General Casey to delay the redeployment of two U.S. brigades, but it did not impact scheduled transition of security responsibilities. In mid-July, Baghdād assumed responsibility for Al Muthanná Province in southern Iraq following the departure of 350 Australian and 600 British troops.[51] In early August, the 4th IA Division took control of Ṣalāḥá ad Dīn, As Sulaymānīyah, and Kirkūk from the 101st Airborne Division.[52] On 31 August, the 1st IA Division assumed operational authority over its 3d Brigade from Multi-National Force–West in Al Anbār Province. That marked the start of a three-phase transition during which the coalition command relinquished operational control over all four brigades of the 1st IA Division.[53] On 1 September, Multi-National Corps–Iraq transferred the responsibility for command and control of the 8th IA Division to the Iraqi Ground Forces Command.[54]

While handovers normally took place on a mutually-agreed-upon date after Iraqi forces met certain criteria, unexpected developments sometimes determined the schedule. In late August, the United Kingdom announced plans to halve the number of British soldiers in Iraq by mid-2007.[55] The pullout would begin in early 2007 with the departure of 1,000 troops from the 7,000-strong force. Officials in London explained that further withdrawals would take place only after Iraqi troops assumed responsibility for areas still under British control.[56] The prospect of handing over security for Al Başrah within the timelines articulated by London placed a great burden on the Iraqi Army. To reduce the opportunity for insurgents and extremists to capitalize on the British departure, MNSTC-I amended unit fielding

51. Juhi Bushra, "Iraqis Take Over Security in Muthanna," *New York Times*, 13 Jul 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/13/world/africa/13iht-web.0713iraq.2189699.html, Hist Files, CMH.
52. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 16 Aug 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
53. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 6 Sep 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
54. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 6 Sep 2006.
55. Thomas Harding, "Britain May Halve Troop Numbers in Iraq by Next Year," *Telegraph*, 23 Aug 2006, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1527026/Britain-may-halve-troop-numbers-in-Iraq-by-next-year.html, Hist Files, CMH.
56. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 23 Aug 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

priorities to ensure the 10th IA Division received an additional brigade by July 2007.[57]

During the first week of September, control of the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (including, at that time, the Iraqi special operations forces), together with the Iraqi Air Force and Iraqi Navy, passed to the Ministry of Defense in a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Maliki and General Casey.[58] An MNF-I spokesperson described the event as an important step in the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty, noting that it marked "the first time in the history [of Iraq], since 2003, that Iraqi security forces will be commanded and controlled directly from the prime minister down through the minister of Defense, to the Joint Headquarters to the Iraqi Ground Forces Command structure, down to the individual Iraqi soldier on the ground."[59] The Iraqi Ground Forces Command took control of the 4th IA Division from MNF-I shortly afterward, with additional divisions scheduled to switch over in the following months.[60]

The impending British pullout forced MNF-I to split its attention between the situation in Baghdād and events in the south. On 21 September, the governor of Dhī Qār Province assumed security responsibility from British and Italian forces. That marked the end of the Italian Army's participation in Iraq, which had been code-named Operation Ancient Babylon. Dhī Qār, with 1.8 million residents, included a stretch of the Al Başrah–Baghdād highway and a network of oil pipelines running from the port to a refinery in the city of An Nāṣirīyah. Approximately 10,000 local police, along with National Police personnel and two battalions from the 3d Brigade of the 10th IA Division, now provided all security in the province.[61] The handover marked the seventh of eighteen provinces returned to Iraqi control (*Table 7.2*).

On 10 October, Maliki approved the creation of the ministerial-level Counter Terrorism Service (originally proposed as the National Counter Terrorism Command and, confusingly, also referred to as the Counter

57. Bfg, n.d., sub: Flag Charts, Apr 2005, slide 10 ("MND-SE"), Hist Files, CMH.
58. David McKeeby, "Iraq Taking Command of Its Armed Forces," *Washington File*, 7 Sep 2006, https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2006/09/iraq-060907-usia02.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
59. Press Bfg, Maj. Gen. William Caldwell, MNF-I, 6 Sep 2006, sub: Security Operations in Iraq, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2006/09/mil-060906-mnfi-b01.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
60. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 6 Oct 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm, Hist Files, CMH; Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 151–52.
61. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 27 Sep 2006.

TABLE 7.2—TRANSFER OF CONTROL FROM MNF-I TO IGFC

Unit	Date of Transfer
1st Iraqi Army Division	February 2007
2d Iraqi Army Division	January 2007
3d Iraqi Army Division	December 2006
4th Iraqi Army Division	September 2006
5th Iraqi Army Division	September 2007
6th Iraqi Army Division	March 2007[a]
7th Iraqi Army Division	November 2007
8th Iraqi Army Division	September 2006[b]
9th Iraqi Army Division	March 2007
10th Iraqi Army Division	February 2007

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Notes: *a.* The handover milestones from Multi-National Force–Iraq to Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) control for the 6th and 9th Iraqi Army Divisions reflect the earliest possible window based on the fact that both divisions would not complete force generation training until early January 2007. *b.* This unit was the first of the Iraqi Army divisions slated to be transferred to IGFC control. All Iraqi Army divisions originally were scheduled to be transferred between September 2006 and July 2007.

Source: Multi-National Corps–Iraq Operation Order 06–03, 5 Nov 2006, 43, Historians Files; Bfg, MNF-I Cmdg Gen to U.S. President, 20 Jan 2007, sub: Baghdad Security Plan Update for POTUS, slide 2, William W. Epley Collection; Memo, Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team Cmdg Gen for Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq Cmdg Gen, 15 Dec 2006, sub: Monthly Report on Iraqi Armed Forces (15 Nov 06 to 15 Dec 06), 2007 Material Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection; all at U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

Terrorism Bureau by Americans until 2009).[62] It would oversee Iraqi special operations forces, develop policy and strategy, and advise the prime minister. However, subsequent U.S. efforts to clarify specific command and control questions came to naught in the face of official Iraqi intransigence. Unbeknownst to MNF-I, the prime minister had instigated the reorganization to gain much tighter control over his most proficient military elements.

In the midst of ongoing organizational and security transitions, Operation TOGETHER FORWARD II revealed more problems when the Ministry of Interior

62. A command and control element under the Ministry of Defense and Joint Headquarters, designated as the Counter Terrorism Service, maintained operational control over Iraqi special operations forces units. David Witty, "The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service" (Washington, DC: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 2015), 9, Hist Files, CMH.

announced on 14 October that it had relieved additional senior National Police commanders pending a full investigation. The ministry also fired more than 3,000 lower-ranking police for various offenses on 18 October. An Iraqi general explained that the reduction in officers was so great that the headquarters of two divisions had been dissolved and all brigades were brought directly under the commander of the National Police.[63] Although changes mandated by MNF-I had reduced sectarian influence within the police, the Year of the Police program unwittingly had forced a growing share of the security responsibilities within the capital onto the Iraqi Army.

On 21 October, General Casey ordered his staff to find out why Together Forward II did not deliver the expected results. Large numbers of Iraqi civilians still were being killed, and American fatalities were approaching their highest level since fall 2005, reaching sixty-five in August and seventy-one in September.[64] The MNF-I staff again reported that a shortage of Iraqi troops had prevented Together Forward II from achieving its objectives.[65] That explanation had some plausibility given that the deployment of Iraqi units to Baghdād had sparked a mutiny within the 2d Battalion, 4th Brigade, 10th IA Division; led to the partial disintegration of the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th IA Division; and triggered "administrative paralysis" within the 3d Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3d IA Division.[66] But the absence of three infantry battalions with a combined present-for-duty strength well under 2,000 soldiers could not have been the entire cause of failure of a multiweek effort involving more than 52,000 security personnel.

In response to these latest examples of a trend that first had surfaced more than two years earlier, General Dempsey formed an internal study group to examine how to improve the Iraqi Army's ability to deploy troops. After reviewing previous efforts, MNSTC-I concluded that the failures were not attributable to logistical or transportation issues. For the most part, the problems resulted from mass refusals among enlisted personnel after they

63. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 18 Oct 2006, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2006/index.htm; "Iraq to Replace Police Commanders," Al Jazeera, 14 Oct 2006, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2006/10/14/iraq-to-replace-police-commanders/; Sabrina Tavernise, "Iraq Removes Leaders of Special Police," *New York Times*, 18 Oct 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/18/world/middleeast/18iraq.html; all in Hist Files, CMH.
64. "U.S. Commander Orders Review of Baghdad Crackdown," Reuters, 21 Oct 2006, http://www.reuters.com/assets/print?aid+USIBO95121420061021, Hist Files, CMH.
65. It is difficult to interpret MNF-I reports from this period because they do not address the sectarian behavior of some Iraqi units or the restrictions imposed by Nouri al-Maliki. For a description of the latter, see Bobby Ghosh, "Maliki: No Fan of Surge," *Time*, 10 Jan 2007, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1576543,00.html, Hist Files, CMH.
66. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 30 Nov 2006, sub: 3 x IA Brigade Deployment to MND-B, revised slides, MNC-I Folder, Hist Files, CMH.

received word that they would be transferred to unfamiliar areas of operations. Their reasons for refusing differed depending on the situation, but included inadequate information about the new mission, lack of commitment to that mission, insufficient confidence in leaders and equipment, and the belief that their missions had neither government nor popular support.

With security operations in Baghdād slated to continue until the end of the year, the group made recommendations to help foster a deployment-oriented culture within the Iraqi Army. Immediate initiatives included tasking military training teams to assist Iraqi units with deployments, accelerating the acquisition of deployment-related support equipment, adding mobility and deployment enablers to Iraqi force modernization programs, and inserting Iraqi Army deployment goals into the MNF-I campaign plan. Suggested intermediate enhancements consisted of replacing Iraqi Army soldiers at static checkpoints with police, requiring Iraqi Army divisions to maintain a mobile reserve, conducting deployment training for Iraqi units, and creating the capability to support the simultaneous deployment of three Iraqi battalions. Long-term fixes included adopting special pay and insignia for deployable units and procuring sufficient dedicated air and ground transportation to support the rapid deployment of a brigade.[67]

Further analysis concluded that, rather than overtax the short-notice capabilities of the 1st IA Division, the Iraqi Army should reconfigure one battalion apiece in the 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 8th, and 10th IA Divisions as rapid reaction units. Recommended preparatory training for these units would consist of four phases spanning 150 days—a 15-day home station portion, a 14-day trial deployment to gain experience in working with a different supporting unit, 90 days conducting combat missions from the Besmaya Range Complex, and a 30-day postdeployment phase.[68] However, the study group conceded that it would take considerable time for the rapid-reaction training program at the Besmaya Range Complex to achieve full impact. Because that base lacked the facilities to train multiple units simultaneously, the battalions would have to cycle sequentially through the program of instruction. Whether those troops would have any more desire to deploy in a crisis than their compatriots in the rest of the army remained an open question.

Almost all of these changes, whether immediate or in the future, dealt with issues related to logistics and transportation—the very things the study

67. Bfg, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Near-Term, Mid-Term, and Long-Term Deployment Options, 2 Archive 2006 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

68. Bfg, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Committee Recommendations on Improving the Deployability of the Iraqi Army Oct 05, slide 2, Iraqi Army Deployability 2006 Folder, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.



A combination of amnesty and bonuses proved successful in persuading more than 1,500 soldiers who had been absent without leave to return to the 1st Iraqi Army Division in late 2006 through early 2007. These soldiers listen to an address from Maj. Gen. Tariq Abdul Wahab Jassim, commanding general of the 1st Iraqi Army Division, upon their return to duty at Camp Habbaniyah. (*Sgt. Bene Eberle, U.S. Marine Corps*)

had determined were not part of the problem. With the exception of special pay and insignia, they did not address the root causes—which were primarily motivational—making it unlikely that the initiatives would produce enduring outcomes. They were programs that MNF-I could implement readily and track in quantifiable terms, which fit with the command's focus on generating numbers of personnel trained or equipment acquired—data that indicated progress toward the goal of transition.

Though MNSTC-I had determined that previous deployment failures were not caused by logistical shortcomings, the group's findings indicated that sustainment challenges would play a greater role in the future. The creation of three additional divisional headquarters (for the 11th IA Division and two as-yet undesignated organizations composed of strategic infrastructure brigades) and the approved personnel increases for combat units would not be accompanied by a matching expansion of the logistical force structure, despite the fact that Iraqi units would be taking over more of their own logistical support from the Americans.[69] The unprecedented

69. This process involved transitioning from a system where the Americans controlled the planning, paperwork, loading, unloading, and convoy operations to a system where the

tempo of Together Forward II, coupled with the requirement to develop a rapid reaction force, highlighted the fact that additional logistical upgrades were sorely needed. A solution to that shortfall was not on the horizon.

At the tactical level, the expansion program had formed seven of nine transportation regiments and 149 of 188 headquarters and service companies by 3 September 2006. In comparison, the development of fixed sustainment nodes lagged significantly. During this period, MNSTC-I rated the Al Habbaniyah regional support unit as 30 percent capable and its counterparts as follows: Al Kasik Military Base at 40 percent, Camp Taji at 60 percent, and both An Numaniyah Military Training Base and Kirkush Military Training Base at 70 percent. Although evolving logistical requirements allowed MNSTC-I to downsize the number of garrison support units from ninety-one to eighty, difficulties in developing a standard table of organization and equipment for those organizations produced major fielding delays. Only five garrison units existed in September, none of which were fully capable.[70]

MNSTC-I sought to align existing logistical milestones with near-term deployment enhancements and force structure growth, but options for doing so were limited. The proposed changes taking place at the depot level, for instance, involved the Ministry of Defense taking over programs managed by contractors. The construction of facilities at the Taji National Depot, which was not slated to begin until December 2007, influenced when handovers would occur. Before implementing the scheduled transfers, MNSTC-I created a team of Ministry of Defense contracting specialists to manage the actual transfer as well as all follow-on responsibilities, as described in the newly signed National Maintenance Contract.[71] The requirement to train and validate ministry specialists pushed the completion milestone for this contract into spring 2007. MNSTC-I also deferred the transfer of the contract for the repair parts system to September 2007 rather than simultaneously shift multiple contracts onto the ministry.[72]

Personnel issues proved to be another worrisome impediment to improving logistical capabilities. A visit by U.S. Government Accountability Office inspectors during this period revealed that uneven personnel management

Iraqis performed all of those tasks with minimal U.S. oversight. Interv, Lisa Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Maj. Phoebe Flynn, former 4th Sus Bde S–4, 23 Oct 2012, 11, OLE.

70. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 3 Sep 2006, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, slide 26, 2 Archive 2006 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

71. Bfg, Ministry Def to High-Level Working Gp, 17 Nov 2006, sub: MoD's Training and Resources Committee Report to the High-Level Working Group, slide 12, CG Briefs 2006 Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

72. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032, "Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistics Capabilities," 28 Oct 2006, 12, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA460534.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

within Iraqi logistical units had produced personnel shortfalls in several critical skill areas. In some instances, Iraqi commanders had reassigned logistics specialists to infantry units pending the delivery of equipment for sustainment organizations, which then had left them short of people when the gear arrived. In other cases, logistics personnel simply had walked away, because Iraqi soldiers did not have a legal obligation to complete their terms of service.[73] Although infantry units had the same problem, it was worse in logistical units because the logisticians received specialized training, which gave them added incentive to turn their skills into better-paying jobs on the outside and likewise made them more difficult to replace. As a result, logistical units often lacked the personnel they needed to perform high-tempo operations on a sustained basis.[74]

Shortages were especially acute within the ranks of medical specialists. As of late August 2006, the Iraqi Army had filled only 24 percent of its positions for doctors, 22 percent of its nurses, 42 percent of its medics, and 22 percent of its required pharmacists. In fairness, most of the medical personnel shortages stemmed from issues beyond the Ministry of Defense's control. A nationwide shortage of physicians, for example, impeded the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel, and efforts to increase pay and benefits as a means to attract more doctors were met with fierce bureaucratic resistance from the Ministry of Health, which was competing for the same limited pool of talent.[75]

A stop-gap solution was to employ existing transportation units and headquarters and service companies, along with proactively assigning units who had not yet completed training, to support Iraqi soldiers operating alongside American forces in Baghdād and Al Anbār. In some instances, however, the unanticipated flow of reinforcements required the Americans to augment Iraqi logistical facilities that only were resourced to support fewer troops. Iraqi Army units not involved in those high-tempo operations would have to rely on civilian contractors for support to replace their missing sustainment units. In fact, MNSTC-I already had concluded that a contract-supported logistics infrastructure would have to serve as an adequate interim

73. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032, "Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistics Capabilities," 28 Oct 2006, 10.

74. The first instance of present-for-duty reporting to the Office of the Secretary of Defense by MNF-I and Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq occurred after Robert M. Gates replaced Donald H. Rumsfeld.

75. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032, "Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistics Capabilities," 28 Oct 2006, 10–11.

solution until the Iraqi military could perform key sustainment functions on its own.[76]

The Iraqis had the means to solve their personnel shortcomings with additional recruiting or new policies, but the issue of equipping new support units was far more complicated to address. Additional U.S. funding for the 4,000 trucks and 980 Humvees that were required by division- and higher-level logistical units remained in question, pending congressional approval of the Pentagon's fiscal year 2007 supplemental budget request.[77] The U.S. Department of Defense would not even submit that proposal to Congress until February 2007, and it likely would be months before it received a vote. Assuming the proposal passed into law, completing the bureaucratic requirements, assembling the equipment, and shipping it all to Iraq would take considerable time, so the vehicles would not arrive before mid-2008.[78]

Recent political developments presented one ray of hope in an otherwise gloomy logistical picture. Iraq's adoption of a constitution and formation of an elected government during the summer of 2006 allowed the United States to designate it as a major non-NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) ally. That in turn allowed Iraq to participate in the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. Under Section 3 of the Arms Export Control Act, the United States could now sell defense articles and services to Iraq for the purpose of strengthening regional security.[79] Although U.S. defense appropriations funded some programs, such as Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training, nations eligible for FMS assistance had to pay for the bulk of the equipment and services they received. Without this mechanism or a similar program administered by the State Department, Iraq could not buy weapons, legally, from the United States. The FMS program allowed the U.S. agencies handling these transactions to supply the Iraqi military with American-made material to fulfill most of

76. Memo, MNSTC-I/NATO Training Mission–Iraq HQ for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 18 Apr 2007, sub: Memorandum to Accompany Edit of Cordesman Manuscript, 3, Hist Files, CMH.

77. The supplemental request included equipping and training 33,000 additional Iraqi troops for sustainment, engineer, maintenance, and support elements (military intelligence, military police, and explosive ordnance disposal). D. J. Elliott, "Iraqi Security Forces Order of Battle: June 2007 Update," *Long War Journal*, 6 Jun 2007, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/06/jun_2007_iraqi_secur.php, Hist Files, CMH.

78. The U.S. Congress did not approve the fiscal year 2007 Supplemental Request until May 2007. D. J. Elliott, "The Latest GAO Report and a Reality Check," *Long War Journal*, 9 Dec 2007, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/12/the_latest_gao_report.php, Hist Files, CMH.

79. Def Institute of Security Management, *DISAM Greenbook*, Jan 2010, ch. 5, 5–1, http://www.disam.dsca.mil/DR/05%20Chapter.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

their military needs, even as Iraqi officials continued to receive training to manage their own defense procurement budgets.[80]

Soon after Iraq became eligible for the FMS program, MNSTC-I staff met with Ministry of Defense representatives to review the procedures for submitting an initial FMS request, referred to as a "master case," to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.[81] Once that was approved, MNSTC-I helped the Iraqis deposit funds, identify and prioritize requirements, finalize equipment specifications, prepare contracts, and make purchases. In addition to assisting during the preparatory phase, MNSTC-I monitored delivery and transfer of equipment as well as the training and maintenance requirements for the new items. Support for generalized logistical tasks not associated with a specific equipment order, such as ammunition management and handling, vehicle replacement and modernization, purchase and stocking of repair parts, and the shipment of other types of supplies, also would be available through the FMS program.[82]

The minister of defense, eager to participate in the program, sent a memorandum to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency requesting support with "establishing an interest-bearing account with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. This account is to support Foreign Military Sales cases for the government of Iraq."[83] One day later, the agency notified Congress of the Iraqi government's desire to procure $250 million worth of helicopters, vehicles, and weapons, including associated equipment and services, through FMS.[84] A second order, valued at $500 million, for 9-mm. pistols, M16A2 rifles, M4A1 rifles, M240B and M249 machine guns, night vision devices, armored personnel carriers, twenty Mi–17 transport helicopters, and several million rounds of small arms ammunition, followed that same day.[85]

80. U.S. Dept. State, "Congressional Budget Justification: Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2008," 2 May 2007, 488, https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/84462.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

81. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 31 Jul 2006, sub: Foreign Military Sales Master Case in Support of the Iraqi Military Modernization Program, 2 Archive 2006 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

82. Statement, William M. Solis, Director Def Capabilities and Management, *Testimony Before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*, 110th Cong. (9 Mar 2007), Government Accountability Ofc Study, GAO-07-582T, *OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM Preliminary Observations on Iraqi Security Forces' Logistical Capabilities*, 4, https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07582t.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

83. Memo, Minister Def Abdul Qadr M. Jassim al-Mafraji for Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Kohler, Director, Def Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), 18 Sep 2009, sub: Return to Work Book (Oct 06), 2 Archive 2006 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

84. DSCA Press Release, Transmittal 06-68, "Iraq—Helicopters, Vehicles, Weapons, and Support," 19 Sep 2006, http://www.dsca.mil/PressReleases/36-b/2006/Iraq_06-68.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

85. DSCA Press Release, Transmittal 06-68, "Iraq—Helicopters, Vehicles, Weapons, and Support," 19 Sep 2006.



Iraqi and U.S. soldiers secure a landing zone after exiting from a UH–60 Black Hawk helicopter near Tall' Afar. This type of operation did not occur frequently enough to build up proficiency within Iraqi units. (*S. Sgt. Aaron Allmon, U.S. Air Force*)

CHARTING A NEW COURSE

Iraq's newfound ability to tap into the FMS program received far less attention in the White House compared to the growing public rift between Ambassador Khalilzad and Prime Minister Maliki. That tension was matched behind the scenes by difficult sessions between General Casey and the prime minister. The MNF-I commander recalled, "I came to realize that until we resolved our differing views of the threat—his seeing Ba'thists as the most dangerous threat, and my seeing the [Shi'i] militia as the most dangerous—we would continue to be at odds."[86] During a visit to Washington, D.C., in early October, Casey explained to senior American officials that the two nations viewed current events differently. He opined that progress in Iraq needed to take place on both the security and political fronts simultaneously, with the Iraqis committing to a firm timeline for the latter. The anticipated completion of the Iraqi military's force structure revisions and Year of the Police reforms, coupled with a temporary halt to American drawdowns, would provide sufficient forces to rectify security issues by late summer 2007.[87] Despite Casey's concern about the prime minister's Shi'i outlook, Maliki had not interfered with ongoing American efforts to oust sectarian

86. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 122.
87. Casey, *Strategic Reflections*, 124.

actors—the majority of whom were Shi'a—from the National Police and other law enforcement organizations.

Concerned about relations between the prime minister and senior U.S. representatives in Baghdād, President Bush dispatched his national security adviser, Stephen J. Hadley, to assess the situation. The president also arranged a series of secure video teleconferences with Maliki to demonstrate solidarity and improve communications. During one such virtual meeting on 28 October, Bush and Maliki agreed that the top security priorities were "accelerating the pace of training the Iraqi Security Force, Iraqi assumption of command and control over Iraqi forces, and transferring responsibility for security to the Government of Iraq."[88]

Soon after that teleconference concluded, the White House issued a statement noting that the two leaders had "discussed a range of issues of great importance to [the] common mission in Iraq, including the development of Iraqi security forces, efforts to promote reconciliation among all Iraqis, and the International Compact for Iraq and the economic reforms associated with it."[89] The press release also disclosed the formation of the Joint High-Level Working Group, consisting of the Iraqi national security adviser, the minister of defense, the minister of interior, General Casey, and Ambassador Khalilzad, which would be tasked with developing strategies to improve the security situation.[90]

Within a day or two of the press release, General Casey asked Defense Minister Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji for input on accelerating the Army Expansion Plan, implementing the 10 percent overstrength initiative, supporting deployment enhancements, and the Iraqi Army's commitment to making logistics improvements. Casey's query to Abdul Qadr marked an important milestone; for the first time, MNF-I was soliciting feedback on multiple programs directly from the Ministry of Defense rather than tasking the ministry's U.S. advisers to perform that work. By this time, the increasingly ambitious Iraqi expansion plans encompassed not only adding brigades to the 6th and 9th IA Divisions, but also authorizing new brigades for the 5th, 7th, and 10th IA Divisions, as well as three more battalions for the 8th IA Division, two additional battalions for the 10th IA

88. White House Press Release, "Joint Statement by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Iraq," 28 Oct 2006, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061028-1.html, Hist Files, CMH.
89. White House Press Release, "Joint Statement by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Iraq," 28 Oct 2006.
90. White House Press Release, "Joint Statement by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Iraq," 28 Oct 2006.

Division, and a 1,230-strong special operations battalion.[91] Making matters more complicated, the Iraqis were now examining multiple ways of forming the National Strike Force. One option consisted of the 11th IA Division headquarters, the 6th Brigade of the 6th IA Division, the yet-to-be-formed 4th Brigade of the 9th IA Division, and a newly generated special operations battalion.[92] Another variant consisted of the 11th IA Division headquarters, a mechanized brigade of the 9th IA Division, a National Police brigade, and one or more regionally affiliated commando companies provided by the ISOF Brigade.[93]

Before providing input to Casey, Abdul Qadr appointed a new committee, known as the Training and Resources Committee, to examine each program. The committee met regularly to examine the suitability of each force structure option, evaluate updated information, identify problems, and propose solutions. The committee's mandate called for the completion of a refined plan of action, which was then sent to Maliki for comment. After the prime minister added his input, the Joint High-Level Working Group reviewed the plan before the Iraqis shared it with General Casey.

Domestic news overshadowed events in Iraq when U.S. voters went to the polls to elect all 435 members of the House of Representatives and 33 (out of 100) senators on 7 November 2006. The Democrats won six seats in the Senate and thirty-one in the House, giving them control of both legislative bodies. The following day, the president announced Secretary Rumsfeld's resignation. Another important, albeit unpublicized, development took place on 8 November when National Security Advisor Hadley distributed a draft Iraq strategy memorandum to Bush's cabinet principals. Based on Hadley's extensive personal interaction with MNF-I, MNSTC-I, and the Iraqi prime minister's office, the document highlighted one of the main problems facing the current Iraqi government—its unwillingness to promote genuine reconciliation. While Hadley believed Maliki and his Islamic Da'wa Party did not openly condone sectarian violence, "reality on the streets of Baghdad suggest[ed] that Maliki [was] either ignorant of what [was] going on, misrepresenting his intentions, or that his capabilities [were] not yet

91. Force strength requirements for the force structure expansion package totaled 19,274 officers, noncommissioned officers, and enlisted soldiers. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 5 Dec 2006, sub: Acceleration 2 – Chart for Hadley Tasking, slide 1, Hendrix Collection, CMH.
92. Bfg, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Committee Recommendations on Improving the Deployability of the Iraqi Army Oct 05, slide 4.
93. Bfg, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Committee Recommendations on Improving the Deployability of the Iraqi Army Oct 05, slide 12; Bfg, 3 Dec 2006, sub: PM State of the Armed Forces Brief (13 Dec 06), 2 Archive 2006 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

sufficient to turn his good intentions into actions."[94] Until the prime minister felt secure enough to weather a good deal of political backlash, he could not appoint nonsectarian politicians to key leadership positions, overhaul his personal staff, distance himself from Muqtada al-Sadr, or take positive steps toward reconciliation.[95]

Casey's staff had calculated that 11,500 additional soldiers—roughly four brigades' worth—were needed to end the widespread violence within the capital and thereby bolster Maliki's political legitimacy in the eyes of all Iraqis. However, both the White House and MNF-I acknowledged that this effort could not be delayed for the six or more months it would take for the Army Expansion Plan to provide the additional troops.[96] In order to acquire more Iraqi Army units as soon as possible, General Casey personally appealed to President Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Regional Government to transfer Kurdish-majority Iraqi Army brigades to Baghdād. That attempt gained only two of the four additional brigades, which meant that the burden of providing additional troops would fall on U.S. forces as well.[97] Both the Kuwait-based 2d Brigade, 1st Armored Division—which already had sent two of its call forward battalions from Ar Ramādi to Baghdād—and the soon-to-redeploy 172d Infantry Brigade Combat Team, located in Mosul, received orders to report to Multi-National Division–Baghdad. With these new orders, soldiers from the 172d also learned that their tour of duty had been extended by four months.[98]

President Bush assembled Vice President Richard B. Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, outgoing Secretary Rumsfeld, General Pace, Director of National Intelligence John D. Negroponte, and Hadley's deputy, Jack D. Crouch, in the Oval Office on 10 November to review the current Iraq strategy. After the attendees provided their views on the Hadley proposal, the president asked each of them to appoint full-time action officers to take part in a follow-on strategy assessment. As the meeting wound down, Bush emphasized that he wanted the group's consolidated recommendations within the next two weeks.[99]

94. "Text of U.S. Security Adviser's Iraq Memo," *New York Times*, 29 Nov 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/29/world/middleeast/29mtext.html, Hist Files, CMH.
95. Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History, 2006–2008* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 8.
96. "Text of U.S. Security Adviser's Iraq Memo."
97. Glenn Kessler, "Bush's New Plan for Iraq Echoes Key Parts of Earlier Memo," *Washington Post*, 11 Jan 2007, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2007/01/11/bushs-new-plan-for-iraq-echoes-key-parts-of-earlier-memo/bc30411d-7dfb-4304-8593-b5a736ad4bcb/, Hist Files, CMH.
98. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 1, 583–84.
99. Sayle et al., *Last Card*, 130.



Iraqi soldiers patrol the streets in Mosul. The vehicle appears to be an unarmored eastern European jeep rather than an American-supplied Humvee. (*Spc. Clydell Kinchen, U.S. Army*)

Although some within the administration agreed with Hadley's proposal to send more American troops, disapproval emanated from many quarters. In many cases, the opposition centered around questions of whether the reinforcements would have a positive impact, given the current political environment in both nations. Some review participants believed that the situation in Iraq resembled a civil war rather than an insurgency, which meant that adding more troops to ongoing counterinsurgency efforts would not solve the problem because insurgents were generating only a fraction of the violence.[100] General Abizaid, along with Casey, felt strongly that the Iraqi military would benefit more from learning on its own how to solve problems rather than watching the Americans do it for them. However, neither U.S. Central Command nor MNF-I provided an estimate for how long this learning process would take. During the reassessment, Abizaid publicly broke with the Hadley proposal when he told a Senate committee, "I do not believe that more American troops right now is the solution to the problem. I believe that the troop levels need to stay where they are."[101]

While the Americans were mired in ongoing debate, the Iraqis moved forward with their own proposals for countering the growing violence. On 17 November, the Ministry of Defense's Training and Resources Committee briefed senior government officials on the feasibility of accelerating security

100. Sayle et al., *Last Card*, 131–33.

101. Peter Baker, "President Confronts Dissent on Troop Levels," *Washington Post*, 15 Nov 2006, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/20/AR2006122000308.html, Hist Files, CMH.

initiatives. The committee identified several high-profile programs that would require more attention during the first half of 2007, including installing a communications network linking thirty-three key Iraqi command and control nodes, equipping the 9th IA Division with 35 armored cars and 351 new armored personnel carriers, fielding a battalion's worth of armored personnel carriers to each infantry brigade in most of the remaining Iraqi Army divisions, and providing divisional engineer companies with two route clearance platoons apiece.[102]

Some of the acceleration options under examination required the adjustment of the Training and Resources Committee's priorities, while others were incompatible with existing capabilities and practices. Some American-supported initiatives proved less than appealing to Iraqis after closer examination revealed that the initiatives were aimed at simply bolstering the Iraqi Army's ability to maintain a sustained presence in urban neighborhoods rather than improving its ability to ferret out and destroy insurgents. The Joint High-Level Working Group agreed to present the Training and Resources Committee's updated findings not only to General Casey but also to Prime Minister Maliki and President Bush when the two leaders met in Jordan later that month.

On 29 November, Casey traveled from Baghdād to talk privately with the president after Air Force One arrived in Jordan. The MNF-I commander briefed Bush on a recent Iraqi proposal that would divide Baghdād into ten operational areas, each garrisoned by an Iraqi infantry brigade, civilian police, and some coalition forces. To allay concerns that the mostly Shi'i police might derail everything, Maliki promised to impose military law.[103] Casey elaborated that the scheme required the transfer of more than three brigades of Iraqi soldiers to Baghdād. He concluded by asking Bush to

102. The number and types of armored personnel carriers per division varied, with the 2d IA Division receiving 198 Cougars and armored Land Rovers, the 3d IA Division receiving 117 armored Land Rovers, the 4th IA Division receiving 143 armored Land Rovers and 42 Cougars, the 5th IA Division receiving 130 armored Land Rovers and 84 Cougars, the 6th IA Division receiving 210 Cougars and 150 Polish-built Dziks, the 7th IA Division receiving no armored personnel carriers, the 8th IA Division receiving 135 Dziks, and the 10th and 11th IA Divisions each receiving 150 Dziks. In addition to Iraqi Army divisions, the strategic infrastructure brigades received 54 armored Land Rovers while the Iraqi Ground Forces Command also received 15 of those vehicles. Each type of vehicle arrived during a different timeframe, with the entire complement of Dziks not appearing before April 2008. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 2 Dec 2006, sub: High Level Working Group on Acceleration, slide 35, Misc MNSTC-I Files "2006" Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

103. Talking Points, Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 14 Dec 2006, sub: Office Call w/GEN Babakir 14 Dec 06, 2006 Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

remind Maliki that calm could not be restored in Baghdād until the Shi'i and Sunni communities worked out their differences.[104]

The Joint High-Level Working Group presented the Training and Resources Committee's assessment to Bush and Maliki on 30 November.[105] The committee had added a number of items to the agenda in response to input from senior American and Iraqi leaders. As a result, the meeting in Jordan sought joint commitment not only to the prime minister's Army Expansion Plan but also to the Ministry of Defense's personnel readiness initiatives; the formation of the National Strike Force; an operational reserve for the Iraqi Army; changes to the Counter Terrorism Service; force protection and mobility enhancements for selected Iraqi Army divisions; logistical improvements for the Iraqi military; the expansion of the Iraqi Army's existing institutional training base; and additional deployment training for Iraqi Army divisions.[106] The Americans were interested in implementing all of those programs, provided they could be accomplished by the end of 2007 rather than spring 2008.[107]

A number of programs, including those designed to improve communications, logistics, training, and intelligence gathering, appeared very suitable candidates for acceleration. Equipment-related initiatives also offered promise, with milestones for armored personnel carrier fielding compressed into a timeline ending in May 2007 rather than March 2008. By funneling newly trained soldiers from predesignated training centers to new units within specific periods, the training program rapidly could create additional brigades and battalions for selected Iraqi Army divisions; 11th IA Division support elements; the 4th Brigade, 9th IA Division; and the 6th Brigade, 6th IA Division.[108] Finding officers to lead the new units was more problematic. The Iraqi government placed such importance on filling those leadership positions that it sought to reinstate 808 former officers who had served during the Saddam era rather than accept a MNSTC-I suggestion

104. Woodward, *War Within*, 254.
105. David Shelby, "Bush, Iraq's Maliki to Speed Transfer of Security to Iraqis," USINFO, 30 Nov 2006, https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2006/11/iraq-061130-usia01.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
106. Bfg, Ministry Def to High-Level Working Gp, 17 Nov 2006, sub: MoD's Training and Resources Committee Report to the High-Level Working Group, slides 2, 10–11.
107. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 5 Dec 2006, sub: Acceleration 2 – Chart for Hadley Tasking, slide 1.
108. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 2 Dec 2006, sub: High Level Working Group on Acceleration, slide 8; Bfg, Ministry Def to High-Level Working Gp, 17 Nov 2006, sub: MoD's Training and Resources Committee Report to High-Level Working Group, slide 9.

to provide platoon leaders faster than originally forecast by curtailing the training of junior officers attending military academies.[109]

The Iraqi Army's support infrastructure offered less potential for acceleration. The full operational capability milestone for the Taji National Depot, for example, could not be shifted more than a few months without creating major problems. Opportunities to achieve progress in other areas, such as ongoing programs to enhance the Iraqi Army's ability to provide supply, ammunition, and repair parts to combat units, also remained limited. In some instances, the lack of resources led to the delay or outright cancellation of programs, including the proposal to provide Iraqi divisional engineer companies with the same equipment used by American route clearance teams. Although MNF-I and the Ministry of Defense both sought to speed up the generation of special operations units, that organization's rigid recruiting and training requirements did not support such a move.[110] The presentation ended with the combined price tag for all of the proposals—$4.5 billion in calendar year 2007—with the bulk allotted to the purchase of vehicles and equipment.[111]

In a candid, private discussion after the presentation, Bush informed Maliki that it appeared to the international community as if the Iraqi government no longer controlled Baghdād. The president added that, although he knew the prime minister wanted coalition troops to leave the Iraqi capital, the United States was ready to commit more soldiers to reverse the international impression. Bush qualified his offer:

> Now, we're willing to help, but we will not do that—because it won't work—unless I have certain assurances from you. They are: There will be no further interference in the conduct of military operations. There will be no political intervention in your general's decisions. . . . No matter who the perpetrators of violence may be, we—your forces and ours—will go after them. . . . And, I have to have your assurance that you are committed to the political reconciliation process, because that has to be moving on as well.[112]

109. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 2 Dec 2006, sub: High Level Working Group on Acceleration, slides 7–11, 18; Memo, CG, Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 Aug 2006, sub: Monthly Report on the Iraqi Armed Forces (15 Jul 06 to 15 Aug 06), 1, CG Month Iraqi Military Report to CG MNF-I Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.
110. Bfg, Ministry Def to High-Level Working Gp, 17 Nov 2006, sub: MoD's Training and Resources Committee Report to the High-Level Working Group, slides 3–7.
111. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 2 Dec 2006, sub: High Level Working Group on Acceleration, slides 7–11, 18.
112. Woodward, *War Within*, 256.

Three days after talking with Bush, Maliki provided a revised security plan for Baghdād to MNF-I. First and foremost, it did not rule out an increase in the overall number of coalition forces and it noted their redistribution would be acceptable if Casey wished to send additional units to Baghdād. The Iraqi leader also expressed a desire to modify the current command and control arrangement in the capital, explaining that he could no longer agree to the coalition exercising exclusive authority over security operations. Instead, he preferred a joint approach, with responsibility initially distributed between an overall commander and deputies from the Ministries of Defense and Interior. He noted that command and control for security in Baghdād ultimately would rest in the hands of the Iraqis themselves.[113]

In addition to "seven areas within the city center," the prime minister defined the most critical terrain as the regions around and adjacent to Baghdād.[114] Government and coalition forces, he noted, had to secure those districts if they wished to "weaken the terrorists, and thus facilitate control of the death squads which [were] a reaction to terrorist acts."[115] To accomplish this, Maliki recommended creating an Iraqi-controlled reaction force, equipped with tanks, helicopters, and modern weapons, capable of quickly striking with precision against enemy targets. The prime minister's designation of the "seven areas" within Baghdād—which did not include Sadr City—along with his assessment of death-squad activity as a "reaction to terrorist attacks" appeared to indicate that he continued to view certain developments from a Shi'i, rather than an Iraqi, perspective.[116] Maliki also wanted to limit entry into the capital by building physical obstacles and creating more checkpoints. The prime minister closed by reminding Casey to remain committed to accelerating the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces, transferring responsibility for the security of provinces to the Iraqi government, and working with neighboring countries to stop the support of antigovernment political parties and militias.[117] Although the prime minister's input was a positive sign, it meant that Casey needed to reconcile his own judgment and that of his staff with Maliki's desires.

113. Memo, 2 Dec 2006, sub: Prime Minister's Proposed Security Plan to Protect and Secure Baghdad (Draft), MNF-I Folder, Hist Files, CMH.
114. Memo, 2 Dec 2006, sub: Prime Minister's Proposed Security Plan to Protect and Secure Baghdad (Draft).
115. Memo, 2 Dec 2006, sub: Prime Minister's Proposed Security Plan to Protect and Secure Baghdad (Draft).
116. Memo, 2 Dec 2006, sub: Prime Minister's Proposed Security Plan to Protect and Secure Baghdad (Draft).
117. Memo, 2 Dec 2006, sub: Prime Minister's Proposed Security Plan to Protect and Secure Baghdad (Draft).

In addition to negotiating with the Iraqis on what to do in Baghdād, General Casey had to address the shifting strategic viewpoints of U.S. political and military leaders. The release of the *Iraq Study Group Report* on 6 December, representing eight months of bipartisan effort by a panel cochaired by former Secretary of State James A. Baker III and former Congress member Lee H. Hamilton, sparked a lively discussion within the Bush cabinet. Although the report explained that sending more American troops to Iraq might worsen the long-term security situation, it offered a caveat: "We could, however, support a short-term redeployment or surge of American forces to stabilize Baghdad or speed up the training and equipping mission, if the U.S. commander in Iraq determines that such steps would be effective."[118]

On 11 December, five prominent strategy and policy experts, including retired Army Generals John M. Keane, Wayne A. Downing, and Barry R. McCaffrey, met at the White House with Bush and Hadley. General Keane emphasized that "the key to the success is to change the [coalition] military mission—instead of preparing for transition to Iraqi control, that mission should be to bring security to the Iraqi population. Surges aimed at accelerating the training of Iraqi forces will fail, because rising sectarian violence will destroy Iraq before the new forces can bring it under control."[119] Keane recommended sending five additional Army brigades and two more Marine battalions to Iraq, while implementing a multitiered economic reconstruction program in Baghdād and eliminating insurgent bases outside the Iraqi capital. Those ideas resonated with Bush, but the president held off on making a final decision until he spoke with Casey's as-yet-to-be named replacement as MNF-I commander. Extensive discussions with Prime Minister Maliki would follow before the United States could settle on the number of troops it would send.[120]

The 11 December discussion set the stage for Bush to visit the Pentagon two days later to secure support for a multibrigade surge. Army and Marine Corps leadership initially argued against the proposal, citing long-standing worries about destroying the morale and readiness of ground combat units. The Army, which bore the brunt of the burden, already had undertaken

118. James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, *The Iraq Study Group Report* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2006), 73, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-IRAQSTUDYGROUP/pdf/GPO-IRAQSTUDYGROUP.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

119. Frederick W. Kagan and Jack Keane, "The Right Type of 'Surge'; Any Troop Increase Must Be Large and Lasting," American Enterprise Institute, 27 Dec 2006, https://www.aei.org/articles/the-right-type-of-surge-any-troop-increase-must-be-large-and-lasting/, Hist Files, CMH.

120. Sayle et al., *Last Card*, 186–92.



Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr. (*left*), the commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division; Lt. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli (*center*), the commanding general of Multi-National Corps–Iraq; and Maj. Gen. James D. Thurman, the commanding general of Multi-National Division–Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division, at the transfer of authority ceremony held at Camp Liberty, Iraq, on 15 November 2006. Maj. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey and Minister of Defense Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji can be seen behind the trio of general officers. (*Spc. Rodney Foliente, U.S. Army*)

a massive internal restructuring that shifted organizational focus from division- to brigade-level deployments in response to its sustained overseas commitments. Chief of Staff of the Army Schoomaker therefore agreed to support the surge only after the president assured him that he would make permanent a proposed U.S. Army end-strength increase of 30,000 personnel.[121]

The shift from a withdrawal-focused strategy to a plan to send more troops to quell the skyrocketing violence assuaged the concerns of senior U.S. military commanders who were accompanying the most recent rotation of troops to Iraq. On 14 December, Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno's III Corps assumed the Multi-National Corps–Iraq mantle from Lt. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli's V Corps in a ceremony at Al Faw Palace in Baghdād. During a news conference after the event, General Odierno informed reporters that many members of his corps staff were serving in Iraq for a second or third time, which he believed would contribute significantly to his command's

121. Sayle et al., *Last Card*, 175–81.

overall effectiveness.[122] The arrival of III Corps followed that of another unit from Fort Hood, Texas, Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr.'s 1st Cavalry Division, which had taken over the duties of Multi-National Division–Baghdad from Maj. Gen. James D. Thurman's 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) a month earlier.[123] Both Odierno and Fil's staffs had monitored events in Iraq, including Operations Together Forward I and II, before their arrival.

On 18 December, Robert M. Gates became the twenty-second secretary of defense.[124] Three days later, he went to Iraq with the intent of obtaining approval from Maliki to send more U.S. troops to Baghdād. The trip also provided General Dempsey with an opportunity to update Gates on the Iraqi security forces.[125] The MNSTC-I presentation included both an overview of acceleration plans and an assessment of other major projects. Although significant progress had been made, Dempsey explained, recent expansion programs and deployment enhancements were consuming the Ministry of Defense budget much faster than forecasted. The Defense Department would have to add $1 billion to the fiscal year 2007 Supplemental Request to maintain the current spending tempo. Failure to provide this funding would bring acceleration efforts to a halt by 1 March.[126]

Secretary Gates also learned that, although the Iraqi Army's trained-and-equipped strength hovered around 99 percent, its aggregate present-for-duty strength stood 11 percent lower. The reason for the disparity, which equated to 14,300 soldiers, lay in the fact that recruiting efforts were not keeping up with losses created by casualties, force structure growth, and soldiers failing to return from leave. Since early 2004, the Iraqi Army had suffered 16,700 losses, with 3,340 killed, 7,014 wounded, and 6,346 missing or absent.[127] Those shortages had to be made up before units could be filled above their

122. Sgt. Curt Cashour, "U.S. Army's 3rd Corps Takes on Multinational Corps Iraq Mission," American Forces Press Service, 15 Dec 2006, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2006/12/mil-061215-afps01.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

123. Spc. Karl Johnson, "1st Cavalry Division Takes Multinational Division Baghdad Reins," American Forces Press Service, 15 Nov 2006, https://www.army.mil/article/647/1st_cavalry_division_takes_multinational_division_Baghdad_reins, Hist Files, CMH.

124. "Dr. Robert M. Gates–Former Secretary of Defense," official biography, U.S. Dept. Def, n.d., http://www.defense.gov/bios/biographydetail.aspx?biographyid=115 (accessed 15 Apr 2012), Hist Files, CMH.

125. David S. Cloud, "Defense Secretary Visits Baghdad," *New York Times*, 20 Dec 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/20/world/middleeast/20cnd-gates.html, Hist Files, CMH.

126. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 21 Dec 2006, sub: State of the Iraqi Security Forces—Briefing to the Secretary of Defense, slide 9, 2006 Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

127. Corresponding figures for the Iraqi police were 4,703 killed, 10,973 wounded, and 16,983 missing or absent, for a total of 32,659 casualties. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 21 Dec 2006, sub: State of the Iraqi Security Forces—Briefing to the Secretary of Defense, slide 15.

authorized strength. However, the deteriorating security situation now was affecting recruitment to a growing degree. Out of the 7,650 young Iraqis forecasted to enter the army in October, only 82 percent actually joined. The recruiting shortfall increased again when only 3,000 additional Iraqis entered military service by 14 December.[128] With enlistments declining, the chances of adding 8,600 more recruits by mid-January 2007 appeared remote.[129]

Dempsey concluded with a candid assessment of the Ministry of Defense and the Joint Headquarters. The former received "partly effective" ratings in most categories. The performance of the ministry's personnel department had been consistently subpar, a state of affairs that hardly could have been surprising given the manpower director general's recent arrest on corruption charges. Significant hurdles also remained within the ministry contracting process, especially with life support contracts for military installations. While the Joint Headquarters also received some "partly effective" ratings, the MNSTC-I commanding general noted that accurate personnel reports, especially of combat losses, remained elusive. Strategic planning received a low grade because the Iraqi staff depended too heavily on coalition expertise. The Joint Headquarters had made discernable progress over the past several months solely in the areas of intelligence collection and analysis.[130]

The next step in implementing a major shift in American strategy in Iraq involved the appointment of new U.S. Central Command and MNF-I commanders. On 5 January 2007, Secretary Gates announced that Admiral William J. Fallon would succeed Abizaid, who was scheduled to retire in March after almost four years as the commanding general of Central Command. The *Washington Post* quoted unnamed Pentagon sources who attributed the unusual selection of a naval officer to oversee the combatant command to the fact that "most of the moving pieces in the region [were] ships and aircraft, in contrast to the troops engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan. Fallon [was] likely to focus less on ground-war tactics in Iraq than did

128. Few Sunnis were joining the Iraqi Army during this period. Out of a contingent of 1,850 soldiers destined for the 7th IA Division in mid-December 2006, only 149 were Sunni. Talking Points, Dempsey, 14 Dec 2006, sub: Office Call w/GEN Babakir 14 Dec 06.

129. Totals range from 69 percent of the 1,500 recruits slated to be trained at K–1 (Kaywan Air Base) to 100 percent of the 750 recruits entering training at Hammam Al Alil near Mosul. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 21 Dec 2006, sub: State of the Iraqi Security Forces—Briefing to the Secretary of Defense, slide 22.

130. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Sec Def, 21 Dec 2006, sub: State of the Iraqi Security Forces—Briefing to the Secretary of Defense, slides 34–35.



General John P. Abizaid (*right*) shakes the hand of Admiral William J. Fallon, the new commander of U.S. Central Command, at their change of command ceremony held at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. (*Spc. Patrick A. Zeigler, U.S. Army*)

Abizaid, who became commander in the immediate aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion in 2003."[131]

The secretary also made public his intention to replace the MNF-I commander, General Casey, whom Gates had nominated to be the next Army chief of staff, with General Petraeus.[132] The secretary explained the changes by noting, "We are engaged in three wars—in Iraq, Afghanistan, and against jihadist terrorism worldwide. . . . As secretary of defense, and as a citizen, I firmly believe that Generals Petraeus and Casey and Admiral Fallon, as individuals and as a team, bring to the challenges that face us, the qualities necessary to be successful in war and to protect the American people."[133] Several days later, Secretary Rice announced the nomination of Ryan C. Crocker to succeed Khalilzad as the U.S. ambassador to Iraq.

131. Ann Scott Tyson, "Admiral's Diplomatic Skills Could Prove Crucial," *Washington Post*, 16 Jan 2007, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2007/01/14/admirals-diplomatic-skills-could-prove-crucial-span-classbankheadcentral-command-nominee-credited-with-achieving-us-goals-in-asiaspan/ae455dc5-c0f2-4135-bb99-c1df495a6872/, Hist Files, CMH.

132. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 10 Jan 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

133. Samantha L. Quigley, "Gates Makes Recommendations for Filling Key Military Roles," American Forces Press Service, 5 Jan 2007, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2007/01/mil-070105-afps02.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

Crocker had considerable experience in the Middle East, having served as the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon, Kuwait, Syria, and Pakistan.[134]

EMBRACING A NEW APPROACH

During his Army Day remarks on 6 January 2007, Maliki revealed his intention to send more troops, including Kurdish units, into Baghdād as part of a general offensive against extremist groups. The Iraqi forces, aided by U.S. troops, methodically would sweep major neighborhoods in an effort to "deny all outlaws a safe haven, irrespective of their sectarian or political affiliation."[135] Although the prime minister stated that they would "utterly reject any interference from political parties in carrying out the security plan," Sunni leaders described the new plan as a thinly disguised attempt to further Shi'i agendas.[136] The announcement also prompted concern on the part of Kurdish leaders, who were worried about being drawn into Arab-on-Arab violence.[137] Misgivings about Maliki's intentions, however, paled in comparison to American concerns following President Bush's unveiling of his new strategy.

In a speech to the nation televised on 10 January, President Bush informed the American people that he had ordered 20,000 additional U.S. soldiers to deploy to Iraq. These reinforcements would bring the total of American forces in Baghdād Province to nine brigades, which would provide numbers sufficient to protect the local population, help the Iraqis secure the city's mixed neighborhoods, and sustain early security gains.[138] Eighteen Iraqi Army and National Police brigades also would take part in the combined effort. To forestall worries about the reliability of Iraqi security forces, President Bush explained, "We will increase the embedding of American advisers in Iraqi army units, and partner a coalition brigade with every Iraqi army division. We will help the Iraqis build a larger and better-equipped

134. "Ryan C. Crocker," official biography, U.S. Dept. State, n.d., http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/81479.htm (accessed 2 Jun 2014), Hist Files, CMH.
135. Sumedha Senanayake, "Iraq: Premier's New Security Plan Carries Heavy Risks," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 10 Jan 2007, https://www.rferl.org/a/1073923.html, Hist Files, CMH.
136. Steve Negus, "Maliki Vows to Restore Order in Baghdad," *Financial Times*, 7 Jan 2007, https://www.ft.com/content/54c99910-9e80-11db-ac03-0000779e2340, Hist Files, CMH; Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 10 Jan 2007.
137. Senanayake, "Iraq: Premier's New Security Plan Carries Heavy Risks," 10 Jan 2007.
138. Five U.S. brigade combat teams would be deployed in the city with another four brigade combat teams operating in the outer belt areas surrounding Baghdād.

army, and we will accelerate the training of Iraqi forces, which remains the essential U.S. security mission in Iraq."[139]

The president admitted that "past efforts to secure Baghdad [had] failed for two principal reasons: There were not enough Iraqi and American troops to secure neighborhoods that had been cleared of terrorists and insurgents, and there were too many restrictions on the troops we did have."[140] Not only were insufficient forces employed during earlier operations, he elaborated, but political and sectarian influence had "prevented Iraqi and American forces from going into neighborhoods that are home to those fueling the sectarian violence. This time, Iraqi and American forces will have a green light to enter these neighborhoods—and Prime Minister Maliki has pledged that political or sectarian interference will not be tolerated."[141]

CONCLUSION

The second half of 2006 was a textbook example of an allied nation prioritizing its own strategic agenda over the senior coalition partner's goals. Although that dynamic is typical, it had not yet come into play, mainly because of the length of time it took to establish a sovereign government that could remain in place long enough for its leaders to establish full control, forge lasting political compromise, and gain institutional knowledge. Concerned that he was perceived as not playing a great enough role in protecting Iraqi citizens from sectarian violence, Maliki talked with other government officials in an effort to devise a solution for which he could take credit. The resultant Army Expansion Plan started out modestly but soon ballooned into a much larger project with MNF-I's encouragement.[142] The prime minister's plan, as well as the Ministry of Defense's 30K Replenishment Initiative and force modernization initiative, gained so much momentum that they formed the centerpiece of the discussion between the prime minister and President Bush in Jordan. However, the expansion plan, 30K Replenishment Initiative, and force modernization program would not bear fruit before late 2007, a timeline which necessitated the deployment of additional American troops to Iraq to serve as a near-term answer to rising violence.

139. George W. Bush, "We Need to Change Our Strategy in Iraq" (speech to the nation, 11 Jan 2007), CNN, http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/01/10/bush.transcript/index.html, Hist Files, CMH.
140. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 10 Jan 2007.
141. Bush, "We Need to Change Our Strategy in Iraq" (speech to the nation, 11 Jan 2007).
142. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 7 Oct 2006, sub: Influences on the PM to Expand ISF, 30K and PM Initiatives Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

Maliki's vision did not produce the immediate solution he had desired. In fact, the spate of new force structure, equipment, and training initiatives unleashed by his initial foray into the security arena inadvertently relegated Iraqi military forces to a peripheral role in the upcoming fight, in large part because of the unavoidable disruptions they created. This unforeseen development produced both negative and positive results: it thrust the near-term task of defeating al-Qaeda and Shi'i sectarian groups squarely onto the Americans, but it also positioned the Iraqi Army for future success, should MNF-I prove victorious over the coming months.

The last six months of 2006 therefore were a seminal period in the American-led train-and-equip effort in Iraq. Extensive postelection bickering had given birth to a more assertive host-nation government, and Bush's White House discarded MNF-I's strategy for withdrawing U.S. troops—which had driven the train-and-equip mission since March 2005—in favor of deploying greater numbers of U.S. troops to Iraq for the purpose of ending sectarian violence. Both developments gave the Iraqis a greater voice in the future of their security forces and conferred greater responsibility on Baghdād for the ultimate outcome of train-and-equip efforts.

8
Recapturing the Initiative: January–June 2007

As senior administration figures in Washington, D.C., hammered out the specifics of a large-scale surge of American troops, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) formulated plans for a fourth attempt to quell sectarian violence in Baghdād. The prospects for better results grew after a patrol from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, discovered a treasure trove of al-Qaeda documents after it stopped a car for curfew violation near At Tājī on 19 December 2006.[1] The information included a map, drawn by al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's successor Abu Ayyub al-Masri, which revealed that the extremist group had divided Baghdād and its surrounding environs into distinct zones. The diagram also disclosed that al-Qaeda had concentrated its "manufacturing and logistical bases . . . from which they would inject such accelerants as car bombs and suicide bombers into Baghdad" in suburban "belts" or support zones encircling the capital's periphery.[2] That revelation led to Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) expanding its interest from Baghdād to encompass those adjacent areas, as well as the western sanctuaries along the Iraq-Syria border that were sustaining those zones.[3]

1. Mil Intel Soldier Heritage Learning Center - MI Museum, "1st Cavalry Division Patrol Seizes Trove of Documents, 19 December 2006," Facebook, 19 Dec 2023, https://www.facebook.com/MISoldierHeritageLearningCenter/posts/725315106255433, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).
2. Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 67.
3. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, *Surge and Withdrawal, 2007–2011* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 64.

American intelligence on the Shi'i militias remained murky. Fortunately for MNC-I, more clues about Muqtada al-Sadr's agenda emerged around the same time. Sadrist members of parliament suspended participation in that body after President George W. Bush's meeting with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and tried to persuade members of other political parties to form a concerted front against the prime minister. The Mahdi Army also sent contingents into majority-Shi'i provinces to intimidate local officials and security forces. Prime Minister Maliki viewed Sadr's strategy as a direct political threat. Rather than test the shaky loyalty of the Iraqi Army by sending it to fight against his Shi'i opponents, he sought out new allies that included Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, head of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, as well as Sadrist lieutenants who had grown disillusioned with the direction of their movement. Their defection compounded another problem afflicting the cohesion of Sadr's organization. The Iranians also were actively courting junior Sadrist leaders to use as proxies in their efforts to ramp up operations targeting American troops.[4]

Maliki's concerns about threats to his hold on power were not limited to those emanating from outside the government. To ensure he gained firm control over the army, the prime minister created a new agency, known as the Office of the Commander in Chief, which reported directly to him. He appointed two Shi'i officials, Lt. Gen. Farouk al-Araji and Bassima al-Jaidri, to head the new agency. The pair did not hesitate to circumvent the military chain of command in order to influence appointments, assignments, and promotions and to target political opposition using Iraqi special operations teams. Some Americans were convinced that the Office of the Commander in Chief had been created to foster the spread of sectarianism throughout the security forces; others viewed it as an attempt to ensure the armed forces did not fall under the influence of Maliki's political enemies. Subsequent developments demonstrated that both theories were somewhat correct.[5]

A long-standing debate among U.S. officials regarding the Iraqi government's suitability as a strategic partner had reignited in the closing days of 2006. On 29 December, Iraqi government representatives had notified the American embassy of Baghdād's plan to execute Saddam Hussein the following morning. The Americans immediately requested a postponement,

4. Nicholas J. Schlosser, *The Surge, 2007–2008*, The U.S. Army Campaigns in Iraq (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2017), 27–28, 80; Mansoor, *Surge*, 82–83.

5. Multi-National Force–Iraq opted for the latter viewpoint, which led Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus to assign a senior officer as a liaison to the Office of the Commander in Chief after he replaced General George W. Casey Jr. as the top U.S. commander in Iraq. Mansoor, *Surge*, 77.

noting that Saddam's execution would occur on Eid al-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice). Considered by all recognized Islamic groups to be one of the holiest religious holidays, Eid al-Adha honors the prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael to prove his faith in God. In 2006, Shi'a and Sunnis observed the holiday on different dates, with the former marking it on the thirtieth. Despite the U.S. appeal, Saddam met his fate in Baghdād before dawn on 30 December 2006.[6] The Americans' concern proved well-founded; several Sunni-majority nations, including Saudi Arabia, accused Maliki of blatant sectarianism for executing the former dictator on that day.[7]

A HAND FULL OF WILD CARDS

The Bush administration and the Pentagon approved sending five additional U.S. Army brigade combat teams—the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division; the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized); the 2d and 3d Brigade Combat Teams, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized); the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division—as well as the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit to Iraq. The Army units would arrive at the rate of one brigade combat team per month, with two going to the Iraqi capital and the rest to the zones encircling Baghdād. The marine expeditionary unit would deploy to Al Anbār.[8]

Capping months of effort to build consensus for the surge, President Bush gained Senate approval for Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus to replace General George W. Casey Jr. as the top U.S. commander in Iraq.[9] Before departing for Iraq, Petraeus, newly promoted to general, coordinated with MNC-I's commanding general, Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno. Both believed that Maliki's pro-Shi'i bias had convinced Sunnis that officials in Baghdād were uninterested in their welfare, and both understood that a wholesale erosion of popular support would bolster rather than reduce the appeal of extremist agendas.[10] They planned to restore faith in the Iraqi government by creating opportunities for Iraqi security forces to demonstrate their willingness to protect innocents, regardless of their sectarian and ethnic affiliation.

6. "Iraqis Execute Saddam for Mass Killings," *Seattle Times*, 30 Dec 2006, https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/iraqis-execute-saddam-for-mass-killings/, Hist Files, CMH.
7. Alistair Lyon, "World Leaders Divided Over Effects of Hussein Execution," *Boston News*, 31 Dec 2006, http://archive.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2006/12/31/world_leaders_divided_over_effects_of_hussein_execution/, Hist Files, CMH.
8. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 64.
9. Schlosser, *Surge*, 17.
10. Schlosser, *Surge*, 30.

Attaining that goal would be a lengthy and arduous process given that the emphasis MNF-I had placed on security handovers since spring 2005 had done little to prepare the Iraqi Army for a more dynamic role.[11]

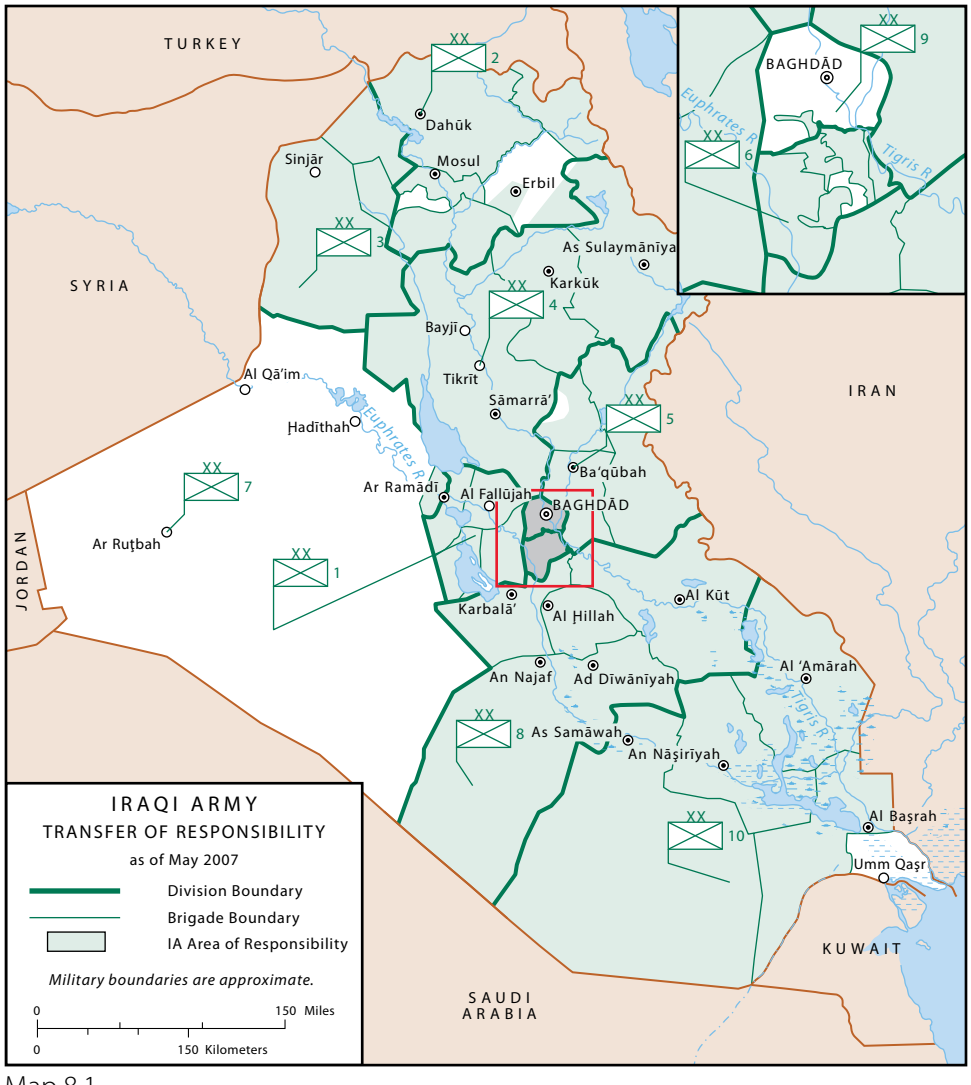
MNF-I's first difficult task was regaining the strategic initiative it had lost when al-Qaeda had destroyed the Sāmarrā' mosque in February 2006. This required the Americans and their Iraqi partners to take the fight to fortified extremist enclaves ringing Baghdād rather than resume using the tactics employed during Operations Scales of Justice and Together Forward I and II. The new methods concentrated on destroying the enemy rather than clearing and holding terrain. The initial phase focused on disrupting the northern, western, and southern Baghdād belts, followed by similar efforts against surviving insurgents seeking sanctuary in other areas of Iraq after the last of the five reinforcing brigade combat teams arrived in summer 2007. The Iraqi special operations forces were prepared to play a major role in planned operations from the onset, but Iraq's conventional forces were immersed in extensive retraining, force structure reorganization, and equipment upgrades. Thus, most of the Iraqi Army could contribute little until its organizational turmoil subsided.

MNF-I efforts would serve as the ultimate test of the U.S. Army's newly published counterinsurgency doctrine. The sectarian violence that had erupted after the Sāmarrā' bombing effectively had prevented the United States from achieving further political or economic progress in Iraq. American military forces would now discard their transition strategy and focus instead on providing security, especially for the people in and around Baghdād (*Map 8.1*).[12] The switch not only involved taking the fight to the enemy by destroying its enclaves, logistical bases, and leadership, but also required MNC-I to abandon the "commute to the fight" mandate levied by General Casey and instead take up residence in urban neighborhoods.[13] Some units in Iraq already had been using the "clear, hold, and build"

11. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 43.

12. Robert M. Gates, *Exercise of Power: American Failures, Successes, and a New Path Forward in the Post–Cold War World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020), 224.

13. Lt. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, the V Corps and Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) commanding general before the arrival of Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno's III Corps, recalled, "I was told my job was to get us down to fifty FOBs [forward operating bases] by the end of 2006. My instructions were pretty clear. You will not have 110 FOBs. There were 110 FOBs when I went in 2006." According to an Army plans officer familiar with the pre-surge period, Multi-National Force–Iraq's downsizing mandate resulted in V Corps/MNC-I's efforts "devolving into a series of disjointed and unconnected tactical actions. [Commuting to the fight resulted in] a failure to retain terrain and amounted to U.S. forces being forced to retake the same ground each day after surrendering it the previous evening." Maj. Wilson C. Blythe Jr., "III Corps During The Surge: A Study in Operational Art," *Military Review* 97, no. 5 (Sep-Oct 2017): 79–80.



Map 8.1

approach that formed the basis of the updated operational concept, Petraeus and Odierno intended to employ this method on an unprecedented scale for a sustained period.

Unfamiliarity with population-centric counterinsurgency was one of the least disruptive challenges facing the Iraqi security forces in January 2007. In addition to the Iraqi Army's ongoing turbulent metamorphosis, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) had initiated the Year of the Police during early summer 2006 with a multimonth top-down inspection program to identify problems within the National Police. That process led to the early relief of both National Police division commanders,

followed by seven of nine brigade commanders, and fourteen of twenty-five battalion commanders during 2006 and the first half of 2007.[14] The Ministry of Interior appointed new commanders to replace the dismissed leaders as soon as possible and reconstituted headquarters elements as needed.

The final step consisted of contractors retraining the brigades after they received new leadership. The 1st National Police (NP) Division included the 1st through 4th NP Brigades, while the 2d NP Division controlled the 5th through 8th NP Brigades. The mechanized police force remained separate from both divisions. The 4th NP Brigade served as the test-bed effort in November 2006, followed by the 8th, 1st, 3d, 2d, 7th, 6th, and 5th NP Brigades and the 1st Mechanized NP Brigade, before culminating in fall 2007 with the yet-to-be-formed 10th NP Brigade, which would be dedicated to protecting the Sāmarrāʾ mosque rebuilding project. The third phase of the Year of the Police program involved NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) personnel teaching police leaders about practices perfected by Italy's Carabinieri, a highly regarded paramilitary law enforcement organization. Because this phase pulled each brigade out of the line for almost three months, it would take two years to complete the program. Although sorely needed to restore the National Police's reputation and proficiency, the intensive training left a portion of that force unavailable for operational duties at any given time.[15]

In addition to upgrading government security forces, MNF-I sought to leverage unrest and dissatisfaction toward al-Qaeda among Iraqi Sunnis. The initiative, commonly referred to as the Anbar Awakening, arose when tribal leaders began to see the terrorist organization as a greater threat than the Shi'i government. The sheikhs in Al Anbār reached an understanding with coalition forces that resulted in tribal fighters, many of whom were former insurgents, forming coalition-sponsored militias or entering the local police force to fight against Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which had reemerged after rebranding itself under the umbrella of the Islamic State of Iraq following the decimation of most of its members and Zarqawi's death in October 2006. Early indications of success persuaded MNF-I to contemplate a similar program, designated as the Sons of Iraq, in mixed Shi'i-Sunni provinces.[16]

14. As a result of the turnover, Sunni representation in the National Police leadership ranks increased from two battalion commanders to four brigade commanders and almost half of more than two dozen battalion commanders. D. J. Elliott, "Training the Iraqi National Police," *Long War Journal*, 3 Jul 2007, 2–3, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/07/Iraqi_national_polic.php, Hist Files, CMH.

15. Elliott, "Training the Iraqi National Police," 2–3.

16. The Sons of Iraq program involved paying Sunnis and former insurgents to guide U.S. troops and staff security checkpoints during coalition operations targeting al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups from June 2007 onward. Najim Abed al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen,

ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

Operation Together Forward III (called Operation Fardh al Qanoon [Enforcing the Law] by Iraqi officials), slated to begin in early March, was MNF-I's latest attempt to rejuvenate its campaign plan following the Sāmarrā' bombing. Its goal was straightforward: "During the first half of [2007], ISF [Iraqi security forces] and Coalition Forces will focus on stabilizing Iraq by breaking the cycle of violence in Baghdād." To accomplish that, "ISF [Iraqi security forces] and coalition troop strength will temporarily increase in Baghdad, Anbar, and Diyala to help arrest the upswing in violence."[17] Once these critical areas were cleared, sufficient forces would remain in place to hold ground and protect the population while reconstruction, reconciliation, and economic initiatives got underway. After much discussion, the MNC-I staff settled on defining an acceptable end-state as an Iraqi government–brokered ceasefire, amnesty offers aimed at ending sectarian violence, defeat of irreconcilable terrorist groups, and the disbandment of illegal militias.[18]

Before Petraeus's arrival, General Casey had set out to make Odierno's task easier by improving the linkages between U.S. and Iraqi forces. The MNF-I staff proposed creating a combined operations center staffed by personnel from Multi-National Division–Baghdad (MND-B)/1st Cavalry Division and the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC). While Maliki signaled his willingness to support this initiative, formal acquiescence rested on MNF-I making changes to its original suggestion. First and foremost, Maliki did not want the new headquarters, henceforth known as the Baghdād Operations Center (BOC), to be located on an American-controlled base, because that would not support his efforts to convince the Iraqi people that he had assumed a leading role in quelling extremist violence. The prime minister also turned down suggestions for IGFC involvement because he wanted a direct link between the center and his own office. The Americans had no option but to agree, with the operations facility moving into Adnan Palace, adjacent to the heavily fortified 10-acre area in the heart of Baghdād known as the Green Zone that housed not only the current Iraqi government but also successive U.S. administrative entities beginning with the Office of

"The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening," *PRISM–The Journal of Complex Operations* 2, no. 1 (Jul 2012): 4, 9–10, 14, https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/prism/prism_2-1/prism_2-1.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

17. Memo, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 27 Jan 2007, sub: 2007 Joint Campaign Action Plan, 4–5, Hist Files, CMH.

18. Bfg, Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) Cmdg Gen to Multi-National Divs Cmdg Gens, 12 Dec 2006, sub: Offensive CONOP (Cdr Conf–14 Dec 06), MNC-I Folder, Hist Files, CMH.

Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. Individuals reassigned from the Ministries of Defense and Interior made up the Iraqi portion of its staff.[19]

The prime minister appointed Maj. Gen. Abboud Qanbar, a Shi'i from the same tribe as Maliki, to head the operations center.[20] Although Qanbar's assignment gave him unprecedented authority, he and his newly formed staff were untested, so MNC-I arranged for several command-post exercises to familiarize his headquarters with the basics of staff work.[21] The requirement to train Iraqi personnel, along with a lack of suitable communications equipment, pushed the center's initial operating capability back to 5 February 2007.[22]

Rather than wait for the BOC to be fully effective, the Iraqis created a pair of interim command and control cells to work with Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr.'s MND-B. The Karkh Area Command, which encompassed the Kadhimiyah, Mansour, Karkh, and Rasheed Districts, had responsibility for monitoring Baghdād west of the Tigris River.[23] Wajih Hameed, a National Police major general, ran the cell, with the 6th Iraqi Army (IA) Division commander, Iraqi Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Ameer al-Zaidi, as his deputy. East of the Tigris, the Adhamiyah, Sadr City, Rusafa, New Baghdad, and Karadah Districts formed the Rusafa Area Command, with the 9th IA Division (Mechanized)'s Maj. Gen. Riyadh Jalal Tawfiq, aided by 1st NP Division commander Maj. Gen. Abdul Karim al-Ezi, overseeing it.

Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell, the MND-B assistant division commander for maneuver, became the senior liaison between coalition and Iraqi security forces within the capital. His responsibilities involved much more than passing information between the various commands, and his rank allowed him to interact with the area commanders and other senior Iraqi leaders as an equal. He soon learned to rely on Iraqi officers who were willing to help and to work around those who were reticent to cooperate. As journalist Linda Robinson observed, "Campbell kept going day after day like a bulldog. He did not win every argument, by any means. Even when they did not agree with him, the Iraqis respected his commitment and down-to-earth manner.

19. Cited in C–3 Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 21 Feb 2007, sub: MNC-I Training Assistance to the Baghdad Operations Command, William W. Epley Collection, CMH.
20. Amir Taheri, "The Right General for Baghdad," *New York Post*, 7 Mar 2007, https://nypost.com/2007/03/07/the-right-general-for-baghdad/, Hist Files, CMH.
21. Ltr of Instruction, MNC-I, 29 Jan 2007, sub: MNC-I Battle Command Training Program Support to the Baghdad Operational Command, Epley Collection, CMH.
22. Bfg, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I), 19 Jan 2007, sub: Baghdad Command Seminar, slide 2, 2007 Material Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, CMH.
23. The Rasheed District was later split into eastern and western halves.



From left to right: Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the commander of Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I); Minister of Defense Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji; National Security Advisor Mowaffak al-Rubaie; interpreter Mike Juaidi; and then Lt. Gen. Abboud Qanbar, commander of the Baghdād Operations Center. (*Sgt. Curt Cashour, U.S. Army*)

They knew he would be right back there with them the next day, trying to push the Baghdad [security] plan forward one step at a time."[24]

General Odierno faced the same geographical and tactical challenges that confronted his predecessor, but he had the advantage of being able to leverage the lessons of Together Forward I and II to address those problems. The militia groups and extremists conducting attacks within Baghdād were, by now, well-established in heavily protected enclaves near major road networks leading into the capital. North of Baghdād, the support belts utilized by al-Qaeda included the cities of At Tājī, At Tarmiyah, Baʿqūbah, and Buhriz. Circling around the capital to the east and south, the terrorist strongholds also included Besmaya, Salmān Pāk, Al Maḥmūdīyah, and Al Yusufiyah. The eastern portion of this area posed major concerns for MNF-I because far fewer U.S. troops were available to operate there than conditions warranted.

24. Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 139.



Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell (*center*), Multi-National Division–Baghdad's assistant division commander for maneuver, discusses developments in Sadr City with Brig. Gen. Ali Ibrahim Daboun (*right*), commander, 8th Brigade, 2d National Police Division, on 5 March 2007. (*Spc. Leigh Campbell, U.S. Army*)

In Al Anbār Province, the cities of Al Fallūjah, Ar Ramādī, and Al Karmah anchored the western belts.[25]

General Odierno recognized that military operations alone would not end sectarian violence. Accordingly, he sought Prime Minister Maliki's public support, permission to operate in Sadr City, and a declaration of martial law within Baghdād. He disagreed with the MNF-I assessment that Operations Together Forward I and II fell short of expectations because insufficient numbers of Iraqi troops took part. The MNC-I commander considered the previous concept of operations fundamentally flawed, given that violence invariably resumed after U.S. troops turned over cleared areas to Iraqi control. Although he planned to make full use of available Iraqi forces, Odierno harbored few illusions as to their capabilities and commitment.[26]

The MNC-I staff mapped out specific phases and identified troop requirements for each major task. The final plan involved Iraqi forces

25. Dale Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad: The 3d Infantry Division and Task Force Marne in Iraq, 2007–2008*, Global War on Terrorism (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2010), 17.
26. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 64.

establishing a cordon around the periphery of Baghdād and covering checkpoints along the Army Canal (Qanat al Jaysh), a 25.7-kilometer-long industrial waterway bisecting the capital. Acknowledging that American troops were better trained and equipped than their Iraqis partners, MNC-I assigned coalition units to clear contested neighborhoods in the capital and assault fortified enclaves in the support belts outside Baghdād. In addition, U.S. forces would mount precision strikes against key opposition leaders, eliminate improvised-explosive-device and vehicle-bomb networks, and interdict insurgent supply routes. Coalition troops would hand over security responsibilities to the Iraqis only after verifying that the extremist groups no longer presented a viable threat. Once the Iraqis took over an area from the Americans, the central government would implement economic and political initiatives designed to promote reconciliation. The final phase focused on redeploying surge forces back to home stations while U.S. troops that remained in Iraq continued to target noncompliant militias and al-Qaeda remnants.[27]

Odierno recognized that repeating the old pattern—of establishing checkpoints and having patrols from distant bases pass through a neighborhood—would not provide real protection to the population, so he encouraged commanders to adopt new methods. MND-B suggested constructing multiple small outposts, dubbed joint security stations (JSSs), which were designed to sustain a constant coalition presence in contested neighborhoods. Both Iraqi and American troops would garrison each outpost and conduct joint patrols each day throughout the surrounding area. Although the basic concept originated with the Iraqi minister of defense in fall 2006, MND-B modified it by equipping the JSSs to coordinate the actions of both armies rather than simply act as static patrol bases. MND-B also touted the value of JSSs as symbols of the coalition's and Iraqi government's joint commitment to protecting innocents from sectarian violence. Once the residents in surrounding neighborhoods were convinced the JSS would not disappear overnight, they began sharing information about illegal militia groups and terrorists with coalition forces.[28]

27. Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 18 Dec 2006, sub: Setting the Conditions for Transition, slides 11–14, MNC-I Folder, Hist Files, CMH.

28. Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: Security and Offensive Operations in Baghdad: Concept for Clear, Control, and Retain, MNC-I Folder, Hist Files, CMH.



Soldiers from Company B, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team (Stryker), 2d Infantry Division, provide security during a cordon and search in Baghdād on 2 January 2007. Because the Iraqi Army did not have night vision devices, most partnered operations took place in daylight. (*S. Sgt. Bronco A. Suzuki, U.S. Army*)

PRELIMINARY MOVES

In the weeks leading up to the start of Together Forward III, both armies reorganized and reinforced their contingents in Baghdād. The Iraqis contributed nine brigades to the operation, six from the 6th IA Division in Baghdād and three from the 9th IA Division based in At Tājī. In addition, the Ministry of Defense planned to field the 11th IA Division in the capital by summer 2007. That decision upset plans to create a national strike force because the 11th IA Division headquarters, commanded by Brig. Gen. Muther Shaher Nasir al-Azawi, originally was supposed to oversee that new organization.[29] The creation of a new division-sized organization on such short notice necessitated the fielding of new brigades as well as permanent

29. When acting as the National Strike Force, the division headquarters would receive control of a brigade apiece from the 6th and 9th Iraqi Army (IA) Divisions as well as an Iraqi special operations forces company. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 13 Jan 2007, sub: State of Iraqi Security Forces Multi-National Security Command–Iraq, slide 7, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

reassignment of already formed brigades to the 11th IA headquarters. Although the 11th would start from a solid base by drawing two existing brigades from the 6th IA Division, forming a division headquarters and an entirely new brigade on such short notice and trying to meld all the parts into a cohesive whole guaranteed that the division would enter combat at less than peak efficiency. In addition, the 11th suffered from equipment and personnel shortfalls, especially among its leaders; it would lack 30 percent of its officers and almost half of its sergeants.[30]

The core components of MND-B/1st Cavalry Division consisted of the 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division; the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division; and the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. The experienced 3d Brigade Combat Team (Stryker), 2d Infantry Division, redeployed from Mosul to the capital and served as both the MND-B mobile strike force and the MNC-I reserve.[31] MND-B began receiving U.S. reinforcements six weeks before the start of Together Forward III. On 3 January 2007, the advance party from Col. Billy Don Farris's 2d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, arrived in Kuwait from Fort Bragg, North Carolina.[32] MNC-I dispatched Colonel Farris's paratroopers, along with the next unit to arrive—the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, commanded by Col. Ricky D. Gibbs—to Baghdād.[33] A Stryker-equipped unit, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, deployed to Multi-National Division–North in mid-May to reinforce the northeastern belt.

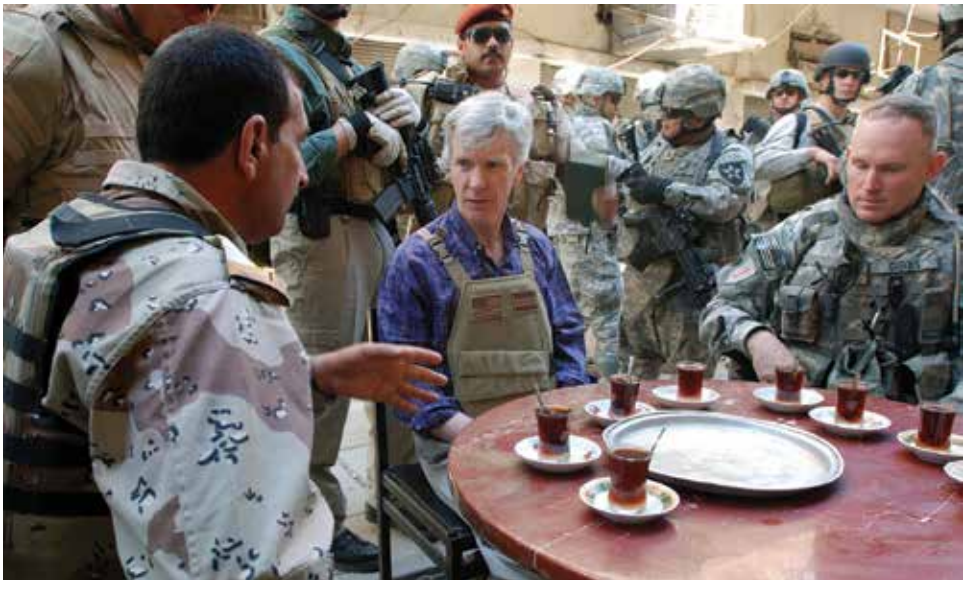
Two other surge brigade combat teams, belonging to Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch's 3d Infantry Division headquarters, made up the core of the newly formed Multi-National Division–Center (MND-C) preparing to tackle the support belts south of the capital. The MND-C headquarters and its 3d Brigade Combat Team initially would join other units already in country—the 25th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team and the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division—in April. They were joined by the 3d Infantry Division's 2d Brigade Combat Team in mid-June. When the 25th Infantry Division and the 10th Mountain Division units rotated home in late

30. Figures are based on January 2007 force-wide averages. For example, 73 percent of officer authorizations and 51 percent of noncommissioned officer authorizations were filled. The latter figure decreased to 39 percent by June 2007 as more units were fielded. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Dec 2007, sub: CG 2007 Numbers, slide 1 notes, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

31. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 48–50.

32. C–3 Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 21 Dec 2006, sub: Setting the Conditions for Transitioning Security Responsibilities for Baghdad to the Iraqi Security Forces, Hist Files, CMH.

33. Schlosser, *Surge*, 39.



Ryan C. Crocker, U.S. ambassador to Iraq (*center*), listens to Lt. Col. Taleb Zaboun, commander of the 3d Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3d Iraqi Army Division (*left*), over tea in Baghdād's Doura neighborhood. Crocker toured the area with Col. Ricky D. Gibbs (*right*), the commander of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. (*Sgt. Curt Cashour, U.S. Army*)

2007, they were replaced by the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and Lynch's 4th Brigade Combat Team.[34]

Seeking to disrupt extremist forces before the formal start of the operation, MNC-I ordered MND-B to reclaim control of Haifa Street, a modern thoroughfare serving as the economic and social core of the Karkh District. The Iraqi brigade holding that area had not been patrolling as frequently as MND-B had wanted it to after U.S. troops had cleared it earlier that year. Making matters worse, the unit lacked not only armor and artillery support but also access to helicopters and other overhead surveillance devices that it needed to cover the gaps between patrols. As a result, Sunni extremists who had been driven out of the area during Together Forward II had returned to establish a shakedown operation. Businesses had to pay fees if they wished to stay open, and motorists had to shell out tolls to get past illegal roadblocks.

34. Multi-National Division–Center's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, and the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, rotated home in late 2007. They were replaced by the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized). Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad*, 24.

Prodded by MND-B, the 6th IA Division ordered more frequent patrols of Haifa Street. On 6 January 2007, a sharp clash at a Haifa Street checkpoint involving a battalion from the 6th IA Division's 5th Brigade and gunmen dressed as police officers resulted in the death of several Sunni fighters.[35] The extremists retaliated by executing twenty-seven members of a senior police official's family and hanging the bodies from utility poles near the dismantled checkpoint. When 5th Brigade soldiers attempted to recover the remains, they were enveloped in gunfire that killed several Iraqi troops and wounded one American adviser. The Iraqis called for help from the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, which dispatched a company from Lt. Col. Patrick E. Matlock's 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment.[36] After learning that the cavalry troopers and Iraqis were unable to dislodge their opponents, MND-B dispatched two Stryker companies from Lt. Col. Avanulus R. Smiley's 1st Battalion, 23d Infantry Regiment.[37]

By daylight on 9 January, more than 1,000 Iraqi and American troops were engaged in a pitched battle against insurgents who had opted to stay and fight rather than retreat. The enemy occupied high-rise towers overlooking Tala'a Square on the northern end of Haifa Street, which posed a tough challenge for the combined force trying to come to grips with their opponents without risking heavy losses.[38] After ensuring noncombatants had fled the area, coalition forces employed AH–64 attack helicopters, Marine F/A–18 jets, and indirect fires against the fortified apartment buildings. A multiple-launch rocket system strike broke the back of the resistance by obliterating a heavily defended position without damaging neighboring structures.[39] The battle concluded after several days with fifty-one militants dead and twenty-one more taken prisoner.[40] Two companies from the 1st Brigade,

35. Michael Hastings, "Iraq: The Battle for Haifa Street," *Newsweek*, 11 Jan 2007, http://www.newsweek.com/Iraq-battle-haifa-street-98243, Hist Files, CMH.
36. Sfc. Kap Kim, "Cav Soldiers Receive Valor Awards for Courage Under Fire," 2d Armd Bde Combat Team, 1st Cav Div Public Affairs, 7 Aug 2007, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/11674/cav-soldiers-receive-valor-awards-courage-under-fire, Hist Files, CMH.
37. Kimberly Kagan, "From 'New Way Forward' to New Commander," Institute for the Study of War and *Weeklystandard.com*, Iraq Report, no. 1 (10 Jan–10 Feb 2007): 8, http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/Iraq Report01.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
38. MNC-I Press Release 20070109–09, Multi-National Division–Baghdad (MND-B) Public Affairs Ofc, "Operations Conducted to Restore Iraqi Security Force Control," 9 Jan 2007, Hist Files, CMH.
39. Email, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Matthew B. Smith, former Cdr, Btry C, 2d Bn, 4th Field Arty Rgt, to Mark J. Reardon, 27 Jul 2020, Hist Files, CMH.
40. The Iraqi Army may have suffered up to twenty deaths while no Americans troops were killed. Hastings, "Iraq: The Battle for Haifa Street"; Kagan, "From 'New Way Forward' to New Commander," 9.



A 227-mm. multiple-launch rocket system fires from a remote area near Tikrīt in 2005. (*Spc. Gul A. Alisan, U.S. Army*)

6th IA Division, remained in position around Tala'a Square after the U.S. forces withdrew.[41]

The unexpectedly fierce battle revealed the deep professional gulf separating the two allied armies on the eve of Together Forward III. MND-B reacted by sending reinforcements. Meanwhile, after accusing Brig. Gen. Razzak Hamza, the Sunni commander of the 5th Brigade, 6th IA Division, of abetting the militants, the Ministry of Defense replaced him with a Shi'i officer.[42] The ministry's reaction reflected either deep-seated sectarian prejudices or a profound misunderstanding of the difficulty of storming a fortified enemy position in tall buildings.

DEPLOYMENT TROUBLES REEMERGE

Additional troops from both armies were already in motion during the battle for Haifa Street, albeit more slowly in the case of the Iraqis, to join the units already in Baghdād. The Americans had sufficient sea and air

41. Kagan, "From 'New Way Forward' to New Commander," 9; MNC-I Press Release #20070114–08, MND-B Public Affairs Ofc, "Iraqi Army Continues Their Hold on Haifa Street," 14 Jan 2007, Hist Files, CMH.

42. The Americans later learned that the ousted brigade commander spirited his family off to Egypt after receiving death threats from the Office of the Commander in Chief's representatives. Talking Points, MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 14 Jan 2007, sub: Office Call with Abdul Qader, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH; Hastings, "Iraq: The Battle for Haifa Street."

assets to dispatch five brigade combat teams, along with all their equipment, ammunition, and vehicles, halfway around the globe with minimal negative impact on tactical readiness. Nevertheless, it still took six months for all the surge brigade combat teams to arrive in country. Units had to complete preparatory training; there was limited capacity at Kuwaiti ports; and MNF-I had to build up logistical support. However, when the units arrived, they were intact and prepared to fight.

The Iraqis, by contrast, still were hampered by an institutionally condoned reluctance on the part of most soldiers to leave their home stations for extended periods. With the 11th IA Division's activation not due until late summer 2007, the Iraqi Army relied on the 6th and 9th IA Divisions during the early phases of Operation Fardh al Qanoon. In fact, these divisions originally came under control of the IGFC before the end of 2006 expressly for that operation, even though none of the eight brigades assigned to them approached full strength in equipment or personnel. At the battalion level, the average present-for-duty strength hovered around 63 percent because of casualties, deserters, and personnel on leave. Even more concerning, Sadrists had infiltrated at least half of the fifteen battalions in the 6th IA Division, including several that had been earmarked for transfer to the 11th IA Division, which would have responsibility for Sadr City.[43]

After determining that three of the Iraqi brigades stationed in Baghdād would need weeks if not months to be fully combat-ready, MNF-I worked with the Ministry of Defense to identify substitutes.[44] The relative calm of the Kurdish-dominated north-central region supported the dispatch of a brigade apiece from the 2d and 4th IA Divisions.[45] Two additional U.S. Marine battalions were inbound for Al Anbār Province, which freed up the 4th Brigade of the 1st IA Division to round out the trio.[46] MNF-I planned to send the 1st IA Division troops to Baghdād by 25 January, followed by the

43. Interv, John Hamilton, U.S. Army Air Def Center and Sch, with Capt. Kenneth W. Frank, former adviser to 6th Iraqi Army (IA) Div, 23 Oct 2007, 5, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Digital Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS. Most U.S. personnel working with the division at that time were unaware of the extent of the Sadrist and Badr Organization influence as evidenced by the biographical summaries of 4th Brigade, 6th IA Division, leaders prepared by U.S. advisers, who, without exception, praised their counterparts' lack of sectarianism. Biographical Summaries, 4 Apr 2007, "4-6 IA BDE Leader Biographies," MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

44. Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq planners calculated that three additional Iraqi brigades were needed in Baghdad. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 31 Jan 2007, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Update, 8, 3 Archive 2007 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

45. Memo, from MNF-I, 2 Dec 2006, sub: Prime Minister's Proposed Security Plan to Protect and Secure Baghdad (Draft), Baghdad Security Plan 2007 Folder, OIF Collection, CMH.

46. Ministry Def Order to Iraqi Ground Forces Cmd, 12 Dec 2006, sub: 4/1 IA DIV TO BAGHDAD, MNC-I C–3 Files, Epley Collection, CMH.



Soldiers from the 3d Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, known as the "Baghdad Eagles," move stealthily through the muddied ground of a palm grove on a patrol in Al Maḩmūdīyah. Coalition and Iraqi Army soldiers patrolled this area together to deny the enemy safe haven and staging grounds to launch attacks against the capital city. Terrorists used palm groves like these to hide weapons caches from the coalition aircraft overhead. (*Pvt. Jon Cano, U.S. Army*)

3d Brigade of the 4th IA Division on 1 February and the 1st Brigade of the 2d IA Division on 20 February.[47] Their respective destinations were Rasheed District in southeastern Baghdād, Al Muthanná in western Baghdād, and Forward Operating Base Constitution located near Al Muthanná.[48]

Maj. Mark S. Gilmore, commanding a battalion-level military transition team (MiTT) with the 4th IA Division's 3d Brigade, heard of the decision to send the Kurdish unit to Baghdād several days before President Bush's televised address.[49] Learning that the brigade would deploy only two of its

47. C–3 Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 21 Dec 2006, sub: Setting the Conditions for Transitioning Security Responsibilities for Baghdad to the Iraqi Security Forces.

48. Ops and Intel Bfg, MND-B to 2d Bde, 82d Abn Div, 6 Dec 2007, sub: Optimized 07Jan07CaseyBRFVer3(BU)–rearranged ver. 1.1 (01226Jan07).ppt, MNC-I Folder, Hist Files, CMH.

49. Interv, Laurence Lessard, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI), with Maj. Mark Gilmore, former team leader, mil transition team (MiTT) 0431,

three battalions, Gilmore recommended against sending the 3d Battalion (the unit his team was advising), explaining that it contained a number of Kurdish soldiers who harbored long-standing prejudices toward Arabs.[50] The U.S. senior brigade adviser agreed and transferred Gilmore and his team to the 1st Battalion, while the 3d Battalion remained in Kirkūk.

All of the 3d Brigade's advisers were aware of the difficulties that arose when Iraqi units received orders to deploy, particularly the problem of significant numbers of soldiers refusing to leave their home stations. Therefore, to gain an accurate determination of the strength of the units going to Baghdād, the brigade advisory team conducted accountability formations for all battalions. The Americans were dismayed to discover the present-for-duty numbers amounted to only 70 percent of authorized strength. After subtracting soldiers declining to go, the departing battalions dropped to between 50 and 60 percent. The soldiers unwilling to accompany their units went to a provisional 4th Battalion in As Sulaymānīyah instead of being punished. Most of the brigade leadership, including the commander, deputy commander, and operations officer, agreed to go to Baghdād, though some of the primary staff did not.[51]

Because the pending movement of Kurdish troops was common knowledge, Maj. Tracy L. Barker, the adviser to 3d Brigade's S–3 (operations officer), laid out a 160.9-kilometer winding route that was designed to avoid insurgent attacks by traveling west from As Sulaymānīyah through Kurdish-controlled land before turning south to Tuz Khurmatu, where the Iraqi 4th Motor Transport Regiment would refuel the convoy before it continued along the Kirkūk-Baghdād highway to its destination. The brigade began its journey to the Iraqi capital on 15 January 2007. Gilmore's team accompanied the 1st Battalion convoy, which consisted of forty-eight vehicles transporting more than 300 Kurdish soldiers.

Lacking experience with moving long distances, the brigade's Kurdish leadership discovered that insurgent interference was the least of their worries. Major Gilmore juggled radio calls to Multi-National Division–North and MND-B to coordinate air support, refueling, and route clearance. The fuel trucks from the motor transport regiment, however, failed to appear at the agreed-upon rendezvous. Nonplussed, Gilmore led the battalion to an American forward operating base to obtain fuel. When the convoy arrived at the Baghdād city limits, the U.S. brigade responsible for securing its route

15 Nov 2007, part 2, 16, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI.

50. Interv, Lessard with Gilmore, 15 Nov 2007, part 2, 15.

51. Email, Maj. Tracy L. Barker, former ops ofcr, 3d Bde, 4th IA Div MiTT, to Mark J. Reardon, 4 Aug 2010, sub: Re: RE: U.S. Army Center of Military History Manuscript on the Post-Saddam Era Iraqi Army, Hist Files, CMH.

into the city advised the Kurds not to proceed further on the highway they were using. Rather than make a lengthy detour that involved retracing part of the convoy's original route, the Iraqi vehicles idled in place for an hour until the 1st Cavalry Division dispatched a military police platoon with Apache helicopters to escort the battalion to Al Muthanná.

Upon arrival at their final destination, the Iraqi soldiers learned that they would be attached to the 1st Cavalry Division's 2d Brigade Combat Team, which was responsible for the volatile Haifa Street area. As Major Gilmore recalled, "Some very motivated [U.S.] division planner, a brigade or battalion S–3, or a commander, would make a plan for the Iraqi Army to execute . . . , [but] the Iraqi Army isn't listening because [the Americans are] not advising, [they're] dictating."[52] The 1st Battalion commander subsequently persuaded his own chain of command to switch the unit's assignment to Al Hurriyah, an intermingled Shi'i-Sunni neighborhood north of Abu Ghraib.

The deployment of the Kurds to Al Hurriyah proved to be a mixed blessing. Although the Americans may have hoped the Sunni Kurdish unit would stand between the Arab Sunnis and the Shi'a, Major Gilmore observed, "When we got there, it was mixed Sunni and Shia. When we left, it was Shia. . . . The Kurds are especially empathetic to the Shia plight, as they would say it, because both have been on the receiving end of Ba'athist terror. . . . They would do the typical policing, I thought, but I came to the conclusion that the Kurds approved of some of the [Shi'i militia] strikes against Sunnis."[53] The situation remained unchanged until enough American reinforcements arrived in Baghdād to be able to consistently mount joint patrols with all Iraqi units.

Following the experience with the 4th IA Division, MNSTC-I took steps to introduce some Iraqi units to methods that could reduce or eliminate the problems that invariably cropped up after short-notice deployment orders. Although it pushed back their arrival schedule by several weeks, selected battalions received predeployment training at Besmaya Range Complex before departing for the capital. The Americans also sent some personnel via air to test the capabilities of the nascent Iraqi Air Force. On 27 February 2007, in a much-publicized event, an Iraqi Air Force C–130 delivered troops from the 1st Brigade, 2d IA Division, to Baghdad International Airport. The rest of the unit, consisting of two battalions numbering 1,450 soldiers, completed training at Besmaya Range Complex before joining the advance party in the capital.[54]

52. Interv, Lessard with Gilmore, 15 Nov 2007, part 2, 15.
53. Interv, Lessard with Gilmore, 15 Nov 2007, part 2, 21.
54. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 28 Feb 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm; MC2 Elisandro Diaz, "More Troops for Baghdad,"

THE UNEXPECTED BRIGADE

The effort to send three brigades to Baghdād was painful yet ultimately successful, but challenges from an unexpected quarter threatened to interfere with plans to maintain a higher number of Iraqi troops in the capital. To placate the Shi'i community, Maliki enthusiastically championed the Al-Askari Mosque's restoration. Because Sunni insurgents were vying with the Baghdād government for control of Diyāla Province, additional soldiers and police were needed to protect the rebuilding effort. During the third week of February 2007, Maj. Gen. Adnan Thabit, a Sunni with a checkered reputation with the National Police, suggested the creation of additional Iraqi Army and National Police brigades to safeguard the mosque. The prime minister agreed to support that initiative despite its potentially negative impact on existing Ministry of Defense and MNSTC-I fielding plans.[55]

When the MNSTC-I commander, Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, learned of the prime minister's decision, he asked his staff to examine ways to minimize the disruption created by dedicating two newly formed brigades—one police and one army—to protecting Sāmarrā'. After confirming that Baghdād security requirements precluded the transfer of already formed army units, MNSTC-I made plans to field a new army brigade by transferring personnel from other units. Dempsey discarded a suggestion to siphon recruits from the 30K Replenishment Initiative because forming an entire brigade composed of enlisted soldiers with minimal training to guard the most important reconstruction project in Iraq seemed risky. The MNSTC-I commander reluctantly concluded that officers and noncommissioned personnel needed for the Sāmarrā' Brigade would have to come from other units regardless of the impact on readiness (*Map 8.2*).[56]

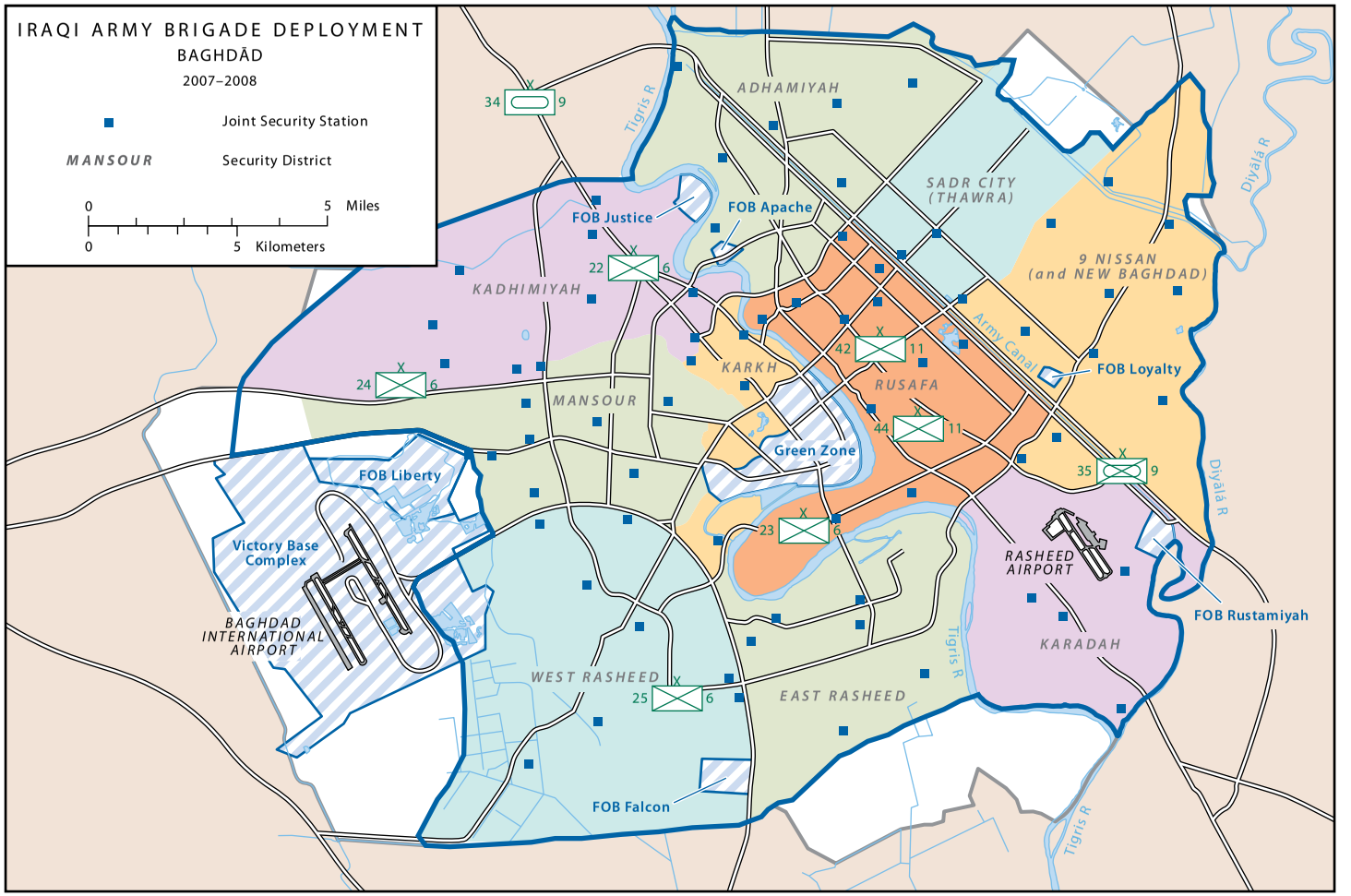
In spite of pressure to form the Sāmarrā' Brigade as soon as possible, Dempsey remained determined to avoid the pitfalls of previous hurried efforts. In the rush to protect Iraq's oil pipelines during 2004, for example, MNSTC-I had established strategic infrastructure battalions en masse using young men from local tribes, decided those units did not require advisory teams, and assumed they would function adequately without

Advisor 4, no. 9 (3 Mar 2007): 4; both in Hist Files, CMH.

55. During a meeting on 24 January 2007, Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey made it clear that the prime minister's support of Maj. Gen. Adnan Thabit's proposal would cause significant changes in agreed-upon resourcing plans. MFR, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Jan 2007, sub: Notes from LTG Dempsey Meeting with Prime Minister, 3 Archive 2007 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

56. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Prime Minister Maliki, 31 Jan 2007, sub: Samarra–A Proposal to Meet the Prime Minister's Intent, slide 2, 3 Archive 2007 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

Map 8.2


IRAQI ARMY BRIGADE DEPLOYMENT
BAGHDĀD
2007–2008
Joint Security Station
MANSOUR
Security District
0
5 Miles
0
5 Kilometers
ADHAMIYAH
Tigris R
34
9
FOB Justice
FOB Apache
SADR CITY (THAWRA)
Diyālá R
9 NISSAN (and NEW BAGHDAD)
22
6
KADHIMIYAH
Army Canal
42
11
FOB Loyalty
KARKH
RUSAFA
24
6
MANSOUR
44
11
Green Zone
35
9
FOB Liberty
23
6
Victory Base Complex
RASHEED AIRPORT
FOB Rustamiyah
BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
KARADAH
WEST RASHEED
25
6
EAST RASHEED
FOB Falcon

extensive training. Dempsey later asked his staff to investigate converting them into light infantry organizations only to learn that the earlier shortcuts had produced units that lacked the skills needed to perform traditional infantry missions. In light of that sobering experience, Dempsey insisted on providing the Sāmarrāʾ Brigade with advisory teams, coalition partner units, and standardized instruction.[57] The consequences of the compromises and modifications that were made to generate an unplanned Iraqi Army brigade in a matter of weeks rippled throughout the entire force.

The Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command—itself in the process of being formed– tackled the task of fielding the Sāmarrāʾ Brigade by looking at how to fulfill that requirement without disrupting the flow of personnel passing through all three training battalions and the six regional training centers (*Chart 8.1*).[58] Once it became clear that existing ways of doing business would no longer suffice, the Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command decided on a major overhaul of basic training. The command adopted a new program of instruction and mandated that training battalions and regional training centers under its jurisdiction implement it. Basic training now included an hour of daily physical fitness, along with drill and ceremony practice and instruction in map reading, hand-to-hand combat, military customs and courtesies, first aid, tactics, Iraqi history, and military history.

The most significant change took place in the marksmanship program. Previously, recruits had fired only four familiarization rounds with their AK47s during the first month of basic training. New recruits now fired forty-eight rounds in a single day as they zeroed the rifle, adjusted its sights to their personal use, and qualified at distances of 50, 100, and 200 meters.[59] Although greatly improved, Iraqi basic marksmanship training contrasted poorly with comparable U.S. Army programs, which allotted thirteen days of instruction and 493 rounds of ammunition to each new soldier.[60] Still, the decision to adopt a standardized program of instruction, rather than relying

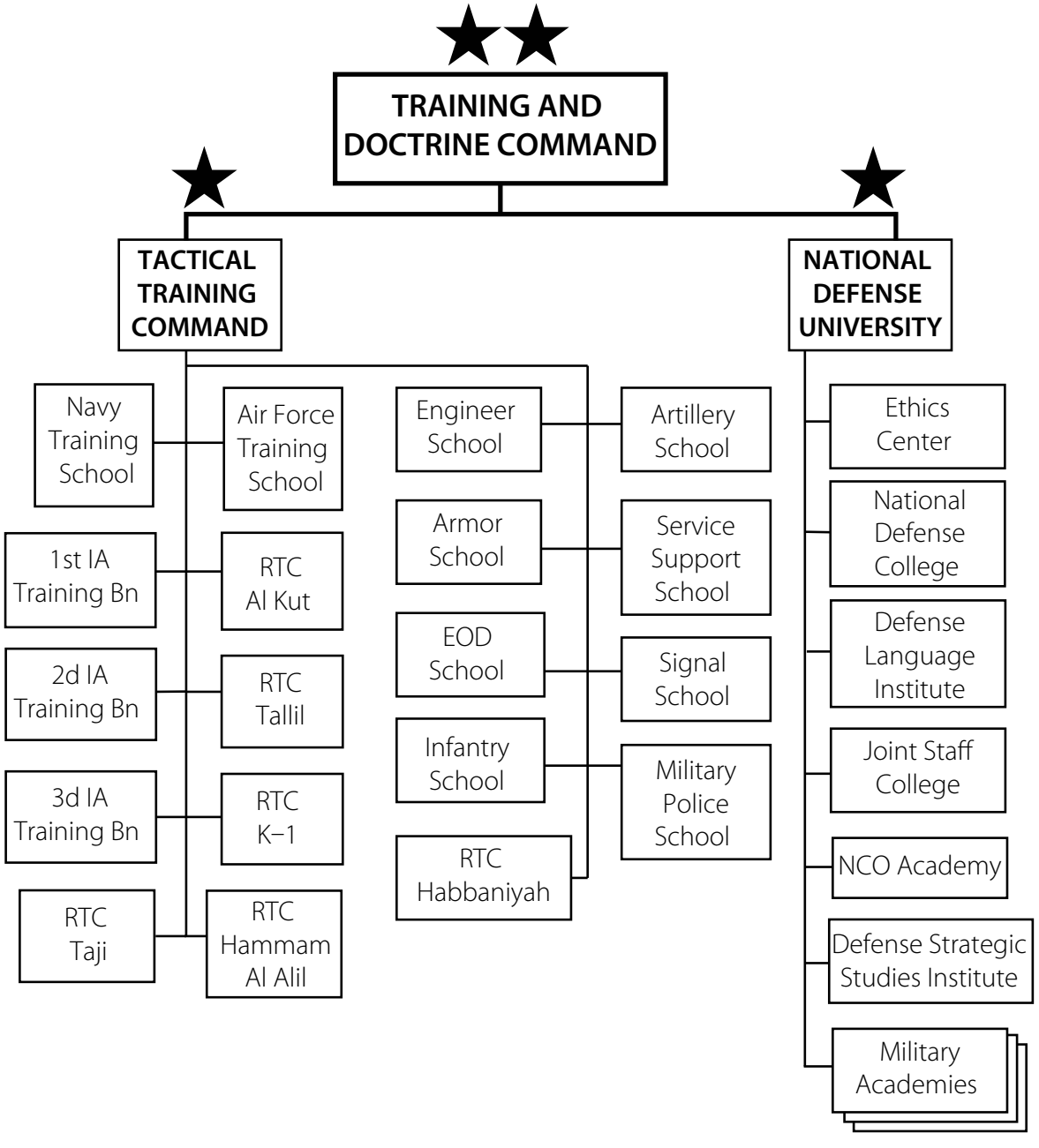
57. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Prime Minister Maliki, 31 Jan 2007, sub: Samarra–A Proposal to Meet the Prime Minister's Intent, slide 3.

58. This command had been formed recently in an effort to place all of the Iraqi Army's schools under the management of a single headquarters. The Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command's major subordinate elements were the Tactical Training Command (which oversaw all three Iraqi training battalions and the six regional training centers) and the National Defense University (which was responsible for all of the military academies).

59. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Maliki, 31 Jan 2007, sub: Samarra–A Proposal to Meet the Prime Minister's Intent, slide 3.

60. Matthew Cox, "Weapons Training and Qualification Overhauled," *Army Times*, 4 May 2008, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/05/army_marksmanship_050408w/ (page discontinued; accessed 17 Aug 2023), Hist Files, CMH.

CHART 8.1—IRAQI TRAINING AND DOCTRINE COMMAND



Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Source: Smart Book, Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, n.d., "How the Iraqi Army Operates," ed. 3, 35, Historians Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

on ad hoc methods, succeeded in producing larger numbers of better-trained basic-training graduates each month.

Although MNSTC-I raided other programs to provide the Sāmarrā' Brigade with 221 officers, 1,409 noncommissioned personnel, and 1,575 soldiers as soon as possible, acquiring major items of equipment was more difficult. As a result, the Sāmarrā' Brigade initially received only enough pick-up trucks, individual equipment, and communications gear to reach the minimal level of readiness. To bring the brigade to full operational capability, the Iraqi government provided $100 million in additional funding and agreed to divert shipments of equipment from other high-priority units. Although MNSTC-I managed to accelerate the brigade's manning and equipping, its personnel had to reside in makeshift quarters until late fall 2007 while awaiting construction of permanent facilities.[61]

The Sāmarrā' Brigade's painful creation shed more light on sectarian influence within the Iraqi government. The Americans were pleased when General Thabit submitted a leadership roster for the new formation that was equally balanced between Shi'a and Sunnis. However, a few days after the Ministry of Defense received the roster, the National Reconciliation Committee, chaired by the deputy national security adviser, Safa al-Sheik, ordered Thabit's dismissal from the military.[62] The ministry group issued a revised list consisting almost exclusively of Shi'i personnel, including several officers known to have links to Shi'i militias.[63]

Taking a cue from Maliki's own tactics, MNSTC-I raised the issue in public. Brig. Gen. David D. Phillips, the deputy Coalition Police Assistance Training Team commander, convened a press conference at which he told reporters that "he had never seen such a blatant sectarianism at such a high-level. . . . It revealed a high-level and concerted effort from inside the Iraqi government to insert Shia leadership with militia ties into an important security organization, and to polarize security forces."[64] Some Americans directed the blame at al-Jaidri, one of the coheads the Office of the Commander in Chief, whom they described as a "rabid advocate with a [Shi'i] agenda who uses her position to intimidate members of Iraq's security

61. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Maliki, 31 Jan 2007, sub: Samarra–A Proposal to Meet the Prime Minister's Intent, slides 6–8, 1.
62. Charles Levinson, "Woman Controls Iraq's Security Forces," *USA Today*, 31 Jan 2008, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2008-01-31-iraqpolice_N.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
63. Arwa Damon, "Shadowy Iraq Office Accused of Sectarian Agenda," CNN, 1 May 2007, http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/05/01/iraq.office/index.html, Hist Files, CMH.
64. James Kitfield, "The Thin Iraqi Line," *National Journal*, 8 Jun 2007, http://www.nationaljournal.com/about/njweekly/stories/2007/0608nj1.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

forces."[65] As in so many cases during this period, the Americans were unable to gain all of their desired objectives, but their protests did result in the reinstatement of some Sunni candidates.

Despite such public statements by the Americans, the prime minister continued to promote a Shi'i agenda, including securing his own power base within the government. To that end, Maliki issued a series of executive orders between December 2006 and April 2007 designed to cement his control of the Iraqi special operations forces.[66] The newly appointed head of the Counter Terrorism Service, Lt. Gen. Talib Shaghati Mushari al-Kenani, now reported directly to Maliki. The newly formed Counter Terrorism Command, led by Maj. Gen. Abdul Ghani al-Asadi, which had operational control of the Iraqi special operations forces units, took its orders from the Counter Terrorism Service.[67] The new arrangement ensured that the Iraqi special operations forces answered to the prime minister rather than Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula.[68] Although this move was contrary to the original concept envisioned by Iraq and the United States, some U.S. planners welcomed it because they believed one or both ministries were tipping off suspects targeted by the Iraqi special operations forces. Maliki had waited until spring 2007 to finalize these changes simply because the Counter Terrorism Command, which was based within the International Zone, did not become operational until March 2007, while the Counter Terrorism Service attained that status the following month.[69]

PETRAEUS TAKES COMMAND

On 10 February 2007, newly promoted General David H. Petraeus assumed command of MNF-I in a ceremony at Camp Victory, which surrounds the

65. Joseph Partlow, "Maliki's Office Is Seen Behind Purge in Forces," *Washington Post*, 30 Apr 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/29/AR2007042901728_pdf.html, Hist Files, CMH.
66. Rpt, Joint Forces Special Ops Component Cmd–Iraq (JFSOCC-I), April 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 5–6, Hist Files, CMH.
67. The Counter Terrorism Service was formed in March 2007 while the Counter Terrorism Command was formed the following month. Rpt, JFSOCC-I, April 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 6; David Witty, "The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service" (Washington, DC: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 2015), 10, 28–29, Hist Files, CMH.
68. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 10.
69. U.S. Dept. Def (DoD), *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2007 (Section 9010, Public*

Baghdad International Airport.[70] Within a few hours of the changeover, General Odierno issued a warning order for all multinational divisions to get ready to conduct extremely high-tempo operations lasting at least seventy-two hours. Three days later, MNF-I discarded the code name Together Forward III, thereafter referring to the operation as Fardh al Qanoon, the designation preferred by Iraqi officials.[71] The change symbolized the introduction of new methods. As U.S. forces prepared for the operation, General Qanbar imposed a nightly curfew in Baghdād from 2000 until 0600. He also suspended the issuance of weapons permits except for authorized security officials and contractors.[72]

Fardh al Qanoon preliminaries began on 14 February when MNC-I ordered execution of Operation Black Anvil. Three battalions of Col. Stephen J. Townsend's Stryker-equipped 3d Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, reinforced by a fourth battalion from the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division—2,500 American troops in all—began to clear Baydah, Shaab, and Ur, three neighborhoods bordering northern Sadr City. The Americans were accompanied by a token contingent of 200 personnel from the National Police. When questioned by reporters about the relative lack of Iraqi participation, Townsend replied, "You've got to remember that our surge plans are ahead of the Iraqis. . . . The Iraqis are still getting set."[73]

At a press conference held in Washington on the afternoon of 14 February, President Bush informed the U.S. media, "I have just finished a conversation with General David Petraeus. . . . [He mentioned that] the Iraqi government is following through with its commitment to deploy three additional army brigades. . . . The commander who[m] Prime Minister Maliki picked . . . is in place; they're setting up a headquarters and they're in the process of being in a position to be able to coordinate all forces."[74] A week later, the Iraqi government reinforced Bush's statement by unanimously endorsing

Law 109–289), Rpt to Cong., Jun 2007, 41, http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/9010-Final-20070608.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

70. MNF-I Press Release, Spc. Stephen P. Kretsinger Sr., "Petraeus Assumes MNF-I Command," 11 Feb 2007, https://freerepublic.com/tag/mnfi/index, Hist Files, CMH.

71. Kagan, "From 'New Way Forward' to New Commander," 7.

72. Sgt. Sara Wood, "New Buildup of Baghdad Security Plan Begins," American Forces Press Service, 14 Feb 2007, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=3055, Hist Files, CMH.

73. Richard A. Oppel Jr. and Damien Cave, "Few Encounters in Sweep of Baghdad, the Americans' First Under Bush's Security Plan," *New York Times*, 15 Feb 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/15/world/middleeast/15iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH.

74. President's Press Conf, George W. Bush, "Iraq & Iran," 14 Feb 2007, http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/02.14.07.print.html, Hist Files, CMH.

a resolution supporting the Baghdad Security Plan. Prime Minister Maliki pledged that he no longer would tolerate political interference in military operations.[75]

Final preparations for jointly coordinating the actions of both U.S. and Iraqi troops in Baghdād took several more weeks. By 1 March, the BOC staff, with the assistance of coalition advisers, had mastered new skills in addition to distributing orders, compiling reports, collecting intelligence, coordinating with MNC-I, and overseeing unit readiness. The staff also monitored predeployment training for the second iteration of units deploying to Baghdād, coordinated the release of units as their ninety-day rotations ended, and arranged for individual replacements to be integrated into ongoing operations. Once the Americans deemed the BOC capable of carrying out its designated responsibilities, MNF-I informed Maliki that Fardh al Qanoon could begin. However, while MNC-I's mentoring had produced measurable progress in a few short weeks, the capabilities of the BOC's Iraqi personnel still fell far short of their American counterparts.

Fardh Al Qanoon officially started on 4 March with the positioning of a JSS, known as JSS Thawra I, on the outskirts of Thawra District.[76] Each JSS not only performed command and control functions, but also furnished logistical sustainment to smaller combat outposts and patrol bases. The stations were so vital to the Baghdad Security Plan's success that the combined forces emplaced the first eight of twenty-seven planned stations in December, followed by eight more in January, and the remainder in February and early March. MNF-I stood ready to build more JSSs within Baghdād as the situation dictated.[77]

Covered by two Stryker companies from 1st Battalion, 23d Infantry Regiment, a company from the 82d Airborne Division's 2d Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment, erected roadblocks around an abandoned police station selected as the site for JSS Thawra I.[78] The hostile reaction was somewhat muted because Sadr had departed for Iran the week before.[79] During the next several weeks, contractors built a wall around the JSS, reinforced the building, installed power lines, and laid communications links. Upon completion, the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 8th NP Brigade, 2d NP Division;

75. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 21 Feb 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
76. Mansoor, *Surge*, 71–72.
77. Bfg, MNF-I Cmdg Gen to U.S. President, 20 Jan 2007, sub: Baghdad Security Plan Update for POTUS, slide 2, William W. Epley Collection, CMH.
78. MNC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Clearing Operations Begin in Sadr City," 4 Mar 2007, http://www.usf-iraq.com/inside-the-force/organization/clearing-operations-begin-in-sadr-city (page discontinued; accessed 4 May 2010), Hist Files, CMH.
79. Oppel and Cave, "Few Encounters in Sweep of Baghdad."

the 3d Battalion, 2d Brigade, 10th IA Division; the Thawra District police headquarters; the 2d Battalion, 325th Infantry; and various U.S. police units and MiTTs began operating out of the JSS.[80]

The activity on the periphery of Sadr City was repeated in the other nine security districts of Baghdād as more American units arrived to reinforce MND-B. The 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, gained control of Mansour and Kadhimiyah Districts in northwestern Baghdād while the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, assumed responsibility for the Rasheed District immediately to the south. The 2d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, occupied the city's center, and the southeastern districts fell under the control of 2d Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division. The early-arriving 2d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, had by this time solidified its foothold overlooking Sadrist-dominated northeast Baghdād.[81]

The Americans' decision to take charge of tamping down violence resulted in MND-B placing far less importance on the transition-oriented approach dictated by MNF-I during Together Forward I and II. In a visible change from earlier practices, coalition troops remained in a location after clearing it, reflecting the realization that coalition troops or capable Iraqi forces would have to stay to prevent insurgent and militia groups from returning. The lack of capable Iraqi forces, however, meant that, over the coming months, the Americans would bear the initial burden of establishing JSSs and supporting outposts across Baghdād.

Al-Qaeda responded to American incursions in Baghdād neighborhoods under its control by launching attacks against population centers, hoping to trigger retaliation by Shi'i militia. To create as many casualties as possible, individuals fitted with suicide vests or vehicles filled with explosives carried out the attacks.[82] Although the bombings produced some backlash, violent Shi'i responses fell far short of what al-Qaeda sought because of a combination of American pressure on the Iraqi government and MNF-I's recent switch to population-centric counterinsurgency methods. Borrowing from a tactic pioneered during the previous fall by a few MND-B units, American commanders in Baghdād had erected portable concrete walls

80. Sgt. Mike Pryor, "Construction Begins on Sadr City's New Joint Security Station," 2d Bde Combat Team, 82d Abn Div Public Affairs Ofc, 6 Mar 2007, http://blackanthem.com/News/U_S_Military_19/Construction_begins_on_Sadr_City_s_New_Joint_Security_Station, Hist Files, CMH.

81. Schlosser, *Surge*, 43–44.

82. "Baghdad Bomb Kills 121, Wounds Hundreds," CBS News, 3 Feb 2007, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/baghdad-bomb-kills-121-wounds-hundreds; Sameer N. Yacoub, "Suicide Bombers Strike Shiite City, Bombs Rock Iraq Capital," *Indiana Daily Student*, 1 Feb 2007, https://www.idsnews.com/article/2007/02/suicide-bombers-strike-shiite-city-bombs-rock-iraq-capital; both in Hist Files, CMH.

around residential and commercial areas and outdoor markets frequented by Sunnis.[83]

BEHIND THE SCENES

Programs to enhance the Iraqi Army's medical capabilities were gaining momentum during this period. As of February 2007, the Iraqi military, including the army, air force, and navy, had only 2,700 health professionals. That month, Brig. Gen. Samir A. Hassan, the Ministry of Defense surgeon general, unveiled a new program designed to recruit and retain qualified medical professionals by doubling the salaries of serving physicians, dentists, veterinarians, medics, and medical technicians. Although this plan was evidence of progress, American military health care personnel still outnumbered their Iraqi counterparts by a ratio of 4:1.[84]

A second initiative involved the construction of military mortuaries, which allowed families to collect the remains of deceased soldiers without fear of being targeted by insurgents, who were monitoring civilian facilities. Military mortuaries also had authority to issue death certificates, a critical step for families wishing to receive government benefits. Construction of the inaugural building, constructed at Camp Taji with coalition funding, took place during the first quarter of 2007. Five additional mortuaries were planned for An Nu'maniyah, Kir Kush, Kirkūk, Al Kasik, and Al Habbaniyah.[85]

In addition, the Iraqi Army created medical follow-up facilities to assist soldiers who were on extended convalescent leave as well as those who had been permanently discharged from active service because of disabling wounds. Although these facilities offered some treatment, such as physical therapy, their primarily purpose was to assist wounded soldiers seeking to resolve pay and benefits issues. Before this initiative, Iraqi units had kept disabled soldiers on their personnel rosters to ensure they continued to receive pay and benefits. By transferring them from unit rolls to medical

83. Bill Roggio, "Task Force Warhorse: Classical Counterinsurgency on Haifa Street," *Long War Journal*, 9 Aug 2007, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/08/task_force_warhorse.php, Hist Files, CMH.

84. U.S. Army medical personnel authorizations in fiscal year 2007 amounted to 48,198 within the Army's active component and 43,370 in the reserves. Ofc Under Sec Def for Personnel and Readiness, "Defense Manpower Requirements Report, Fiscal Year 2007" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, Jul 2006), 72, https://prhome.defense.gov/Portals/52/Documents/RFM/TFPRQ/Docs/DMRR_FY07.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

85. S. Sgt. Zachary Wilson, "Iraqi Army Opens New Mortuary at Taji," *Advisor* 4, no. 6 (10 Feb 2007), Hist Files, CMH.



Brig. Gen. Samir A. Hassan, Iraq's surgeon general, speaks to Iraqi Healthcare Training Center graduates and other healthcare professionals at the Ibn Sina Hospital, operated by the 28th Combat Support Hospital. (*Maj. William Aiken, U.S. Army*)

follow-up facility rolls, the Iraqi Army improved the accuracy of its battalion-level personnel-readiness assessments.[86]

Other strength accountability issues, which arose from the deployment of Iraqi units to Baghdād, lent impetus to the coalition's long-standing desire to overhaul Ministry of Defense personnel tracking mechanisms. The existing architecture, which relied on manual input, failed to provide a timely or accurate status of Iraqi unit strength. The written reports, as MNSTC-I long had been aware, also were susceptible to deliberate falsification by unit commanders interested in skimming money from the monthly unit payroll. To ameliorate these issues, the multinational command hosted a conference to introduce Iraqi personnel managers to automated technology. Staff officers from eight of the Iraqi Army's ten divisions as well as IGFC representatives learned about fingerprint scanners, digital cameras, database software, and laptop computers.[87]

86. MC2 Elisandro Diaz, "Surgeon General Charts New Course," *Advisor* 4, no. 3 (20 Jan 2007): 4, 7, Hist Files, CMH.

87. S. Sgt. Zachary Wilson, "Iraqi Military Information Consolidated," *Advisor* 4, no. 5 (3 Feb 2007): 5, 8, Hist Files, CMH.

Fielding that technology at the division level addressed some but not all of the personnel accounting issues. A broader solution, encompassing pay, medical, training, career development, and identity verification, would take several years to implement. In a first step toward a long-term solution, MNSTC-I contracted Torres Advanced Enterprise Solutions to develop an automated personnel and payroll management system for the Ministry of Defense. Applying lessons learned from a similar initiative sponsored by the U.S. Air Force, the company worked on a computer-based personnel system tailored for the Iraqi ministry's perceived needs.[88]

Growing awareness of the advantages of making information that had been gathered at the division level visible to all users once it reached a central ministry database led to MNSTC-I's decision to abandon a stove-piped model for a more accessible process. With system transparency now elevated to a top priority, Torres modified its original software program to provide a much broader range of organizations, including the IGFC, divisional personnel managers, support facilities, schools, training centers, and recruiting stations, access to the ministry's personnel database. Improved connectivity between these organizations created other tangible benefits, such as improving the ministry's ability to identify corrupt officers who were attempting to inflate unit payrolls and, thanks to the biometric data analysis feature, allowing users to identify militia members and other individuals who were using assumed identities.

As the system underwent further development, Torres encountered technical concerns that defied easy solutions. When pressed by the MNSTC-I staff to solve these issues, Torres pointed out that the original contract did not specify what deliverables it had to provide. U.S. officials were at an impasse. They "were not satisfied with the contractor's performance but they could not terminate the project because they could not cite the contractor for failure to meet requirements."[89]

In addition to technical difficulties, the program encountered considerable resistance from the Iraqi bureaucracy. Proponents saw automation as a proven, positive measure for any military force to undertake, but that attitude overlooked the overriding importance of the commander's personal authority in the Arab culture and discounted the pervasive nature of corruption in the Iraqi military. Few, if any, Iraqi officers were comfortable surrendering

88. "U.S. Nearing Delivery of Milestone System to Manage Iraqi Armed Forces," *Business Wire*, 22 Jan 2008, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/_/print/Printarticle.aspx?id=173956435, Hist Files, CMH.

89. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–09–002, "Challenges in Obtaining Reliable and Useful Data on Iraqi Security Forces Continue," 21 Oct 2008, ii, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a488413.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

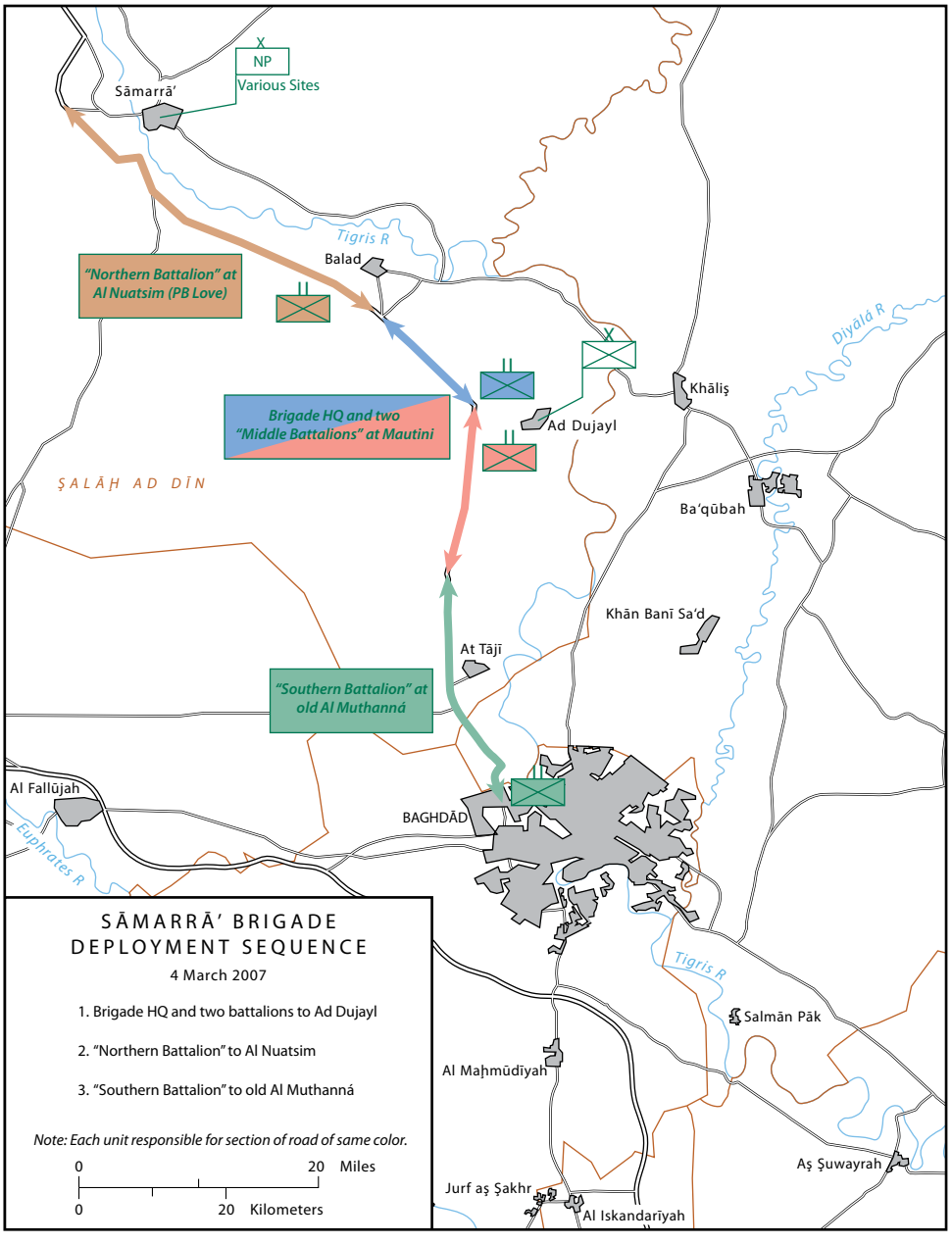
either their command prerogative or the opportunity to benefit financially from skimming money from their unit payroll. Even if the system worked as advertised, it would take two years to provide biometric identification cards for all Iraqi security personnel.[90] Nevertheless, the Ministry of Defense agreed to take on some responsibility for funding the program, even as the cost estimate rose to $30 million. Ultimately, the American investment in computerized personnel administration went for naught as the Iraqis abandoned the system at the first opportunity.

Another behind-the-scenes initiative was the refinement of the existing infrastructure protection program. On 25 March, MNSTC-I briefed General Petraeus on the idea of converting seventeen strategic infrastructure battalions into standard infantry units. The protection of Iraq's oil revenue had retained a high priority since the Sāmarrāʾ bombing, even as Baghdād remained the focus of security efforts. MNSTC-I sought to meet both needs by remodeling strategic infrastructure battalions so that they could perform typical infantry missions if threats to the pipelines diminished. The MNF-I commanding general readily approved that plan and the two-phase transformation process started in May 2007 (*Map 8.3*). Phase I formed the battalions into provisional brigades and placed them under existing Iraqi Army divisions. Thirteen of the seventeen infrastructure units were temporarily attached to the 4th IA Division, while the 2d, 6th, 8th, and 9th IA Divisions gained one apiece.[91] The process went both ways, with two battalions from the 3d IA Division undergoing infrastructure protection training so that they could carry out that mission if a situation required reinforcements. MNSTC-I also worked out partnering arrangements for the infrastructure battalions and determined their MiTT requirements.

In Phase II, the infrastructure battalions rotated individual companies through a five-week training course. Construction of bases for the transitioning units began once infrastructure battalions attained deployable status and soldiers no longer could live at home and commute to the job. At the conclusion of the company-level training, the newly forming 12th IA Division assumed operational control of two of the converted strategic infrastructure brigades as well as one existing regular infantry brigade, which it acquired from the 4th IA Division. Meanwhile, the 4th IA Division gained permanent control of the third strategic infrastructure brigade, which consisted of five battalions.

90. "Narrative to Accompany Award of the Bronze Star, Maj Erica P. Clark," *Newark Speaks*, n.d., http://www.newarkspeaks.com/forum/showthread.php?t=9877 (page discontinued; accessed 19 Mar 2010), Hist Files, CMH.

91. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 12 Apr 2007, sub: SIB Transformation Briefing, slide 4, 3 Archive 2007 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.



Map 8.3

The transformation process created additional personnel churn. The infrastructure battalions had not been included in the original plan to provide units with 110 percent of their authorized strength, so they collectively now required another 3,000 enlisted soldiers to bring them on

par with standard infantry battalions. Under their previous configuration, they also had fewer commissioned and noncommissioned officers than infantry units. Rather than wait for training schools to produce additional leaders, the Ministry of Defense directed Iraqi divisions to reassign officers and noncommissioned officers immediately to fill a quarter of the shortage in the former infrastructure battalions. As the divisions received noncommissioned officer and officer replacements over the next several months, they had to direct some of the new leaders, along with some of their veteran ones, to the converted units in order to cross-level experience throughout their formations.[92]

The prime minister's Army Expansion Plan underwent revision during March and April 2007 because of recruiting shortfalls, the evolving tactical situation, and the fact that MNF-I and the Ministry of Defense had identified ways to achieve their goals more efficiently, such as assigning the Sāmarrāʾ Brigade to the 4th IA Division and generating a logistics battalion for the 9th IA Division's strike force brigade rather than fielding more combat units. The final version of the plan is illustrated in Table 8.1.

The Iraqi Army weathered organizational turbulence on a larger scale when it transitioned from Russian-made small arms to U.S. weapons. Selected units were scheduled to receive 27,238 M16 rifles, 2,304 M4 carbines, and 1,146 M203 grenade launchers over a seven-month period ending in November 2007.[93] The 5th, 6th, and 9th IA Divisions were the first to obtain these weapons. Because the 6th and 9th IA Divisions were involved in Fardh al Qanoon, the fielding schedule had to be coordinated carefully to avoid operational disruptions. To ensure weapons did not end up in enemy hands or on the black market, MNSTC-I representatives collected a range of biometrics—such as fingerprints, retinal scans, and voice recordings—from each soldier who was issued a weapon. They also took high-resolution digital photographs of each soldier holding the issued weapon with its serial number visible. This painstaking process contrasted greatly with earlier methods that had relied on the Iraqis to maintain accountability of American-provided small arms.

As units transitioned from AK47s to U.S. rifles, Iraqi soldiers attended a five-day training course at Camp Taji where they zeroed and qualified

92. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 28 May 2007, sub: Calendar Year Assessment In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, an. C, 30, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

93. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, 29 Mar 2007, sub: M16/M4/M203 Fielding and Training Plan, slide 1, 3 Archive 2007 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

Table 8.1—Prime Minister's Army Expansion Plan, April 2007

Unit	Authorized Personnel	Start Date	Initial Capability Date
11th IA Division headquarters	509	January 2007	June 2007
ISOF Battalion	1,320	January 2007	October 2007
4th Brigade, 9th IA Division (Mech)	2,390	January 2007	June 2007
4th Brigade, 4th IA Division (Samarra' Brigade)	3,205	March 2007	June 2007
3d Battalion, 1st Brigade, 8th IA Division (An Najaf)	759	March 2007	June 2007
12th IA Division headquarters	509	March 2007	October 2007
5th Brigade, 10th IA Division	2,446	February 2007	December 2007
two battalions from 8th IA Division	1,518	February 2007	November 2007
6th Brigade, 6th IA Division	2,446	February 2007	October 2007
two battalions from 10th IA Division	2,518	February 2007	November 2007
4th Brigade, 5th IA Division	2,446	February 2007	December 2007
Logistics Battalion, 4th Brigade, 9th IA Division (Mech)	406	February 2007	December 2007
4th Brigade, 7th IA Division	2,446	February 2007	December 2007
11th and 12th IA Division support units	2,714	February 2007	December 2007
Total	24,632	N/A	N/A

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Source: Bfg, Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team to Multi-National Force–Iraq Cmdg Gen, 2 Apr 2007, sub: CMATT to P4 Overall Brief, slide 2, 3 Archive 2007 Folder, Kirkland Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

with the new weapons.[94] Four battalions cycled through the base during May and June, followed by another six over the ensuing five months.[95] The Iraqi divisions receiving American small arms therefore had to deal with the constant departure and return of subordinate battalions during a very crucial period in the Baghdad Security Plan. However, given that U.S. forces carried much of the tactical burden in the capital during the latter half of 2007, the infrastructure battalion conversion and small arms transition did not have as great a negative effect as they might have had if Iraqi forces had been a central component of the surge.

TROUBLE DOWN SOUTH

Even though the Americans had switched from a transition-based approach to a more aggressive strategy, some U.S. partners remained focused on turning over security responsibilities to the Iraqis. British Prime Minister Anthony C. L. "Tony" Blair had promised publicly in November 2005 to withdrawal British troops from Al Başrah in sixteen months, but antigovernment groups sought to speed up that process to take advantage of the Iraqi leadership's preoccupation with Baghdād.[96] The situation in the southern Port of Al Başrah grew dire as insurgents and criminal gangs harried the departing British troops.

In response to escalating attacks, British forces carried out a step-by-step evacuation of their forward base in the Al Saie neighborhood and the Shatt al Arab Hotel over a three-week period starting in mid-March 2007.[97] London then transferred security responsibility for the southern province of Maysān to the Iraqis on 10 April, marking the third province passed to Iraqi control out of the four in the British area. The British also prepared to hand over control of Shaibah Logistics Base in Al Başrah, which once had been the nexus of coalition military operations in Iraq's southernmost provinces, by mid-April. Upon completion of the transfer, the Shaibah Logistics Base would continue to host a coalition patrol base, in addition to the 10th IA

94. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 16 May 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
95. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Maliki, 29 Mar 2007, sub: M16/M4/M203 Fielding and Training Plan, slide 5.
96. "Britain Stayed in Basra Longer Because of US: Commander," Agence France Presse, 9 Sep 2007, http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5jircjXhABg04JcCM1Rc8v0kb1IbA, Hist Files, CMH.
97. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 25 Apr 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

Division's 5th Brigade and a major training facility for Iraqi troops.[98] The British ultimately sought to relinquish control of all of their enclaves in Al Başrah, with the exception of Saddam Hussein's former presidential palace in the city center and the civilian airport 11.2 kilometers to the west of the port, by late April 2007.[99]

The rapidly shrinking coalition footprint, when coupled with the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence guidance for all remaining troops to adopt a less aggressive posture, curtailed British interaction with local Iraqi military units. A diverse but highly motivated group of enemies stood ready to take full advantage of any opportunity created by a further British pullback. The U.K. drawdown therefore posed significant risk to MNSTC-I's plan for an extensive buildup of the Iraqi Army, including the fielding of a new infantry division, in southern Iraq.[100]

LOOKING AHEAD

MNSTC-I published its third Iraqi security forces annual assessment on 30 May 2007. MNF-I took a keen interest because of Petraeus's belief that the surge offered a unique opportunity to build confidence within the Iraqi Army. The report opened with the admission that the Iraqi Army had yet to master the task of deploying combat-ready units to different parts of the country. In response, the MNF-I commander, in conjunction with the Ministry of Defense, agreed to support a MNSTC-I recommendation to boost authorized personnel levels in selected units from 110 to 120 percent to ensure battalions deployed at 85 percent or greater present-for-duty strength.[101] The plus-up generated a requirement for 20,000 additional junior enlisted personnel, which could be met only by extending the recruiting and training programs that had been developed to support earlier initiatives.[102]

98. MNSTC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Taking Control," *Advisor* 4, no. 17 (28 Apr 2007): 8, Hist Files, CMH.
99. "Britain Stayed in Basra Longer Because of US: Commander."
100. The Ministry of Defense planned to rename the 10th IA Division's 5th Brigade as the 2d Brigade, 14th IA Division, in late summer 2007. Two more 14th IA Division brigades were slated to be formed in fall 2007 and early spring 2008. Bfg, Coalition Army Advisory Training Team to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 1 May 2008, sub: 14th DIV Force Generation Update, slides 2–3, Hendrix Collection, CMH.
101. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slide 3, Hist Files, CMH.
102. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slide 3.

In another effort to upgrade the Iraqi Army's deployment capabilities, MNSTC-I wanted to raise an additional ten infantry battalions and twenty police support units. These new units would secure the perimeter of their bases when their parent divisions deployed, so that existing units did not have to remain behind to accomplish that task.[103] Creation of these dedicated force protection battalions also would bring Iraqi divisions a step closer to having four brigades of four battalions each, a formation which would allow divisions to transition to a monthly leave schedule and would permit each brigade to deploy three full-strength battalions at any given time. Divisions with sixteen battalions theoretically possessed enough combat power to create either reserve forces or stand down battalions for collective training without degrading overall readiness.

To provide logistical support for a fourth maneuver brigade for each division, MNSTC-I proposed several near-term enhancements to the divisional sustainment infrastructure. These included enlarging the logistics staff, fielding a second medium truck company, and augmenting the motor transport regiment's assigned repair detachment. In addition to getting generic division-level upgrades, the 1st, 3d, and 5th IA Divisions were slated to receive more mechanics and spare parts in order to maintain their infantry battalions, which were equipped with armored personnel carriers, at a higher level of readiness. MNSTC-I made plans to create, above the division level, a transportation regiment with a mix of long-haul and heavy-equipment transport companies and an engineer bridging battalion in late 2007. Both would enable the IGFC to assist divisions requiring this specialized support for particular operations. The remaining improvements under consideration focused on enhancing fixed sustainment infrastructure, including creating a sixth regional support unit, constructing three ammunition supply points, and building water purification and bottling plants at each regional support unit.[104]

MNSTC-I also sought to address the Iraqi Army's continued reliance on American fire support. The 2007 assessment pointed out that "the ISF [Iraqi security forces] currently is unable to take advantage of its superior training to dominate small unit engagements because . . . its crew served

103. The new police support units were slated to be fielded during fiscal year 2008 as follows: eight in Al Anbār, four in Diyālá, and two each in Al Baṣrah, Nīnawā, Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn, and Kirkūk. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slide 17.

104. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slides 14–20.

and personal weapons offer at best parity with the enemy."[105] As a result, the multinational command recommended providing the Iraqi Army with 700 81-mm. mortars, 2,278 Russian-manufactured 12.7-mm. machine guns, 257 U.S.-made .50-caliber machine guns, and six battalions' worth of American 155-mm. howitzers.[106]

With the Iraqis continuing to assume security responsibilities over large areas of the country, increases in firepower and logistical support had to be matched by command and control enhancements. Acknowledging that the IGFC's capabilities still lagged behind evolving requirements, MNSTC-I proposed the creation of several corps-equivalent headquarters. The first of the new organizations, designated as Northern Operations Command, would be established in Mosul. The BOC could convert into a fully staffed stand-alone headquarters serving as another corps. Accomplishing either task would not be easy given the Iraqi Army's long-standing shortage of commissioned officers. As with almost all force structure growth, the creation of two headquarters produced a potential requirement for additional MiTTs.[107]

Simultaneous changes in force structure, logistical support, and weaponry warranted major modifications to the Iraqi Training Command. The increase in battalion personnel, coupled with the creation of additional units and the need to replace battle losses, resulted in an expected annual throughput of 50,000 personnel for Iraqi basic training units though the end of 2008. With the Iraqis taking responsibility for all aspects of training, attaining that goal required the creation of a fourth training battalion at An Numaniyah Military Training Base and building regional training centers at Besmaya, Tikrīt, Al Kasik, Shaibah, and Al Asad Air Base.[108] The requirement for added specialized instruction, such as advanced infantry tactics, armored warfare, tactical bridging, route clearance, and artillery fire support, triggered expansion plans for the infantry, armor, and engineer schools and the creation of a field artillery school.[109]

105. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slide 42.
106. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slide 20.
107. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slide 42.
108. Bfg, Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team Cmdg Gen to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 2 Jun 2007, sub: Cdrs Conf CMATT Slides, slide 10, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.
109. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slide 20.

The price tag for the projected training upgrades came to $347.5 million, of which the Iraqi government agreed to provide $21 million for the regional training centers and creation of a civil affairs and psychological operations school. Although the Iraqis contributed less than 10 percent of the new training costs, they pledged to fund the bulk of the projected costs for fiscal year 2008, promising $11.6 of the $17.1 billion required for sustaining, equipping, and upgrading Iraqi security forces. The U.S. contribution of $5.5 billion included an unprogrammed increase of $3.5 billion over earlier forecasts. Much of that went toward the increased force structure, expanded training capacity, and enhanced logistics systems.[110]

The report was General Dempsey's final accomplishment as head of MNSTC-I. On 10 June 2007, he relinquished command to Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik in a ceremony held in the Green Zone. Dubik had served in numerous high-level staff assignments, including special assistant and executive officer for successive Army chiefs of staff, in addition to commanding at every level from company through corps.[111] General Petraeus, who presided over the change of command, told attendees that General Dubik came to Iraq with a well-deserved reputation for creativity, resourcefulness, innovativeness, and commonsense leadership. In summing up Dubik's credentials, Petraeus remarked, "He is precisely the right man for this position at this time."[112]

THE BATTLE OF THE BELTS BEGINS

On 1 April 2007, MNC-I had activated MND-C, composed of General Lynch's 3d Infantry Division headquarters and its subordinate units. Following the arrival of the division's 2d Brigade Combat Team in June 2007, Lynch possessed sufficient forces to begin targeting enemy bases south of Baghdād. The new operation, code-named Phantom Thunder, called for three simultaneous efforts to clear insurgent infrastructure from the belt surrounding Baghdād. It marked a significant departure from earlier plans because "MNC-I was orchestrating operations to place pressure on militants

110. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 30 May 2007, sub: In Stride Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces For the FY 08 ISFF Budget Review, slides 2–3.
111. "Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, Commanding General, MNSTC-I," official biography, DoD, n.d., https://www.defense.gov/home/blogs/docs/DUBIK-James_bio.pdf (accessed 6 May 2010), Hist Files, CMH.
112. Sr. Amn. Christie Putz, "Dubik Takes Responsibility for Training Iraqi Security Forces," *Advisor* 4, no. 24 (16 Jun 2007): 3, Hist Files, CMH.



Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, incoming commander of Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, speaks at the unit's change of command ceremony on 10 June 2007. (*S. Sgt. Curt Cashour, U.S. Army*)

across the board [rather than] focusing operations in one area allowing insurgents to duck to other, quiet zones."[113]

Three recent developments impacted the planned offensive operation. First, coalition units in the field had identified and sponsored emerging irregular formations composed of Sunnis and former insurgents. The Americans paid and supported these volunteers, who were part of the MNF-I Sons of Iraq program, in return for their assistance in eliminating the al-Qaeda and jihadist presence in the Baghdād belts.[114] Like the volunteers from the Anbar Awakening, the Sons of Iraq participants added a local element that increased popular support for the drive against antigovernment elements and generated fruitful intelligence.

The second development was the unexpected but welcome change of command for the 5th IA Division. Maj. Gen. Shakir Hulail Hussein al-Kaabi was long suspected of supporting Shi'i death squads, but he had derailed coalition efforts to gather proof by repeatedly replacing his chief intelligence officer. The charade ended after U.S. special operations forces shot a

113. Mansoor, *Surge*, 155.
114. Al-Jabouri and Jensen, "Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening," 14.

member of General Shakir's personal security detail as he was emplacing an improvised explosive device along a route used by U.S. convoys. The Ministry of Defense dispatched an inspection team to the division headquarters in Baʿqūbah, where it uncovered sufficient evidence to summarily dismiss Shakir. Maj. Gen. Abdul Kareem al-Robiya took over as the disgraced commander's replacement.[115]

The final development involved a major change in the Iraq Assistance Group's mandate in early June 2007. General Odierno had been frustrated by the need to interact with no fewer than three entities within his own headquarters depending on what information he desired about the Iraqi security forces. He consolidated that responsibility in the Iraq Assistance Group, making it the primary coordinating and liaison agency between the Iraqi security forces and MNC-I. The group also served as the administrative headquarters for most MiTTs, which established an information pipeline running from the MiTTs through the Iraq Assistance Group directly to the MNC-I commander.[116] Once the new arrangements were in place at the end of June, Brig. Gen. Dana J. H. Pittard handed over command of the group to Brig. Gen. James C. Yarbrough.[117]

The opening moves of Phantom Thunder by MNF-I during this period targeted the northern, western, and southern belts. The push into the insurgent support zones quickly revealed that they were much more heavily defended than initial estimates had predicted. The MNF-I effort began with an offensive inaugurated by MND-C, code-named Operation Marne Torch, starting on 15 June and lasting through 2 July. General Lynch's forces focused on neutralizing al-Qaeda's primary staging area, located in Arab Jabour, a rural community of about 120,000 people nestled along a prominent bend in the Tigris River just south of the capital. MND-C employed four U.S. brigade combat teams, with the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division, drawing the task of clearing Arab Jabour while Lynch's own 3d Brigade Combat Team prevented insurgent fighters from fleeing east across the river.[118] The assault on Arab Jabour opened with four B–1B bombers

115. M. Sgt. Daniel P. McGuire, "Working with the 5th Division Iraqi Army (IA) in Diyala Province Iraq" (personal experience paper, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, 28 Jan 2008), 7–8, https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/api, Hist Files, CMH.

116. An earlier change to the Iraq Assistance Group's charter involved military transition teams being formally attached to coalition brigade combat teams. Interv, William W. Epley, CMH, with Brig. Gen. Dana J. H. Pittard, Cmdg Gen, Iraq Assistance Gp, 24 Jun 2007, 3–4, Hist Files, CMH.

117. Spc. Stephanie Homan, "Yarbrough Assumes Command of Iraqi Assistance Group," MNC-I Public Affairs Ofc, 30 Jun 2007, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/11063/yarbrough-assumes-command-iraqi-assistance-group, Hist Files, CMH.

118. Schlosser, *Surge*, 59.

targeting weapons caches and potential escape routes. The aerial onslaught cleared a path for ground troops, who succeeded in penetrating the enemy perimeter, albeit at the cost of three armored vehicles that were destroyed and three soldiers who were killed.[119] The initial operation ended without resolution after two weeks to allow MND-C to transition to Operation Marne Avalanche while also preparing for a second attack on Arab Jabour in September.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon's 25th Infantry Division/Multi-National Division–North launched Operation Arrowhead Ripper, designed to clear Al-Qaeda in Iraq/the Islamic State of Iraq from Ba'qūbah and secure the city, on 18 June. The operation lasted for two months. Three U.S. brigade combat teams encountered dozens of the usual improvised explosive devices, but the enemy also introduced new tactics by emplacing explosive charges in houses with the goal of collapsing the buildings when American troops entered.[120] The fighting continued for weeks before the Americans announced they had achieved their objective.[121]

Iraqi Army units, which lacked the training, equipment and firepower to mount deliberate assaults against a dug-in enemy, were relegated to a supporting role when the Americans plunged into insurgent enclaves. In some operations, Iraqi participation increased only after coalition forces had breached the outer defenses.[122] For example, elements of the 2d Brigade, 5th IA Division, aided by a battalion from the division's 1st Brigade, assisted with clearing Ba'qūbah during Arrowhead Ripper once U.S. troops had cleared a corridor through improvised explosive device fields barring access to the city center. The heavy fighting in Arab Jabour during Marne Torch prevented Iraqi forces from making much contribution there. In other operations, Iraqi participation was strong throughout. For example, during Operation Alljah, which lasted from 16 June to 14 August, Sunni tribes that had been savaged by al-Qaeda fought alongside the II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward). Their knowledge of the local populace and of the Al Fallūjah area proved invaluable.[123]

119. Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad*, 129–34.
120. Mansoor, *Surge*, 155–56.
121. Multi-National Division–Center resumed the attack in September. "Operation Marne Torch I," Institute for the Study of War, n.d., http://www.understandingwar.org/operation/operation-marne-torch-i (accessed 24 Sep 2023), Hist Files, CMH.
122. Multi-National Division–North Press Release #20070907–09, MNC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Arrowhead Ripper Continues to Deny Terrorists Resources," 9 Jul 2007, https://freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1863290/posts, Hist Files, CMH.
123. Pfc. Brian Jones, "Iraqis Eager, Willing to Protect Their Community," 5 Aug 2007, https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/News/Article/Article/552671/iraqis-eager-willing-to-protect-their-community/, Hist Files, CMH.

CONCLUSION

Although the Iraqi government and MNF-I had different opinions on the best course of action to keep insurgents from further destabilizing the country, both agreed that it was imperative to retrieve the initiative that the insurgents had seized following the Sāmarrā' mosque bombing. The first step to achieving this goal required an agreement that success could only be obtained by defeating the enemy rather than holding terrain. The second step required the development of a coordinated campaign plan that accounted for the overhaul of the National Police and the impact that a major force structure and reequipping effort would have on the Iraqi Army. Many Iraqi units would not be fully mission capable until late 2007 or after. MNF-I's decision to assign the task of reducing heavily defended enclaves to better equipped and trained U.S. forces eliminated potential problems with both steps. Initially, the Iraqis supplied troops to cordon off the areas under attack and minimize the movement of insurgents into or out of the objective. During the hold phase, the Americans and Iraqis shared responsibilities. Iraqi security forces then assumed primary responsibility for the build phase while U.S. troops remained in the background. In each phase, the clear division of effort worked well given the respective levels of performance of both armies, but it eliminated opportunities for American and Iraqi soldiers to build deeper mutual respect and trust.

The first six months of the surge therefore saw the Americans emphasizing tactical priorities that addressed the current operational situation and positioning their partners for long-term strategic success. The submission of the logistical support package as part of fiscal year 2007's supplemental funding request softened the potential impact of unbalanced force structure that had emerged with the fielding of the 11th and 12th IA Divisions. The Americans also realized that they did not need to fix every Iraqi shortcoming immediately. The U.S. commitment of twenty brigade combat teams had bought them more time. As a result, programs designed to upgrade firepower initially included only American-made individual and battalion-level weapons systems. The acquisition of protected mobility, field artillery, and more capable armored fighting vehicles was deferred until the surge shifted into its final phase in mid-2008. Organizational upheaval within the Iraqi Army during this period created an unavoidable stumbling block with some serious near-term impact, but, from the onset, MNF-I managed those adverse effects as carefully as circumstances permitted.

9
Expansion Amidst the Surge: July 2007–January 2008

The U.S. military believed that to protect the Iraqi population, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) would have to eliminate extremist groups that were fanning the flames of sectarian hatred. This line of thinking dominated operations throughout 2007. However, MNF-I opted to prioritize its targets, focusing on a more aggressive approach against al-Qaeda while avoiding trouble with Shi'i militias whenever possible. A small engagement between U.S. troops and Muqtada al-Sadr's followers in An Nāşirīyah during May 2007 momentarily had threatened this unofficial armistice, but both sides soon settled back into an uneasy status quo that was marred only by an occasional U.S.-led raid targeting Sadr City–based criminal gangs claiming allegiance to the cleric.

Before the surge, Shi'i communities welcomed Mahdi Army efforts to protect them from marauding Sunni extremists. With no one else to rely on, the civilian population tolerated Sadrist demands for cash, goods, and unquestioning obedience in exchange for their ensured safety. The Sadrists, however, overlooked the possibility that ordinary citizens might grow weary of high-handed and coercive behavior. Attitudes shifted slowly and did not immediately leach significant support from Sadr.[1] In a June 2007 assessment, General David H. Petraeus's MNF-I staff officers noted, "While the [government of Iraq] is making slow, incremental progress toward meeting the needs of the Baghdad population, there has been little change in the population's satisfaction."[2] They were more upbeat about the status of

1. Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 174.

2. Bfg, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) Strategic Plans and Assessment Ofc (SPA) to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 Jun 2007, sub: Measuring the Effects of the Plus-Up: "Is the

Iraqi security forces in Baghdād, observing, "Their Operational Readiness Assessments are stable, with minor improvements and minor regressions among units."[3] The report revealed that despite having just launched an unparalleled offensive effort targeting numerous enemy enclaves ringing the capital, MNF-I's overriding interests lay in the situation within Baghdād and the status of the Iraqi Army.

TAKING STOCK

Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik's assignment as the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) commanding general came after all five U.S. Army brigade combat teams, a reinforcing combat aviation brigade, and two U.S. Marine Corps battalions had arrived in Iraq to take part in the surge. The presence of 20,000 more American troops soon produced measurable reductions in civilian casualties within Baghdād, albeit without deterring extremists from attempting to sustain a cycle of sectarian violence. One such incident involved Sunni insurgents destroying the ten-story-tall gold minarets flanking the ruins of the main dome of the Al-Askari Mosque on the morning of 13 June. The attackers were able to mount their assault because the police detachment that controlled access to the shrine had not yet been vetted and retrained as part of the ongoing Year of the Police initiative.

The defense minister transferred the 4th Iraqi Army (IA) Division's 4th Brigade to Sāmarrāʾ to safeguard against future incidents, and Iraqi forces had arrested the commander and twelve policemen who had been providing security at the shrine.[4] In an attempt to ward off potential backlash within Baghdād, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki banned vehicle traffic and public gatherings.[5] Thwarted by those measures in the capital, vengeful Shi'i militants turned their attention southward. On 15 June, fighters posing as

President's Initiative Making a Difference in Iraq?," Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).

3. Bfg, MNF-I SPA to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 15 Jun 2007, sub: Measuring the Effects of the Plus-Up. The statement reflects as much optimism as fact. According to this briefing, only eleven of the twenty-nine Iraqi Army battalions in Baghdād were staffed at an average of 80 percent or greater strength in mid-June 2007.

4. Talking Points, MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 17 Jun 2007, sub: Mtg with Minister Abdul Qader, 3 Archive 2007 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH; Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 20 Jun 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

5. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 13 Jun 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

television cameramen destroyed the Talha Bin al-Zubair Mosque, a Sunni shrine outside of Al Başrah.[6] Al-Qaeda did not join in the tit-for-tat because coalition attacks were forcing foreign extremists to concentrate on their own survival.

The Iraqi Army reshuffled its available units to provide additional protection to other sites of religious and cultural importance. It had the means to do so because of the force structure and staffing decisions following Operations Together Forward I and II. When the inevitable debate over the relative merits of quality versus quantity emerged within MNSTC-I, General Dubik reminded his subordinates, "If we chose quantity over quality, then we would have a whole bunch of people that were worthless on the battlefield. If we chose quality over quantity, then our timeline would be so long that we would not be able to contribute to the counteroffensive and achieve the effects that we knew we needed to achieve on the timeline that General Petraeus had set for us."[7] To strike a balance, Dubik sought a blended approach that would be capable of producing units with sufficient skills to meet immediate mission needs.

Dubik mandated other major changes that affected how MNSTC-I interacted with its Iraqi counterparts. Seeking to further improve ministerial capacity alongside that of the operational forces, Dubik decreed that the Iraqis thenceforth would be involved in decision making for major projects in order to expose them to the full range of bureaucratic and organizational processes. Rather than dictate a solution for emerging challenges, MNSTC-I sought input from the Ministry of Defense. For example, instead of pulling soldiers out of existing units or dispatching new recruits directly to noncommissioned officer schools in order to fill noncommissioned officer shortfalls, Dubik deferred to a ministry recommendation to send the top 20 percent of graduates from each basic course to five additional weeks of leadership instruction. Although not all of the selectees completed the leadership training, the ministry course of action added 14,000 junior noncommissioned officers to the Iraqi Army's ranks by 2008.[8]

6. Talha Bin al-Zubair, one of Prophet Muhammad's companions, commands high respect among Sunnis. The shrine was renovated in the late 1990s, during Saddam Hussein's rule. John Ward Anderson, "Gunmen in a Convoy of Pickups Demolish Sunni Mosque in Basra, but Baghdad Quieter as Government Plans to Lift Curfew," *Washington Post*, 16 Jun 2007, https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Gunmen-in-a-convoy-of-pickups-demolish-Sunni-2586386.php, Hist Files, CMH.

7. Interv, Vince McLean, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI), with Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James Dubik, former Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) Cmdg Gen and Cmd. Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Tommy Williams, former MNSTC-I Cmd Sgt Maj, 5 May 2010, 5, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI.

8. Interv, McLean with Dubik and Williams, 5 May 2010, 6.

PROCEEDING WITH THE SURGE

Unlike Multi-National Division–Baghdad units, which deployed to Baghdād for fifteen months, Iraqi Army units were dispatched from other areas to the capital for much shorter periods. Whenever a new Iraqi rotation took place, MNSTC-I faced a fourfold challenge. First, Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) had to assess whether deploying a unit would decrease security in the region surrounding its home base. Second, Iraqi units required considerable predeployment training. Third, no one knew whether the 30K Replenishment Initiative, combined with allowing some units to be filled over 100 percent strength, would offset the inevitable losses to desertion. Finally, the Americans could not be entirely certain whether the arrival of a new unit would exacerbate or diminish sectarian tensions.

In theory, the process should have gotten easier with successive rotations, but it did not. Replacing elements from three Iraqi brigades that had been sent to Baghdād in the January–February 2007 timeframe generated almost as many challenges as the initial deployment. Follow-on reinforcements, which arrived from early May through mid-June, consisted of the 2d Brigade, 4th IA Division, minus its headquarters company and one battalion; two battalions from the 10th IA Division; and the 3d Brigade, 2d IA Division. News of the 3d Brigade's impending transfer to Baghdād triggered mass desertions within its 1st Battalion. When reconstitution before its scheduled departure proved impractical, the brigade reassigned the remaining soldiers to other battalions. The Iraqis managed to sidestep another potential issue, at least temporarily, when the 1st Brigade, 3d IA Division, agreed to delay the departure of its 3d Battalion from Baghdād for ninety days.[9]

MNF-I's emphasis on securing Baghdād remained unshakable even in the face of growing Iraqi concern over Sadrist efforts to control the Al Başrah oil terminal and religious sites such as those in Karbalā' and An Najaf. Sadr's growing influence in the south already had led Prime Minister Maliki to create the Karbalā' Operations Command under Lt. Gen. Mohan al-Furayji. As commander, General Mohan had authority over all Iraqi Army and police units, Department of Border Enforcement and Facilities Protection Service personnel, and provincial and national intelligence centers in the province.[10] Soon after taking command, General Mohan delivered a report on the pressing need to enhance Iraqi military capabilities in Al Başrah to the Ministerial Council for National Security, which prompted a further

9. Bfg, MNF-I SPA, 15 Jun 2007, sub: Measuring the Effects of the Plus-Up, slide 13.
10. Talking Points, Ofc Prime Minister, 20 May 2007, sub: Executive Order 148, 3 Archive 2007 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

reordering of the Iraqi government's priorities. Mohan recommended speeding up the contemplated fielding of the 14th IA Division, deploying a mechanized battalion and a special forces company to Al Başrah, and using units from other parts of the country to replace brigades from the 10th IA Division that had been infiltrated by militia members.[11] MNSTC-I learned of Mohan's recommendations only after Minister of Defense Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jassim al-Mafraji asked Dubik about accelerating the fielding and equipping of the 10th and 14th IA Divisions.[12]

Although Maliki also had concerns about the stability of Al Başrah, the Iraqis still were grappling with the need to take proactive steps to forestall potential conflict. In this instance, plans to create a fully functioning provincial operations command in Al Başrah could not be implemented until the Americans provided communications resources. However, Maliki made it very clear that he would take action whenever a crisis arose, regardless of whether adequate preparation had taken place. The prime minister also paid limited attention to fixing problems exposed by recent security emergencies. The ad hoc command and control measures put into place in Karbalā' and An Najaf remained unimproved, resulting in the two provincial operations centers following different protocols. That lack of standardization hampered decision making and the timely flow of information, with the result being that the closest reinforcements were not the most likely to respond to problems in Al Başrah.[13] The prime minister's bias toward immediate action therefore guaranteed that 14th IA Division units filled with inexperienced troops would spearhead any effort to address rising tensions within the port city.

The Iraqis decided to ask for help from the United States after realizing their operational goals were not attainable without outside assistance. Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, who also represented the Sunni-led Iraqi Islamic Party, provided an updated set of Iraqi priorities to MNF-I in July 2007. He made it clear that while Baghdād remained the top Iraqi concern, the Maliki government considered southern Iraq as potentially more volatile. He used a roughly sketched map that divided Iraq into five zones—Baghdād, northern Iraq, Kurdistan, Al Anbār, and southern Iraq—to illustrate how the Iraqis themselves viewed the emerging security issues affecting their nation. The

11. Talking Points, MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 5 Aug 2007, sub: CG MNSTC-I Talking Points Memo, 2007 Material Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, CMH.
12. Talking Points, MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 8 Jul 2007, sub: MNSTC-I CG Talking Points, 7, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.
13. Info Paper, "JHQ M5 Analysis of Current Iraqi Command and Control (C2) Structure," MNSTC-I Joint HQ–Advisory Team, 27 Jun 2008, 2008 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.



Soldiers with the 4th Platoon, Company D, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, and the Iraqi National Police return small arms fire during an ambush in southern Baghdād on 23 July 2007. (*M. Sgt. Jonathan Doti, U.S. Air Force*)

sketch included a prioritized variety of methods, such as politics, military force, economic stimulus, cooperation, and reconciliation, which Baghdād planned to employ in each zone. It envisioned an equal mix of political initiatives and military force for the southern provinces, while political means, reconciliation, and economic measures were preferable to military options in Al Anbār and northern Iraq. In relatively benign Kurdistan, the primary means of maintaining control were government policymaking and cooperation.[14]

MNF-I's ability to address Iraqi perceptions depended in large part on the progress, or lack thereof, made in Baghdād. The Ameriya neighborhood in Mansour District illustrated the challenges of maintaining security in the capital throughout summer 2007. Although the initial clearing operations were successful, the hold phase proved far more difficult because there were not "enough U.S. troops, and the primarily Sunni local populace did not trust the Shi'a-dominated [Iraqi Army] Battalion."[15] The residents provided al-Qaeda terrorists with sanctuary in exchange for protection against marauding Shi'i militia groups. Although U.S. troops demonstrated their willingness to confront sectarian death squads, the seemingly close

14. Diagram, Iraqi Islamic Party Sec Gen and Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, 2 Jul 2007, sub: Searching for a 100% Green Zone, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
15. Dale Kuehl, "Testing Galula in Ameriyah: The People Are the Key," *Military Review* 89, no. 2 (Mar-Apr 2009): 73–74.

association of American forces with primarily Shi'i government security forces discouraged whole-hearted cooperation by Sunni residents.

RESHAPING THE BATTLEFIELD

Further differences between Iraqi and American priorities emerged as security-related tensions came to light within the central government. When the second iteration of reinforcing Iraqi brigades arrived in Baghdād, the prime minister's constant personal involvement in security matters triggered a crisis within the Iraqi military. General Babekr al-Zibari, who had served as the Iraqi Army's chief of staff since 2004, tendered his resignation on 29 July in protest over the prime minister's day-to-day handling of military affairs. In a statement issued to the Kurdish press, Babekr announced that "he did not want to be just a civil servant who signs the orders decided by the prime minister."[16] After spending a week at home, Babekr withdrew his resignation once Maliki agreed to ask the Ministry of Defense intelligence chief to resign, clarified the responsibilities and authority of the ministry and Joint Headquarters, and promised to henceforth use the chain of command rather than bypass General Babekr.[17]

With internal bureaucratic friction temporarily quelled, Defense Minister Abdul Qadr met with senior military leaders in early August to address concerns about southern Iraq. He wanted to move the 10th IA Division headquarters from Al Başrah to An Nāşirīyah to reduce the pressures placed upon it by its proximity to Shi'i militias. He also wanted to relocate the 10th IA Division's 1st Brigade from Al Başrah to Al Kūt and replace it with the 8th IA Division's 3d Brigade. The former unit, which had been judged to be unreliable because of militia infiltration and intimidation, lacked embedded British military transition teams. The 8th IA Division soldiers, who were considered less susceptible to coercion because they did not have personal ties to Al Başrah, had earned excellent ratings from MNSTC-I. In a twist from the usual problem of deploying Iraqi forces, in this instance it was the 3d Brigade's U.S. advisers who could not go to Al Başrah because of logistical and security concerns on the part of the Iraq Assistance Group. The Iraqis also planned to provide the 10th IA Division outfit with additional firepower by reinforcing it with a mechanized battalion and a tank company from the

16. "Babaker Zebari, Iraq's Army Chief Resigns," *Ekurd Daily*, 1 Aug 2007, https://ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2007/8/government1150.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
17. Talking Points, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 9 Aug 2007, sub: Talking Points for General Babakir 9 August 2007, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH. See endnote 4.

9th IA Division. General Mohan recommended sending a special forces company, as well.[18]

When apprised of Iraqi desires to divert troops to Al Başrah, the Americans counseled against moving any units for at least ninety days. MNSTC-I argued that delaying the transfers would provide enough time to build communications facilities in An Nāşirīyah to support the 10th IA Division headquarters and permit the 3d Brigade, 8th IA Division, to conclude its participation in the interdiction operations being directed by Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch's Multi-National Division–Center (MND-C)/3d Infantry Division (Mechanized). In addition, the Iraqi mechanized contingent selected to relocate to Al Başrah needed preparatory training because it had been assessed as capable of operating only at platoon-level, owing to significant shortfalls in noncommissioned officers and officers.[19] Although the Iraqis agreed to study the counterproposal, they still leaned toward redeploying troops to the south sooner rather than later, despite U.S. reluctance. The Americans also resisted the brigade swap because they believed it added unnecessarily to the force structure turbulence the Iraqis were experiencing.

The scheduled fielding of the 11th IA Division, for example, barely remained on track for the late summer timeframe. MNSTC-I and the ministry settled on transferring the 6th IA Division's 2d Brigade to form the nucleus of the 11th IA Division. Numerous other issues associated with creating the 11th IA Division and many other topics eventually required formal resolution by a joint committee. On 26 August, MNSTC-I and ministry representatives met to settle upon force generation priorities for the upcoming year. The original fielding schedule for 2008 authorized all Iraqi Army divisions, with the exception of the 10th, 11th, and 12th, to expand in size to four brigades by the end of 2008. The participants divided the projected force structure increases into six-month windows, with the first one encompassing January through June 2008, and the second extended from July to December.

During the first six months of 2008, the Americans and Iraqis agreed to field the 12th IA Division headquarters and its 1st Brigade, the 14th IA Division's supporting troops and its 3d and 4th Brigades, the 7th IA Division's 4th Brigade, and a presidential security brigade. Because the 12th IA

18. Bfg, MNSTC-I Joint HQ Training Team to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Aug 2007, sub: Brief for CG MNSTC-I on the MOD plans to Reinforce Basra, slides 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

19. The mechanized battalion in question had been rated as unready for combat operations since November 2006. Bfg, MNSTC-I Joint HQ Training Team to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Aug 2007, sub: Brief for CG MNSTC-I on the MOD plans to Reinforce Basra, slide 10.

Division would be composed of three strategic infrastructure brigades plus a brigade siphoned from the 4th IA Division, the committee also accorded a high priority to converting seventeen infrastructure battalions to standard infantry units. The group pushed back the fielding of the 2d and 3d Brigades of the 12th IA Division, the 3d IA Division's 4th Brigade, and a number of separate units—including six logistics battalions, fourteen garrison support units, and a general support signal battalion—to the second half of 2008.[20]

Although the meeting resolved questions about future force structure without undue dissention, the Iraqis remained obdurate on the issue of sending more troops to Al Baṣrah. Baghdād's continued refusal to put these deployments on a back burner led to advisers being held back from the 3d Brigade, 8th IA Division, but the prime minister's office issued orders to the units involved to relocate to the port city on short notice.

OPERATION PHANTOM STRIKE BEGINS

Under the command of Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, MNC-I's second series of U.S-led offensives, code-named Phantom Strike, began in mid-August. Although MNC-I scheduled the operation to catch insurgent groups fleeing from Baghdād before they could reestablish themselves in northern Iraq, the fact that the U.S. Congress demanded an in-person interim progress report from Petraeus by mid-September also influenced its timing.[21] The objectives of Phantom Strike were far more focused as a result of insurgent operational documents seized during earlier fighting and information provided by cooperative Sunni communities.[22] The new offensive also differed in that the Iraqi government gave MNC-I permission to freely target Iranian-supported terror cells and rogue Mahdi Army elements.[23]

The main effort involved a deliberate push by Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon's Multi-National Division–North up the Diyālá River Valley from Baʿqūbah to just below Mosul. Mixon's command consisted of the 25th Infantry Division headquarters, one of its organic brigade combat teams, and

20. Bfg, MNSTC-I Joint HQ Training Team to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Aug 2007, sub: Brief for CG MNSTC-I on the MOD plans to Reinforce Basra, slide 14.
21. Mansoor, *Surge*, 171–72.
22. Mario Loyola, "Phantom Strike: How the U.S. Military Is Demolishing al Qaeda in Iraq," *Weekly Standard* 12, no. 47 (3 Sep 2007): 26–32, Hist Files, CMH.
23. Bill Roggio, "Coalition, Iraqi Forces Launch Phantom Strike," *Long War Journal*, 13 Aug 2007, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/08/coalition_iraqi_forc.php, Hist Files, CMH.

additional brigade combat teams detached from the 1st Cavalry Division, the 2d Infantry Division, and the 82d Airborne Division.[24] Mixon also had the secondary task of cleaning out al-Qaeda hideouts in Kirkūk Province, southeast of Mosul. MNF-I directed General Lynch's MND-C to consolidate gains made during Phantom Thunder while pushing further south to complete the clearing of Arab Jabour. Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr.'s Multi-National Division–Baghdad continued its efforts to clear sectarian actors from urban districts while safeguarding residents from further violence. Finally, MNF-I tasked Lt. Gen. Walter E. Gaskin's Multi-National Force–West/II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) to focus on the region of Lake Tharthar, where intelligence analysis suggested Sunni extremists still maintained some bomb-making capability.[25]

On 13 August, Mixon's 25th Infantry Division initiated Phase I of Operation Lightning Hammer, the first large-scale Phantom Strike offensive, in Diyālá Province with a veritable torrent of artillery and air strikes on targets north and east of Baghdād.[26] The ground portion began with helicopters delivering two U.S. infantry battalions near the towns of Abu Karmah and Al Mukhaysah. The Americans expended more than 300 artillery shells, rockets, and bombs in an effort to disrupt command and control, inflict casualties, eliminate weapons caches, and interdict movement.[27] After consolidating on their landing zones, Multi-National Division–North soldiers belonging to the 1st Cavalry Division's 3d Brigade Combat Team and the 5th Squadron, 73d Cavalry Regiment, converged on Abu Karmah in an effort to locate several al-Qaeda leaders hiding there.[28] Several thousand troops from the 5th IA Division joined the Americans a few days later.[29] The combined force arrested or killed a number of insurgents,

24. Some of these brigades were assigned to Multi-National Division–North for the duration of the 25th Infantry Division's deployment while others were temporarily reassigned from other multinational divisions.
25. Mansoor, *Surge*, 173.
26. Bill Roggio, "Iraq Report: Lightning Hammer Update," *Long War Journal*, 15 Aug 2007, https://www.longwarjournal.org/dailyiraqreport/2007/08/iraq_report_lightning_hammer_u.php, Hist Files, CMH.
27. "Phantom Strike Operations Target Terrorist Safe Havens in Iraq," American Forces Press Service, 15 Aug 2007, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2007/08/mil-070815-afps01.htm (accessed 15 Mar 2025), Hist Files, CMH.
28. Les Neuhaus, "Operation to Drive al Qaeda in Iraq Fighters from Diyala Province Kicks Off," *Stars and Stripes*, 15 Aug 2007, https://www.stripes.com/news/operation-to-drive-al-qaida-in-iraq-fighters-from-diyala-province-kicks-off-1.67685, Hist Files, CMH.
29. Les Neuhaus, "Soldiers Become Detectives in Operation Pericles," *Stars and Stripes*, 16 Aug 2007, https://www.stripes.com/migration/soldiers-become-detectives-in-operation-pericles-1.67728, Hist Files, CMH.



A soldier from the 6th Iraqi Army Division patrols a street in Arab Jabour while a Bradley fighting vehicle provides cover. (*Spc. Robert H. Baumgartner, U.S. Army*)

and, more importantly, their presence convinced local tribal leaders to swear an oath against al-Qaeda in a formal ceremony on 19 August.[30]

Prime Minister Maliki's decision to create the Karbalā' Operations Command appeared to have been prescient by late summer. On 28 August, religious pilgrims from across the Middle East were gathered in the city to observe the anniversary of the birth of the twelfth Shi'i imam. Scuffles broke out as the crowd tried to push through police checkpoints surrounding the Imam al-Hussein Shrine. Tensions increased as Sadr supporters confronted the Badr Organization (formerly known as Badr Corps until 2003), the armed wing of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (formerly known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq), which dominated the local security forces. A spokesperson for Sadr later claimed that police had provoked the violence by beating pilgrims who had been chanting pro-Sadr slogans. Other witnesses stated that shots had been fired after Mahdi militia members were prohibited from taking weapons into the shrines. Armed gunmen began targeting Badr Organization security forces with automatic rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortars. A series of bloody skirmishes ensued throughout the afternoon as Sadrists successively overran six checkpoints encircling the shrine. One police officer reported, "Hundreds

30. Nicholas J. Schlosser, *The Surge, 2007–2008*, The U.S. Army Campaigns in Iraq (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2017), 67.

of Mahdi Army [personnel] have occupied several hotels near the two shrines. . . . The battle is fierce, and we are defending our posts here."[31]

With the situation growing worse by the minute, police ordered pilgrims out of the center of the city, effectively ending the religious celebrations that had been scheduled to last through the following morning.[32] The pilgrims fled in huge numbers, but many could not get transportation out of Karbalā' as police established roadblocks to prevent Mahdi Army reinforcements from entering the city. Horrified Iraqis watched television footage of the fighting as 52 people were killed and another 229 wounded, most of whom were civilian bystanders trapped between the opposing militias.[33] When word of the clash reached other Sadr groups, sporadic fighting between Mahdi militia members and Badr gunmen broke out in Al Kūt, Ad Dīwānīyah , and An Najaf.[34] Western media commentators were quick to point out that the showdown would prove embarrassing if the Baghdād government could not control the Mahdi Army and restore order in a holy city in the heart of the Shi'a's homeland.

The violence in Karbalā' convinced the prime minister that the time had come for him to put the Sadrists firmly in their place. As journalist Linda Robinson wrote, "Maliki went ballistic. He was on the phone all night. . . . His national security advisor, Mowaffak al-Rubaie, badgered the Americans until they let him go to Karbala. He went to the shrine and at 7:30 the next morning Rubaie called Maliki to tell him it was safe enough for him to come down. He drove down in a fifty-two-vehicle caravan including Iraqi armored cars equipped with heavy machineguns."[35] The Americans ensured that AH–64 attack helicopters provided security to the prime minister's convoy. Multiple Iraqi columns converged on Karbalā' as the Ministries of Interior and Defense sent additional forces, including a sizable contingent from Maj.

31. Stephen Farrell, "50 Die in Fight Between Shiite Groups in Karbala," *New York Times*, 29 Aug 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/29/world/middleeast/29iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH.
32. "Two Shiite Groups Clash in Karbala, Killing 51," *Tampa Bay Times*, 29 Aug 2007, https://www.tampabay.com/archive/2007/08/29/two-shiite-groups-clash-in-karbala-killing-51/, Hist Files, CMH.
33. Stephen Farrell, "Fifty Killed at Religious Festival in Iraq," *New York Times*, 28 Aug 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/28/world/middleeast/29iraq.html; Damien Cave, "Iraqi Cleric Demands Inquiry into Gun Battle," *New York Times*, 2 Sep 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/02/world/middleeast/02cnd-iraq.html; both in Hist Files, CMH.
34. "Two Shiite Groups Clash in Karbala, Killing 51."
35. Mansoor, *Surge*, 175; Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 285.

Gen. Othman al-Ghanimi's 8th IA Division, to carry out Maliki's directive to lock down the city.[36]

After meeting with local officials and inspecting the scene of the previous day's fighting, Maliki imposed an indefinite curfew in Karbalā'. He also ordered the 2d Iraqi Special Operations Forces Battalion—previously known as the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force—to help the National Police's emergency response unit in Karbalā' hunt down the responsible Mahdi Army commander. Within a short period of time, the Iraqi special operations unit apprehended the individual, eliciting praise from Maliki.[37] The positive comments reflected a significant change in the prime minister's opinions as the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force repeatedly had experienced his ire whenever it had targeted Shi'i extremists in the past.[38] To further reassure residents, Maliki dismissed a number of local officials and security personnel.[39] The potent combination of bad publicity for Sadrists, combined with the prime minister's personal intervention, spurred Sadr into issuing a statement that promised a moratorium on attacks targeting coalition personnel through February 2008.[40]

The developments at Karbalā' accelerated plans to build up the Iraqi Army's presence in and around Al Başrah.[41] In accordance with the minister of defense's instructions, the 10th IA Division's 1st Brigade and the 8th IA Division's 3d Brigade completed their exchange of battlespace by 3 September 2007. In addition, the Iraqis transferred the 6th Brigade headquarters of the 2d National Police Division, along with its 3d Battalion but minus transition teams, to Al Başrah on 5 September. American heavy equipment transporters ferried the thirty-eight BMP1 infantry fighting vehicles of the mechanized battalion, along with eleven T55 tanks, to Shaibah Logistics Base on 10 September. In a demonstration of increasing logistical capability,

36. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, *Surge and Withdrawal, 2007–2011* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 231.
37. Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 285.
38. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, with former Operational Detachment Alpha 512 Team Leader, 10 May 2008, Hist Files, CMH.
39. A total of 1,500 police personnel were fired by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, including Maj. Gen. Salih Khazall.
40. "Spokesman for Cleric Moqtada al-Sadr Says Militia Won't Attack US," *New York Daily News*, 29 Aug 2007, https://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/spokesman-cleric-muqtada-al-sadr-militia-won-attack-u-s-article-1.235237, Hist Files, CMH.
41. "Wagonmasters Plan, Move 3/9 IA Armor to Basra," *Anaconda Times*, 19 Sep 2007, Hist Files, CMH.

the Iraqi 10th Motor Transport Regiment carried the mechanized battalion personnel southward to link up with their equipment that same day.[42]

Soon after the moves were completed, Prime Minister Maliki gave an assessment to the Iraqi parliament of the gains realized since the U.S. military buildup began: "We have been successful in preventing Iraq from sliding into civil war, which was threatening our dear country. We are sure that national reconciliation is our only option. . . . Despite disturbances made by some of the sides, local and foreign, the mission has been successful."[43] He suggested that progress would continue, but he also insisted that Iraqi forces needed more time to take over security responsibilities from coalition forces.[44]

PETRAEUS REPORTS

General Petraeus flew to the United States to provide his interim progress report in testimony before Congress during a two-day session beginning on 10 September. Preparations for that seminal event had consumed the attention of the MNF-I staff for several weeks. Mindful that the analysis generated by national intelligence agencies lagged behind developments in Iraq by weeks if not months, the MNF-I commander invited several prominent members of the intelligence community to review the latest information from military analysts in Baghdād. This prompted a report by the National Intelligence Council in which council members explained, "Developments in Iraq are unfolding more rapidly and with greater complexity today than when we completed our January [2007] National Intelligence Estimate."[45] The disclaimer gave General Petraeus the ammunition he needed to challenge U.S.-based agencies whose analysts disagreed with conclusions drawn from intelligence reports prepared by MNF-I.

Petraeus opened by informing legislators that the objectives for the surge were being achieved. He explained that MNC-I had completed its first major offensive, which had been designed to clear Baʿqūbah and several key neighborhoods in Baghdād, and also had eliminated insurgent sanctuaries in the belts surrounding the Iraqi capital. General Odierno had built upon

42. Talking Points, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 7 Sept 2007, sub: CG MNSTC-I Talking Points, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, Hist Files, CMH.
43. Sam Enriquez, "Al-Maliki Trumpets Improved Security," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Sep 2007, http://articles/sfgate.com/2007-09-11/news/17259832_1_al-maliki-shadha-mousawi-iraqi-prime-minister, Hist Files, CMH.
44. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 12 Sep 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
45. Mansoor, *Surge*, 189.

the success of that effort in recent weeks by launching another series of attacks designed to inflict further losses on extremist groups already reeling from the initial operation. The massive and sustained American military commitment proved to be a potent catalyst for the formation of additional Sunni volunteer groups in provinces outside Al Anbār. This movement differed from the Anbar Awakening, in which tribal leaders primarily encouraged young men to join the police, because the Americans directly paid and supplied these volunteer organizations, making them independent of the central government.[46]

Citing from an impressive collection of statistics, Petraeus pointed out that the overall number of incidents in Iraq had declined in eight of the past twelve weeks, with attacks in the last two weeks dropping to the lowest levels of the past sixteen months.[47] In the capital, civilian deaths from all causes had decreased by 70 percent since December 2006, and sectarian killings had plummeted by 80 percent.[48] The falling death toll also attested to the success of offensive efforts that targeted extremist staging bases in the belts surrounding Baghdād. These gains, Petraeus noted, resulted from adopting new tactics after a bleak December 2006 security assessment had indicated that the coalition faced the prospect of failure. Rather than conduct clearing operations and "commut[ing] to the fight" from large forward operating bases outside of major Iraqi cities, coalition and Iraqi troops were now living among the people they were charged with protecting.[49]

The general then reported that more than 4,400 weapons caches had been uncovered since February 2007, a figure that represented an increase of nearly 1,700 over the total discovered throughout 2006. The push into the Lake Tharthar region northwest of Baghdād was exceptionally fruitful, eliminating numerous bomb-making factories and explosive stockpiles. Also, extremist groups had suffered numerous casualties. Coalition forces had killed five top al-Qaeda officials, detained twenty-eight others, neutralized six media cells, and killed or captured nearly 2,500 rank-and-file fighters between June and September 2007. Coalition forces even had captured the

46. Najim Abed al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen, "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening," *PRISM–The Journal of Complex Operations* 2, no. 1 (Jul 2012): 3, https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/prism/prism_2-1/prism_2-1.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

47. Gen. David H. Petraeus, MNF-I Cdr, *The Situation in Iraq*, Rpt. to Cong., 10 Sep 2007, 1, *Politico.com*, https://www.politico.com/story/2007/09/full-text-petraeus-and-crocker-testimony-005735, Hist Files, CMH.

48. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 12 Sep 2007.

49. Petraeus, *The Situation in Iraq*, Rpt. to Cong., 10 Sep 2007, 2.

deputy commander of a Lebanese Hezbollah unit after it began targeting Iranian-backed proxies assisting rogue Shi'i militias.[50]

Coalition and Iraqi troops had wrought considerable havoc on agents of sectarian violence, but Petraeus also highlighted the contributions of unexpected allies in the fight against al-Qaeda: "The most significant development in the past six months likely has been the increasing emergence of tribes and local citizens rejecting Al-Qaeda and other extremists. This has, of course, been most visible in Anbar Province. A year ago the province was assessed as 'lost' politically. Today, it is a model of what happens when local leaders and citizens decide to oppose Al-Qaeda and reject its Taliban-like ideology."[51]

Petraeus finished by pointing out that although American troops were spearheading all major offensive operations, the Iraqis were operating in a useful support role that contributed to overall mission success without incurring undue internal disruption at a critical point in the surge. U.S. troops, aided by local volunteer groups, could maintain a higher operational tempo, and this indirectly facilitated the implementation of numerous initiatives designed to transform the Iraqi Army into a larger and better-equipped force. Although that expansion contributed less to the surge than some desired, it guaranteed that almost a half million Iraqi security personnel would be under arms when the five surge-dedicated U.S. brigades departed.[52]

Petraeus hoped to persuade a skeptical Congress—which had just opened a debate on bringing the war to an end—that a favorable outcome was still possible. The general outlined U.S. military actions and explained that the force-structure initiatives, which currently prevented the Iraqis from assuming a central role in the campaign, would ensure that fully capable government forces could take over the fight from U.S. troops once the surge concluded. His testimony not only offered an effective point-by-point rebuttal of issues raised by critics but also convinced legislators to give MNF-I a free hand to carry out its strategy.

50. Gen. David H. Petraeus, MNF-I Cdr, *The Situation in Iraq*, Rpt. to Cong., 10–11 Sep 2007, "Charts to Accompany the Testimony of GEN David H. Petraeus," slide 10, Politico.com, http://www.politico.com/pdf/PPM43_general_petraeus_testimony_slides10_september_2007.pdf (accessed 8 Jan 2024), Hist Files, CMH.

51. Petraeus, *The Situation in Iraq*, Rpt. to Cong., 10 Sep 2007, 5.

52. The total number of security forces numbered 450,000 by September 2007, with another 40,000 personnel slated to enter the ranks by the end of the year. The Iraqis also were shouldering a greater share of the financial burden, having spent $3.4 billion procuring U.S. equipment that year. Mansoor, *Surge*, 191.

BUILDING UPON THE OPENING SUCCESSES OF PHANTOM STRIKE

While the Iraqis fixed their attention on the south, the Americans continued targeting the insurgent strongholds surrounding Baghdād. Operation Marne Husky, designed to locate and eliminate insurgents who had fled earlier American attacks on the towns of Salmān Pāk and Arab Jabour, was the MND-C contribution to Phantom Strike during this period. General Lynch assigned responsibility for Marne Husky to the Combat Aviation Brigade, 3d Infantry Division, which he augmented with an infantry company from the attached 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. The operation differed from previous efforts in that MND-C targeted enemy remnants in the vicinity of Arab Jabour capable of reinforcing the insurgents holding out in the city. The aviators executed nine successful company-size raids between 15 August and 15 September. In each instance, rotary-wing pilots conveyed foot soldiers over obstacle zones so that they could strike targets that had been pinpointed by intelligence sources. By the time Marne Husky concluded, MND-C had succeeded in clearing 836 buildings, locating 19 weapons caches, killing 63 insurgents, and capturing another 193, including at least one senior al-Qaeda leader.[53] Although the specialized nature of the air assaults conducted by Lynch's aviation brigade meant that Iraqi Army troops had played little, if any, vital role in the operation, local Iraqi volunteers had provided substantial aid to the U.S. troops.[54]

MND-C mounted Operation Marne Torch II as a subset of Marne Husky. The operation followed up the June push into Arab Jabour by clearing the southern two-thirds of the town that had remained in enemy hands. Unlike the previous effort, Marne Torch II employed a mix of U.S. units and civilian auxiliaries to spearhead assaults while using Iraqi Army elements in a supporting role. The latter force included the 5th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th IA Division, and the 3d Battalion, 3d Brigade, 8th IA Division. Soon after two American battalions initiated offensive operations against enemies in southern Arab Jabour, the Iraqi units occupied blocking positions to prevent the enemy from escaping.[55]

The American attack began on 1 September 2007 by targeting al-Qaeda death squads in the Hawr Rajab region, located just west of Arab Jabour. Over a two-week period, the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment,

53. Dale Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad: The 3d Infantry Division and Task Force Marne in Iraq, 2007–2008*, Global War on Terrorism (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2010), 197–98.
54. "Operation Marne Husky," Institute for the Study of War, n.d., https://www.understandingwar.org/operation/operation-marne-husky (accessed 8 Jan 2024), Hist Files, CMH.
55. Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad*, 246.

methodically swept from west to east through Hawr Rajab, encountering improvised explosive devices but little in the way of organized resistance. The 3d Infantry Division reinforced the cavalry unit with the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, on 15 September. The latter force employed air strikes and artillery to eliminate enemy bases in and around southern Arab Jabour before building a patrol base in the middle of that area. Emboldened by the constant American presence, local citizens provided a series of tips that resulted in the seizure of bomb-making materials and weapons caches and the detention of 222 suspected extremists. Marne Torch II ended in mid-October with Arab Jabour under coalition control.

On 5 September, General Mixon initiated Phase II of Lightning Hammer by sending the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, into the Za'ab Triangle, an insurgent stronghold in Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn Province bounded by the towns of Al Qayyarah, Kirkūk, and Bayjī.[56] Mixon also ordered the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, to push into the Hamrin Mountains between Diyālá and Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn Provinces while assigning the mission of reducing extremist enclaves clustered around the towns of Bayjī and Tikrīt to the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division. In late September, Multi-National Division–North shifted its main effort once again as Mixon tasked the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, to conduct targeted raids in the sparsely populated area around the farming community of At Tarmiyah, located on the Tigris River, approximately 20.9 kilometers southwest of Baʿqūbah.[57]

In sharp contrast to developments elsewhere within the Phantom Strike operating area, al-Qaeda succeeded in making a stand in Nīnawā Province by September 2007. As more and more insurgents filtered northward, the extremists gained strength. Meanwhile, Iraqi divisions in that region grappled with problems created by deployments to Baghdād. In addition, Mixon's troops were preparing to turn over their area of responsibility to the 1st Armored Division. As a result, the 25th Infantry Division had to reduce its operational tempo so that it could focus on orienting the newcomers to the area and sending its personnel back to home station. Emboldened, al-Qaeda launched a wave of bombing attacks against Iraqi security forces, religious leaders, and government officials. The attacks began with a car bomb outside the Mosul courthouse, which killed three Iraqis and wounded more than forty others on 26 September.[58] The newly arrived 1st Armored

56. Eric Hamilton, "Backgrounder #31: The Fight for Mosul," Institute for the Study of War, Apr 2008, 12, http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/The%20Fight%20for%20Mosul.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
57. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 253.
58. Hamilton, "Backgrounder #31: The Fight for Mosul," 13–14.

Division, under the command of Maj. Gen. Mark P. Hertling, girded itself for a sustained fight as it awaited the return of 2d IA Division elements from Baghdād in January 2008.[59]

Late September 2007 also saw other positive developments taking place northwest of Baghdād in the Lake Tharthar region.[60] The 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit had uncovered and seized a number of weapons caches and stockpiles of bomb-making materials, which contributed to a 70 percent drop in car bombings in Baghdād.[61] The marines were ably assisted by Sunni irregulars whose interaction with the local populace played a vital role in finding the illicit explosives. General Odierno later acknowledged that the clear rejection of the al-Qaeda agenda by large segments of the Iraqi population inevitably had led to significant improvements in the security situation.[62]

TARGETING CRIMINALS IN UNIFORM

Despite the successes of Phantom Strike, problems that could not be alleviated by the surge—widespread corruption, sectarian prejudice, bureaucratic inertia, and enemy infiltration—remained within the Iraqi Army. A vivid reminder of those issues came on 26 September when U.S. and Iraqi special operators raided the Ar Rustamiyah military academy in eastern Baghdād. Following a brief firefight in which three Iraqi soldiers were wounded, authorities arrested fifteen officers, including a colonel, and fifty enlisted soldiers.[63] The apprehended individuals were charged with murder, kidnapping, perpetrating improvised explosive device attacks, and providing equipment and weapons to insurgents. Two years earlier, when the previous academy director first had suspected the group of covert activities, the renegades had murdered him. Further investigation revealed that the current academic dean was the group's ringleader. Two weeks before he was arrested, the man who would become his successor—who also felt

59. The 1st Armored Division assigned responsibility for the restive Nīnawā Province to the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.
60. Jim Garamone, "US Officials Discuss Increased Iraqi Capabilities," American Forces Press Service, 29 Sep 2007, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/printable/524386; James Schogol, "13th MEU Becomes First 'Surge' Unit to Depart," *Mideast Stars and Stripes*, 29 Sep 2007, Hist Files, CMH.
61. Mansoor, *Surge*, 171–72.
62. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 7 Nov 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
63. "Iraqi, U.S. Forces Raid Military Academy," Reuters, 26 Sep 2007, http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL26866212, Hist Files, CMH.

something within the academy was amiss—had been kidnapped. The Iraqi special operators were able to free him unharmed.[64]

The incident at Ar Rustamiyah showed that Iraqi security forces still carried significant cultural, social, and political baggage. An advisory team working with the 6th IA Division, for example, reported that the division's intelligence section was an inward-looking organization, monitoring the loyalty of its soldiers rather than acquiring information on the enemy. This observation tracked closely with a report from another military transition team, which noted that Iraqi unit commanders rarely extended their trust beyond a small, reliable circle of officers. These were not isolated cases of professional paranoia. Many Iraqi commanders devoted considerable effort to keeping tabs on their professional rivals and ambitious subordinates rather than focusing every available resource on ferreting out insurgent infiltrators.[65] This phenomenon demonstrated that, despite years of close association, American advisers had limited success in erasing deeply ingrained behavior within the Iraqi officer corps.

By August 2006, the Iraqis officially had acknowledged that unchecked corruption would have a deleterious impact on the efficiency of their security forces. Since then, they had created a multitier organization by forming inspector general offices at the ministerial level within each major service and at the divisional level within the Iraqi Army.[66] The Ministry of Interior had opened no fewer than 6,652 investigations into graft and corruption during 2007, which led to the dismissal or arrest of 1,155 individuals. At least 8 major generals, 33 brigadier generals, and 139 colonels and lieutenant colonels had been arrested or forced into retirement. Individuals under investigation used a variety of means to avoid prosecution, including sending their subordinates to carry out targeted assassinations and facilitating insurgent attacks against inspector general personnel traveling to outlying bases. By the end of 2007, the Ministry of Interior's director general of internal affairs had survived no fewer than fourteen assassination attempts, and his counterpart in the army experienced a similar number of attacks.[67]

64. Ned Parker, "59 Iraqi Troops Arrested," *Los Angeles Times*, 27 Sep 2007, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-sep-27-fg-iraq27-story.html, Hist Files, CMH.
65. Schlosser, *Surge*, 74–75.
66. Draft Memo, Mark Bangsboll, n.d., "Building an Inspector General System for the New Iraqi Armed Forces," 1; Dir, Ministry of Defense, trans., Nov 2006, sub: Authorization for Establishment of Inspector General Office; both in Hist Files, CMH.
67. During 2007, a total of eighteen personnel from the Ministry of Interior's Inspector General Office were killed, and another thirty-two were wounded. Memo (Fact Sheet), n.d., sub: Ministry of Interior Internal Affairs, 2008 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

NEW CAPABILITIES

Efforts to reorganize and strengthen the Iraqi Army in the wake of Together Forward I and II began to pay off by fall 2007. On 6 October 2007, Iraqi and coalition representatives opened the Iraqi Army's new bomb disposal school at Besmaya Range Complex, nearly four months after the closure of the Az Zubayr facility near the Kuwaiti border. The school would train over 450 explosive ordnance disposal technicians each year, an increase over the old program, but the faculty had to trim five weeks from the original twelve-week schedule of instruction in order to meet that ambitious goal. Although American soldiers received thirty-eight weeks of instruction covering a wide range of munitions, the Iraqis concentrated solely on the types of munitions they were most likely to encounter in the current fight.[68] That was typical of the compromises struck between quality and quantity. The Besmaya explosive ordnance disposal facility taught two training courses. The first introduced soldiers to basic bomb disposal and demining. The second offered advanced instruction in ordnance and landmine detection, ordnance demolition, nonelectric demolition, and planning and supervising operations. Students also learned how to operate specialized equipment, such as remotely operated robotic devices, to safely neutralize improvised explosive devices that were commonly employed by the insurgents.[69]

Unit set fielding, a process designed to train and equip complete brigades collectively, also began at Besmaya during this period. Previously, Iraqi soldiers had undergone individual training and then joined their assigned units. That method had not contributed to unit cohesion, which also was worsened by the high turnover in some Iraqi formations. Under the new unit-set-fielding process, a full complement of enlisted soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers arrived together at Besmaya Range Complex for specialized individual and collective training and receipt of equipment before going as a complete unit to their duty station.

The Ministry of Defense and MNSTC-I set aside plans to shift a second brigade from the 6th IA Division to the 11th IA Division in favor of generating new brigades at Besmaya using the unit-set-fielding model.[70] Implementation

68. Sr. Amn. Christie Putz, "Besmaya Now Home to Iraq's Only EOD school," *Advisor* 4, no. 31 (6 Oct 2007): 7–8; "EOD Technician MOS Qualification Requirements," U.S. Army Recruiting Command, n.d., http://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/browse-career-and-job-categories/intelligence-and-combat-support/explosive-ordnance-disposal-specialist.html (page discontinued; accessed 16 Jun 2019), Hist Files, CMH.
69. Putz, "Besmaya Now Home to Iraq's Only EOD School," 7–8.
70. D. J. Elliott, "The Real Surge Continues: Iraqi Army Corps Formation," *Long War Journal*, 22 April 2008, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/04/the_real_surge_conti.php, Hist Files, CMH.



An instructor at the Besmaya Range Complex's Explosive Ordnance Device School practices a class on ordnance disposal techniques the week before the first students arrived on 7 October 2007. (*Sr. Amn. Christie Putz, U.S. Air Force*)

of unit set fielding took place soon after a decision to renumber brigades armywide rather than sequentially within each division. The new system started with the 1st through 4th Brigades in the 1st IA Division, followed by the 5th through 8th Brigades in the 2d IA Division, and continued accordingly. (*See Table 9.1.*) The numbering of yet-to-be-formed brigades would take up where the last division left off. If brigades were shifted from one division to another, they would retain their new designation rather than be renumbered for a third time. In order to minimize the potential for confusion, MNSTC-I temporarily referred to Iraqi brigades by their old and new designations. For example, the formation entering unit set fielding at Besmaya in July 2007 was known as the 3d/44th Brigade.

The soldiers assigned to the brigade had undergone individual training at Kirkūk before proceeding to Besmaya for collective training and equipment issuance. The brigade dedicated the first few days of its stay at Besmaya to forming platoons, companies, and battalions, complete with new chains of command.[71] The soldiers then received six weeks of instruction on M16s, machine guns, and close quarters combat, while also familiarizing themselves with all types of assigned vehicles. They completed unit set

71. MNSTC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Unit Set Fielding Begins at Besmaya," *Advisor* 4, no. 33 (3 Nov 2007): 6.



Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, along with troops from the 4th Iraqi Army Division, search for hidden weapons along the banks of the Tigris River. (*Rick Rzepka, U.S. Army*)

fielding on 18 November 2007.[72] Although the new process quickly had generated a cohesive, brigade-sized infantry formation, the unit lacked organic logistical support elements, dedicated command and control cells, and heavy weapons, rendering it less capable than U.S. counterparts. After weighing the risks involved in deploying the newly minted force into a potentially restive area, MNF-I prepared to send one battalion to Forward Operating Base Hope in Sadr City. The remaining battalions would arrive in Baghdād over the next several weeks.[73] The MNF-I staff calculated that the presence of numerous U.S. combat units in the vicinity of the new brigade's operating area would reduce the potential risk to a manageable level.

Iraqi special operations forces also expanded their force structure, albeit through traditional methods rather than unit set fielding. The growing effectiveness of the Counter Terrorism Service led to a decision to increase the number of existing commando battalions.[74] In accordance with an American proposal intended to reduce Iraqi special operations forces'

72. S. Sgt. Christopher Frost, "Graduating Besmaya: Iraqi Army Brigade Completes Unit Set Fielding," *Advisor* 4, no. 35 (1 Dec 2007): 6–7.

73. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Chairman Joint Chs Staff, 5 Oct 2007, sub: Briefing to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, slide 17, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, Hist Files, CMH.

74. U.S. Dept. Def (DoD), *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2007* (Section 9010, PL 109–289), Rpt to Cong., Jun 2007, 41, http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/9010-Final-20070608.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

TABLE 9.1—IRAQI ARMY BRIGADE RENUMBERING, 2007–2008

1st IA Division (IIF)	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	1st Bde
2d Bde	2d Bde
3d Bde	3d Bde
4th Bde	4th Bde

2d IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	5th Bde
2d Bde	6th Bde
3d Bde	7th Bde
4th Bde	8th Bde

3d IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	9th Bde
2d Bde	10th Bde
3d Bde	11th Bde
4th Bde	12th Bde

4th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	14th Bde
2d Bde	15th Bde
3d Bde	16th Bde
4th/Samarra Bde	17th Bde

5th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	18th Bde
2d Bde	19th Bde
3d Bde	20th Bde
4th Bde[a]	21st Bde

6th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	22d Bde
5th Bde	23d Bde
3d Bde	24th Bde
4th Bde	25th Bde
6th Bde[b]	54th Bde

7th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	26th Bde
2d Bde	27th Bde
3d Bde	28th Bde
4th Bde[a]	29th Bde

8th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	30th Bde
2d Bde	31st Bde
3d Bde[a]	32d Bde
4th Bde	33d Bde

9th IA Division (Mechanized)	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
2d Bde (Armd)	34th Bde (Armd)
1st Bde	35th Bde
3d Bde	36th Bde
4th Bde[b]	37th Bde (Armd)

10th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	38th Bde
2d Bde	39th Bde
3d Bde	40th Bde
4th Bde	41st Bde

TABLE 9.1—IRAQI ARMY BRIGADE RENUMBERING, 2007–2008 (CONTINUED)

11th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
2d Bde, 6th IA Div	42d Bde
2d Bde	43d Bde
3d Bde	44th Bde
4th Bde	45th Bde

12th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
1st Bde	46th Bde
2d Bde	47th Bde
3d Bde	48th Bde
4th Bde	49th Bde

14th IA Division	
Old Designation	**New Designation**
3d Bde, 8th IA Div	50th Bde
5th Bde, 10th IA Div[a]	51st Bde
3d Bde	52d Bde
4th Bde	53d Bde

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Notes: a. Formed or backfilled following transfer by the prime minister's Army Expansion Plan. *b.* Army Expansion Plan unit designated as part of the National Strike Force.

reliance on coalition-provided airlift, the first of the new units consisted of a Baghdād-based commando battalion with companies permanently forward-deployed to Al Başrah, Mosul, and Al Asad Air Base. This initiative matured far more rapidly than other projects, with the Al Başrah and Mosul companies both operational by the end of September 2007, and the third coming on line shortly afterward.[75] Although geographically separated, rather than being based on a single installation like the 1st Iraqi Special Operations Forces Brigade, the commando companies would provide the framework for forming a second special operations forces brigade in the near future.

The Iraqis followed up by expanding each of the original trio of regional commando companies into 440-person battalions, with a fourth battalion to be established in Baʿqūbah.[76] The expansion program tripled the size of the

75. Rpt, Joint Forces Special Ops Component Cmd–Iraq (JFSOCC-I), Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 6–7; DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2007* (Section 9010, PL 109–289), Rpt to Cong., Dec 2007, 6, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2007/iraq-security-stability_dec2007-01.htm; both in Hist Files, CMH.

76. The new units acted as immediate reaction forces and intelligence collectors, prompting U.S. Special Forces advisers to recommend the creation of "regional counterterrorism centers" in Al Başrah, Mosul, Baʿqūbah, and Baghdād and at Al Asad Air Base for the purpose of managing the collection, analysis, and dissemination of terrorist-related intelligence. David Witty, "The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service" (Washington, DC: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 2015), 12, Hist Files, CMH.

Iraqi special operations forces in less than a year and extended the footprint of that organization beyond Baghdād. Finally, a 766-person garrison support unit stationed in Baghdād would form in 2008 to provide sustainment for Iraqi special operations elements.[77] The Ministry of Defense also authorized the establishment of a new rotary-wing aviation unit—the 15th Special Operations Aviation Squadron—which would be dedicated to supporting special operations missions.[78]

With the Americans heaping praise on Iraq's special operations forces, Maliki sought to gain even more control over those effective units. In September 2007, the prime minister's office submitted draft legislation to parliament codifying the Counter Terrorism Service as a ministerial-level organization with appropriate powers and authorities.[79] The Council of Ministers approved the draft legislation after a lengthy debate, but several factions in parliament withheld their support.[80] They wanted safeguards written into the legislation to prevent the Counter Terrorism Service from targeting potential political enemies of the prime minister. Maliki's office, predictably, opposed adding any form of operational restriction to the legislation.[81] That impasse came to an end after a memorandum of agreement between the Ministry of Defense and the Counter Terrorism Service failed to address pressing financial issues. The prime minister stepped in, using his office's discretionary funds to alleviate monetary concerns, which further solidified his control of the organization.[82] Although this stopgap measure did not prevent recurring pay issues or fix supply shortages, no one in

77. DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2008* (Section 9010, PL 109–289), Rpt to Cong., Mar 2008, 55, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2008/iraq-security-stability_mar2008-exec.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

78. Rpt, JFSOCC-I, Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 6–7; DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Rpt to Cong., Dec 2007, 50.

79. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 11; Michael Knights and Alex Mello, "The Best Thing America Built in Iraq: Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Service and the Long War Against Militancy," War on the Rocks, 19 Jul 2017, https://warontherocks.com/2017/07/the-best-thing-america-built-in-iraq-iraqs-counter-terrorism-service-and-the-long-war-against-militancy/, Hist Files, CMH.

80. Rpt, JFSOCC-I, Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 7–8.

81. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 17. See also Joel Rayburn, *Iraq After America: Strongmen, Sectarians, Resistance* (Stanford, CT: Hoover Institution Press, 2014), 56–57.

82. Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–11–004, "Iraqi Security Forces: Special Operations Force Program Is Achieving Goals, But Iraqi Support Remains Critical to Success," 25 Oct 2010, 18, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA545722.pdf; Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 20.

Iraq's special operations forces hierarchy harbored any doubts about who controlled both their personal and professional livelihoods.[83]

CHANGE IS CONSTANT

Toward the end of 2007, internal pressures that had been building up over the past several months drove General Dubik to reexamine the personnel structure within MNSTC-I. He felt that the current makeup focused too much on the tactical level and too little on higher-level organizations. In addition, the training teams currently working with the Ministry of Defense, Iraqi Army, Air Force, Navy, and the Joint Headquarters all reported directly to him. The separate reporting chains led to compartmentalization of information and miscommunication, which produced confusion rather than synergy. MNSTC-I also seemed ill-positioned to respond to changes suggested by recent audits by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, and the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.[84] Those revelations combined to spur Dubik into initiating a major internal reorganization effort.

The MNSTC-I staff devised a plan that addressed the specific issues raised by Dubik while also setting the stage for the post-surge timeframe. The first major change shifted focus from training teams to combined directorates. The newly created Directorate of Defense Affairs consolidated the Coalition Army Training Team, the Coalition Air Force Training Team, the Maritime Service Training Team, and the teams advising the Joint Headquarters and Ministry of Defense. The Coalition Police Assistance Training Team and the Ministry of Interior Advisory Team combined to form the Directorate of Interior Affairs. Dubik's Strategic Initiatives Group absorbed the MNSTC-I public affairs, political-military, and protocol offices, leaving only the Intelligence Training Team and the Counter Terrorism Service Training Team as separate entities. The proposed reorganization entailed an overall increase of 103 people, including 79 U.S. soldiers, 8 coalition military personnel, 7 civilian mentors, and 9 civilian contractors. With the addition of these slots, MNSTC-I would have 2,156 military and civilian personnel, divided almost equally between military transition team members and staff. The reorganization did not impact the Iraq Assistance Group, training

83. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 20.
84. Bfg, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen to Gen. David H. Petraeus, 10 Dec 2007, sub: MNSTC-I Reorganization, slides 2–3, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

teams assigned to MNC-I, or the 200-strong NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Training Mission–Iraq.[85]

On 10 December, General Dubik presented the plan to General Petraeus, who approved it with one caveat: zero growth in the number of American military personnel. The MNF-I commander believed the Joint Staff and U.S. Central Command would veto any proposal along those lines. Petraeus therefore directed Dubik to delete a proposed J–3 (Operations) security element and additional automotive mechanics, maximize the number of non-U.S. coalition personnel within other parts of the MNSTC-I staff, and ensure, personally, that validation documents submitted through the Joint Manning Document (all services) and Request for Forces (Army-only) personnel request processes conformed to the no-growth guidance. Acknowledging the need for an augmented personal security element, Petraeus suggested the use of vetted contractors in lieu of U.S. soldiers.[86]

When he returned from MNF-I headquarters, General Dubik told his staff to plan for reorganizing no later than 1 January 2008 using the currently authorized number of personnel. With little time to accomplish many tasks, the chief of staff, Col. Michael W. Fuller, scheduled the first reorganization group meeting for 12 December 2007. The staff faced several major challenges as it assembled the documents required to obtain personnel with the skills needed in the new structure. It soon became clear that future requirements would lead to fewer U.S. Army positions and more joint or international slots. The latter trend represented the first step in MNSTC-I transitioning from a focus on generating Iraqi ground units to addressing Iraq's post-surge defense requirements. To ensure that U.S. personnel from each service arrived in a timely manner, the revised Joint Manning Document had to go to the Joint Staff by 20 December.

The only way to meet General Petraeus's zero-growth guidance was to increase coalition representation from fifty-two personnel to just over one hundred. For now, these additions were more of a wish list, as the MNSTC-I staff still had to coordinate with coalition partners to determine if each nation could provide all of the requested personnel. If not, Dubik's staff would have

85. In addition to the 1,156 spaces within the headquarters, the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) total includes approximately 1,000 military transition team personnel with Iraqi units. Memo (Info Paper), MNSTC-I/NATO Training Mission–Iraq, 16 Aug 2009, sub: MNSTC-I Evolution–Mission Statement and Task Organization, 9, I Corps Collection, CMH; Bfg, MNSTC-I to Petraeus, 10 Dec 2007, sub: MNSTC-I Reorganization, slide 5–6, 8, 14–15.

86. Memo, Lt. Col. Bill Davison, MNSTC-I J–1, for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 11 Nov 2007, sub: MNSTC-I Reorganization Brief to Gen Petraeus, 2007 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

to eliminate a proposed slot or shift an authorization from a lesser-priority position in order to obtain a U.S. service member with the necessary skills.[87]

As it turned out, coalition partners generally agreed to contribute additional personnel, which allowed MNSTC-I to submit the required documentation to the Joint Staff before the deadline. The multinational command's ranks previously included almost 300 more positions filled by the U.S. Army compared to those filled by other services. The new organization reversed this imbalance, with almost 200 more joint positions than those filled by the U.S. Army. The restructuring anticipated not only evolving mission requirements, but also the likelihood that MNF-I would absorb the training command's functions at some point in the future. Dubik revealed the ultimate goal of the restructuring effort in his end-of-year report, "The new Joint Manning Document is a step in the journey of eventually becoming some form of an Office of Security Cooperation that will be consistent with other Coalition force headquarters redesign."[88]

ONE YEAR INTO THE SURGE

The closing weeks of 2007 featured a series of meetings between Iraqi and U.S. representatives to discuss defense-related items. The talks exhibited a growing sense of urgency because the United Nations Security Council resolution that had authorized the presence of U.S. and coalition military forces would expire on 31 December 2008. Although Iraqi voters had approved a new constitution and had chosen a permanent government in 2006, Baghdād had asked the United Nations to renew the original resolution annually until the violence decreased. As a measure of stability returned, however, the Iraqi desire to exert direct influence over foreign military forces operating within Iraq's borders grew more insistent.

On 26 November 2007, President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Maliki took the first step in transitioning away from a United Nations–mandated arrangement by signing the Declaration of Principles for Friendship and Cooperation. The document provided the United States and Iraq with a basis for future talks on political, economic, and security relationships. Various factions within the Iraqi parliament heatedly had argued the wisdom of entering into a bilateral relationship with the United States before all parties finally realized that "a long term partnership with the

87. Memo, Davison for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 11 Nov 2007, sub: MNSTC-I Reorganization Brief to Gen Petraeus.

88. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 8, 2008 Material Folder, Hendrix Collection, CMH.



At Camp Taji, Iraqi security forces officers prepare to inspect a fleet of more than seventy up-armored Humvees purchased through the Foreign Military Sales program. (*Capt. A. Sean Taylor, U.S. Army*)

United States [would] not [be] simply a matter of [perpetuating the] status quo."[89] Although considerable debate had taken place, the Iraqi parliament's acceptance of the need for a formal agreement removed a great deal of uncertainty concerning what MNSTC-I's relationship with the Iraqi military would be like after 31 December 2008.

A bilateral arrangement of a different sort, spurred in large part by Iraqi willingness to provide their own funds for equipment and training costs, had been maturing over the past year. From 2003 to 2006, the Iraqi military had acquired a varied inventory consisting of Soviet-manufactured weapons, items donated by former Warsaw Pact members, and equipment from various sources procured by funds appropriated for the Department of Defense by the U.S. Congress. Iraq began receiving U.S.-made equipment once it opened a Foreign Military Sales account in 2006, and it continued to use that program, despite numerous delays, through 2007. However, when MNSTC-I recommended that Iraq transfer a further $1.5 billion into its account for purchases in 2008, the Ministry of Defense unexpectedly delayed its decision on that request.

Lingering frustration over difficulties inherent in dealing with a peacetime-oriented process during wartime, combined with the inevitable

89. Fred W. Baker II, "White House Lays Foundation for 'Normal' Iraqi Relationship," American Forces Press Service, 26 Nov 2007, http:///www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id+48231, Hist Files, CMH.

delays created by the ministry's own deeply ingrained budget execution and resource philosophy, resulted in the Iraqis questioning the wisdom of relying on the Foreign Military Sales program for major acquisitions. A major part of that issue—which the Maliki government was reluctant to admit—lay with the Iraqis themselves rather than American regulations and policies. Lingering memories of Saddam Hussein's tendency to punish any individual who obstructed financial decisions without his permission played a large part in the Ministry of Defense's tendency to form committees to examine large-scale purchases of military equipment. The committees debated the details of each purchase for weeks and sometimes months. Delays proved so frequent that the Americans, in turn, developed their own fiscal workarounds to ensure that the Iraqi process did not jeopardize critical projects.[90] On this latest occasion, Dubik dipped into a combination of existing Foreign Military Sales dollars and congressionally authorized Iraqi security force funding to ensure that key programs, such as the unit-set-fielding program, did not fall behind schedule as the Iraqis negotiated future Foreign Military Sales contributions. (*See Table 9.2.*)

MNSTC-I's efforts paid off starting in late November 2007 with the 3d/44th Brigade, 11th IA Division, completing unit set fielding, followed closely by the 2d/43d Brigade, 11th IA Division, on 2 January 2008.[91] Defense Minister Abdul Qadr attended the latter's graduation ceremony and then toured Besmaya's medical facility and equipment holding area.[92] The 3d/52d Brigade, 14th IA Division, also at the base, would complete its unit set fielding in mid-February, followed a month later by the 4th/21st Brigade of the 5th IA Division.[93]

Implementing unit set fielding after ten months of surge operations reinforced Petraeus's September 2007 testimony in which he had explained to Congress that force structure initiatives were positioning the Iraqi Army for future success as much as they created opportunities for it to take a greater part in current operations.[94] On the downside, the unit-set-fielding

90. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 18–19.

91. "Iraqi Army's 2nd Brigade Trained, Ready to Join the Fight against Terrorism," *Free Republic*, 3 Jan 2008, http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1947948/posts, Hist Files, CMH.

92. "Iraqi Army Graduates New Brigade," *Middle East Times*, 4 Jan 2008, Hist Files, CMH.

93. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 20 Feb 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH; MNSTC-I Press Release 080318–01, MNSTC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Iraqi Army Graduates Unit Set Fielding at Besmaya," 18 Mar 2008, Hist Files, CMH.

94. MNSTC-I subsequently admitted as much in subsequent command briefings for distinguished visitors. See Bfg, MNSTC-I, 14 Sep 2008, sub: MNSTC-I Command Brief V8



Members of the 2d Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, graduate from unit training at the Besmaya Range Complex in January 2008. The brigade was the second to participate in unit set fielding. (*PO2 Erica Gardner, U.S. Navy*)

process resulted in units that lacked individual and collective experience because they were composed wholly of new soldiers. As a result, placing unit-set-fielding units in situations where they might experience intense combat soon after graduation involved a degree of tactical risk.

A positive, but largely overlooked, benefit of the program was its administrative predictability. Units entered training and graduated on predetermined dates that MNF-I could factor into its campaign planning. Although the training efficiently generated infantry brigades in a matter of weeks, the process relied on a significant amount of preliminary effort, which started four months before a unit assembled at Besmaya. The multinational command also had to prepare facilities at Besmaya to support the temporary presence of several thousand soldiers, the instructor cadre, and other support personnel. Because MNSTC-I lacked the funds and storage space necessary to pre-position equipment and weapons, it carefully had to schedule the acquisition and transportation of weapons, individual equipment, and vehicles to arrive exactly when needed.[95]

The equipping portion of unit set fielding turned out to be difficult to coordinate. For example, the 3d/52d Brigade departed Besmaya after graduating on schedule, but it still lacked 13 heavy machine guns, 234 light machine guns, 24 60-mm. mortars, 19 up-armored Humvees, 77 tents, 83 light sets, and 638 water cans. Assigning noncommissioned officers to unit-set-fielding brigades also constituted a major challenge. The Ministry of Defense did not track the exact number of 52d Brigade noncommissioned

(14 Sep 08), slide 6, Hist Files, CMH.

95. Interv, Mark J. Reardon with Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. Dubik, former MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 31 May 2023, Hist Files, CMH. The comments contained in this interview were provided by Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. Dubik at the external review board for the final draft of this manuscript, convened on 31 May 2023 by the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Table 9.2—Unit Set Fielding, 2007–2008

Unit[a]	Date
3d/44th Brigade, 11th IA Division	18 November 2007
2d/43d Brigade, 11th IA Division	2 January 2008
3d/52d Brigade, 14th IA Division	18 February 2008
4th/21st Brigade, 5th IA Division	18 March 2008
4th/29th Brigade, 7th IA Division	3 April 2008
4th/12th Brigade, 3d IA Division	30 June 2008
4th/53d Brigade, 14th IA Division	2 July 2008
4th/45th Brigade, 11th IA Division	20 November 2008

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Note: a. When the Iraqi Army transitioned from an identical brigade numbering system within each division to an armywide numbering system, it temporarily used these slashed designations, which included both the original and updated brigade designations.

officers assigned and present for duty, preferring to lump noncommissioned officer present-for-duty strength together with junior enlisted soldiers. It is highly unlikely that policy would have been adopted if the numbers reflected positively on the unit in question.[96] Other newly formed Iraqi Army brigades were probably afflicted by similar issues after completing unit set fielding.

Although the United States and Iraq remained focused on future developments, another major coalition partner prepared to end its involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom. On 16 December, British forces gave provincial officials responsibility for Al Başrah as London inched its way toward a full withdrawal.[97] Iraqi forces now were in charge of the province's security. British troops played a supporting role, engaging in combat only if they were attacked or if Iraqi military commanders asked for assistance. Just

96. These shortfalls are specifically identified as not being issued at unit set fielding. Bfg, MNSTC-I Staff to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 9 Apr 2008, sub: 52nd IA BDE Generation Status, slides 2–4, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

97. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 19 Dec 2007, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c20698.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

4,500 British troops remained in Iraq, and this number would scale back to 2,800 by spring 2008.[98]

The handover's timing drew some criticism from Americans who questioned recent statistics attesting to a substantive decline in violence within Al Başrah Province. Brig. Gen. Joseph Anderson, MNC-I's chief of staff, argued that the turnover pressured Iraqi officials into administering the region before they were ready to do so. British officials countered that their continuous mentoring of Iraqi forces validated the reports indicating a decrease in violence.[99] Whether the additional Iraqi forces sent by the Ministry of Defense to Al Başrah could tamp down an increasingly restive situation in the south remained an unanswered question. Only time would reveal which assessment was accurate.

CONCLUSION

During the summer and fall of 2007, the U.S. and Iraqi armies operated semi-independently, albeit in a closely coordination fashion, in order to make best use of available resources to set conditions for combined success. This unique synergy came about because MNF-I embraced a logical division of "clear, hold, and build" responsibilities during major operations. MNF-I primarily waged the high-tempo clearing operations while also participating alongside the Iraqi military in the hold and build phases. The hold and build phases were equally essential to overall success, but they were defensively oriented compared to clearing operations, which were primarily offensive in nature. The transition between phases required close coordination because newly generated Iraqi forces often played major roles in the build and hold phases, while also serving as a deterrent against insurgent expansion into new areas.

As a result, the flow of MNC-I operations throughout 2007 depended as much on having Iraqi Army troops to secure newly liberated territory as it did on possessing sufficient U.S. combat power to clear out insurgent enclaves. Odierno could not afford to leave any area unguarded, lest the insurgents reoccupy lost support bases, nor could he afford to commit

98. Paul Fiddian, "British Troops Pass Basra Control Back to Iraq," Armed Forces International, 16 Dec 2007, http://armedforces-int.com/news/british-troops-pass-basra-control-back-to-iraqi.html, Hist Files, CMH.
99. Peter Spiegel, "British Troops Prepare to Leave Basra," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 Dec 2007, http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2007-12-16/news/0712150230_1_basra-british-official-troop-levels, Hist Files, CMH.

American troops to support the hold and build phases without diminishing the amount of combat power available for future clearing operations.[100]

The division of duties between both armies allowed the Iraqi military to weather the first twelve months of the surge without suffering debilitating losses or humiliating setbacks. MNF-I encountered little or no resistance to the arrangement from Prime Minister Maliki, especially because unit set fielding and other force structure upgrades offered him ample opportunities to seed newly created units with cooperative leadership. Although the Americans realized that they were creating a predominately Shi'i army that was controlled by a central government with a subtle but unmistakable sectarian tinge, MNF-I accepted that development as an unavoidable byproduct of tamping down violent extremism before the surge ended. The Kurdish and Sunni minorities, however, remained keenly aware of the dangers it posed to their respective communities.

By the end of 2007, MNF-I actively was searching for more ways to create opportunities for Iraqi-led operations. That process included not only identifying tasks appropriate to the Iraqi Army's capabilities but also adopting tactical methods that did not require Americans to assume a central role. Evolving operational priorities, however, did not account for the fact that fellow Shi'a, rather than Ba'thists, now constituted the most dangerous threat to Prime Minister Maliki's political future. Mindful of the difficulties Combined Joint Task Force 7 had faced when Sunni and Shi'i groups simultaneously confronted coalition forces in April 2004, MNF-I remained focused on Sunni insurgents while temporarily avoiding confrontation with the Sadrists.

As the new year approached, Generals Petraeus and Odierno prepared to continue the current fight, whereas the Iraqis—who were keenly aware that their growing numbers could handle the tasks currently assigned to them with resources to spare—anticipated a very different one. The combination of U.S. reinforcements and irregular augmentation permitted the Iraqi government to support the offensives in a secondary role while retaining sufficient military forces to address potential threats offered by political rivals.

100. Interv, Reardon with Dubik, 31 May 2023.

10
An Army Comes of Age: January–April 2008

During the twelve months that followed President George W. Bush's January 2007 address announcing the surge, coalition troops, aided by former insurgents, tribal militias and Iraqi soldiers, mounted aggressive strikes not only against predominately Sunni extremists in and around Baghdād, but also al-Qaeda's support base in western Iraq. However, as U.S. units reached their scheduled departure date, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) could not maintain the tempo of coalition operations or continue limiting the Iraqi Army's participation without impacting its development and morale. Adding political concerns within the United States into the equation, all signs pointed unfailingly to the surge culminating by mid-2008.[1]

Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno's Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) and General David H. Petraeus's MNF-I jointly planned for a gradual reduction of forces starting in December 2007, with the goal of returning by July 2008 to the level of forces they had had before the Sāmarrāʾ mosque bombing in February 2006. Each command agreed on the method and pacing, but MNC-I alone was responsible for devising a concept of operations capable of achieving the envisioned end-state. Rather than have U.S. forces depart completely from any particular region, MNC-I decreed that they would incrementally thin out across the country, which would allow them to maintain coverage across their original areas of operation and sustain partnerships with Iraqi military units for as long as possible. The redeployments would pause for several months in July 2008 so that each command could evaluate the security situation.

1. Robert M. Gates, *DUTY: Memoirs of A Secretary at War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 224–34.

INTER- AND INTRA-COALITION TENSIONS GROW

Virtually every challenge impacting the U.S. drawdown had either a direct or indirect impact on the Iraqi Army. For example, diverse issues such as interoperability, maintainability, and rules governing the transfer of advanced technologies influenced every discussion about which equipment should be shipped back to the United States and which items could be given to the Iraqis.[2] Another concern was the retention, transfer, or closure of temporary American installations. Turning over a base to host-nation control was a delicate matter that required careful consideration. MNC-I would not share draft plans for transferring facilities with the Iraqis until it had determined that sharing the information would not signal to the extremists that they could outlast the Americans simply by avoiding contact until U.S. forces departed.[3]

The strategic purpose of the surge had been to create conditions for political reconciliation and to defeat al-Qaeda and its Sunni allies. American accomplishments fell far short of that objective simply because powerful factions within the Iraqi government unsurprisingly placed their own interests ahead of the United States. The notion that positive developments in Al Anbār offered Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki a chance to open a dialogue with Sunni tribes emanated from American hopes rather than the stark realities influencing government decision-making in Baghdād. Instead, the prime minister exacted retribution for real and imagined past wrongs by arresting influential Sunni leaders and manipulating election laws to undercut that community's political influence. The Sunni parliamentary bloc reciprocated that enmity by refusing to participate in the business of governing until their community received tangible concessions from Baghdād. Given those developments, the tactical successes achieved by the Americans seemed to encourage parliamentarians to turn their attention away from combating sectarian violence and toward bureaucratic infighting.[4]

Maliki's advocacy of a secular national agenda ran into similar resistance from several fronts. The emphasis on the secular alienated Shi'i religious

2. Bfg, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) to Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) Cmdg Gen, 12 Mar 2009, sub: Drawdown Equipment Transfers to ISF Brief Back (Final), Kirkland Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).

3. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, *Surge and Withdrawal, 2007–2011* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 286.

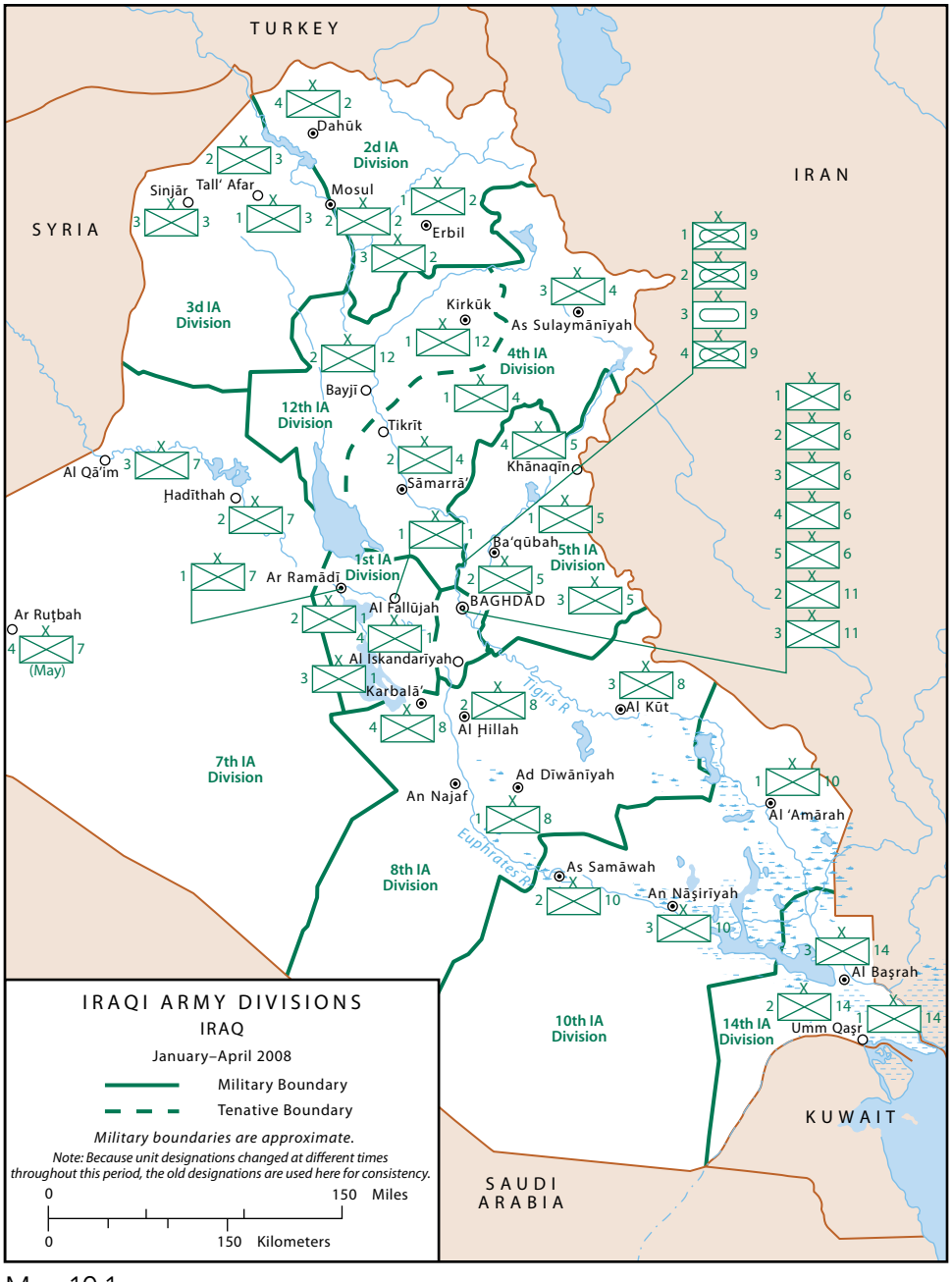
4. Emma Sky, *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015), 295–303; Carter Malkasian, *Illusions of Victory: The Anbar Awakening and the Rise of the Islamic State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 168, 179–80, 202–3.

leaders, just as the emphasis on a national state over regionalism sowed discontent among Kurds. The latter had made their approval of the 2005 constitution conditional upon the approval of Article 140, which called for a popular referendum to determine whether Kirkūk would become part of Kurdistan. Competing Arab and Kurdish claims were not limited to the city itself, but also included a large area "running from Sinjār in the northwest next to the Iraq-Syria border, down to Balladur in the southeast adjacent to the Iraq-Iran border."[5] Neither MNF-I nor the Iraqi prime minister supported a referendum in the midst of the surge, which led to the initiative's indefinite postponement.[6]

Lingering questions over how oil revenues would be distributed, coupled with unabated tensions in the north, resulted in both Kurdish leaders and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq openly discussing the prime minister's ouster.[7] The Kurdish contingent was "increasingly frustrated with what its members perceived as Maliki's ineffective leadership and isolated decision-making" and considered withdrawing from the government. The Bush administration placed a high priority on stabilizing the Iraqi government, but developments in early 2008 appeared to be pushing that objective beyond reach rather than drawing it nearer. Given that a post-surge withdrawal of American troops left Washington with little choice except to renew its commitment to a transition-oriented strategy, the competing agendas adopted by various factions appeared less than reassuring.[8]

The pressure took its toll on Maliki, who flew to London on 29 December for treatment by cardiac surgeons to alleviate acute symptoms of exhaustion and stress.[9] When the prime minister returned to Baghdād, he realized that rumors about his fitness to lead the country were even more widespread than he had thought. A combination of British passivity, American fixation on Sunni extremists, and growing calls for Maliki to step down had emboldened Sadrists in Al Baṣrah. He thus sought opportunities to showcase his strong leadership and decisiveness, and his interests shifted from pursuing extremist remnants in northern Iraq to eliminating the growing threat of uncooperative Shi'i militias and organized crime in the

5. Gareth Stansfield and Liam Anderson, "Kurds in Iraq: The Struggle Between Baghdad and Erbil," *Middle East Policy Council* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 136, Historians (Hist) Files, CMH.
6. Sumeda Senanayake, "Iraq: Kirkuk Referendum Likely to be Delayed," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 13 Sep 2007, https://www.rferl.org/a/1078655.html, Hist Files, CMH.
7. Stansfield and Anderson, "Kurds in Iraq," 135–36.
8. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 287.
9. "Iraqi PM Flies to London for Medical Check-up," Reuters, 29 Dec 2007, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-maliki-idUSL296401820071229, Hist Files, CMH.


TURKEY
IRAN
SYRIA
SAUDI ARABIA
KUWAIT
Dahūk
2d IA Division
Sinjār
Tall' Afar
Mosul
Erbil
3d IA Division
Kirkūk
As Sulaymānīyah
4th IA Division
Bayjī
12th IA Division
Tikrīt
Khānaqīn
Sāmarrā'
Al Qā'im
Ḥadīthah
Ba'qūbah
5th IA Division
1st IA Division
Ar Ramādī
BAGHDĀD
Al Fallūjah
Ar Ruṭbah
(May)
Al Iskandarīyah
Karbalā'
Tigris R.
Al Kūt
Al Ḥillah
7th IA Division
Ad Dīwānīyah
An Najaf
Al 'Amārah
Euphrates R.
8th IA Division
As Samāwah
An Nāṣirīyah
Al Baṣrah
Umm Qaṣr
10th IA Division
14th IA Division
IRAQI ARMY DIVISIONS
IRAQ
January–April 2008
Military Boundary
Tenative Boundary
Military boundaries are approximate.
Note: Because unit designations changed at different times throughout this period, the old designations are used here for consistency.
0 150 Miles
0 150 Kilometers

Map 10.1

port city. As a result, the priorities of the Iraqi government and American military began to diverge significantly as 2008 got underway.

American staff officers were concerned by Iraqi efforts to prioritize the port city over Mosul (*Map 10.1*).[10] Shifting resources to Al Başrah not only could jeopardize hard-won gains in and around Baghdād but also could impact operations unfolding in northern Iraq. It therefore made no sense to MNF-I to break off pursuit of a beaten enemy to deal with an isolated group of Sadrists whose elimination would not produce a quantifiable strategic gain. The British were unwilling to provoke an all-out conflict with the Sadrists, so they also did not support Maliki's position. Although Petraeus accepted the prime minister's explanation for shifting elements of the 10th Iraqi Army (IA) Division under militia influence from Al Başrah to Maysān and Dhī Qār Provinces, the Americans did not anticipate how that decision would impact future events.[11] Transferring the tainted unit northward diminished rather than solved problems because the newly fielded 14th IA Division absorbed the departing 10th IA Division's 5th Brigade (renumbered as the 51st Brigade) based on reports that militia members had not infiltrated its ranks as heavily as other elements in the division.[12]

The commander of the 8th IA Division had been unsparing in his efforts to ensure Sadrists did not gain control of any of his subordinate elements, so Baghdād detached the newly redesignated 50th Brigade (originally the 3d/32d Brigade) from that command with orders to join the 14th IA Division. The division's 3d/52d Brigade also became part of the unit after graduating from unit set fielding in February. The 4th/53d Brigade would not arrive in Al Başrah until it completed training at the Besmaya Range Complex in July. As a result, in early 2008, the port city's garrison consisted of an inexperienced division headquarters and a disparate mix of military units with no history of working together.

KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE IN THE NORTH

On 8 January 2008, MNC-I announced a series of division- and brigade-level operations taking place over the next several months, collectively designated Operation Phantom Phoenix, designed to pursue extremist

10. Nazar Janabi, "Who Won the Battle of Basra?," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 10 Apr 2008, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/who-won-the-battle-for-basra, Hist Files, CMH.
11. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 352–53.
12. Bfg, Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team, 1 May 2008, sub: 14th DIV Generation Update, slides 2–3, Kirkland Collection, CMH.



Pfc. Adam Devries, an infantry soldier in the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, patrols the streets of Mosul during Operation PHANTOM PHOENIX. (*Sgt. John Crosby, U.S. Army*)

elements fleeing Baghdād.[13] Maj. Gen. Mark P. Hertling's 1st Armored Division, which had assumed responsibility for Multi-National Division–North from Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon's 25th Infantry Division several months earlier, oversaw the employment of 24,000 American and 50,000 Iraqi troops, arraying them in key locations throughout Diyāla, Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn, Nīnawā, and Kirkūk Provinces. The effort was III Corps' last major endeavor before it turned over the reins of MNC-I to XVIII Airborne Corps, whose immediate mission focused on defeating al-Qaeda in northern Iraq before the bulk of the surge brigades departed for home station.

Hertling's opening thrust, involving the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division; elements of the 2d Cavalry Regiment (Stryker); the 2d Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment; and the 5th IA Division, began on 9 January in the upper Diyāla River Valley.[14] The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, also pushed into Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn Province as the 3d

13. Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) Press Release 20080108–03, MNC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Multi-National Corps Iraq announces Phantom Phoenix," 8 Jan 2008, http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=16298&Itemid=21.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
14. Multi-National Division–North (MND-N) Press Release 20081009–05, MND-N Public Affairs Ofc, "Operation Iron Harvest Clears al-Qaeda from Northern Iraq," 9 Jan 2008,



Iraqi soldiers and police work a checkpoint in Baghdād on 26 January 2008. (*Spc. Jeffery Sandstrum, U.S. Army*)

Armored Cavalry Regiment stepped up operations in and around Mosul.[15] The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), began targeting terrorists using the city of Kirkūk in Kirkūk Province as a base of operations.[16] Although MNF-I public affairs billed the deployments as a combined operation, Hertling assigned only secondary missions to the Iraqis because they lacked the training, equipment, and expertise needed to deal with booby traps, mines, and other types of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). As one participating U.S. unit observed, "The [Iraqi Army] was mainly confined to manning checkpoints in an attempt to control [insurgent] freedom of movement."[17] General Hertling and his subordinates

http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=16323&Itemid=21.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

15. MNC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Op Phantom Phoenix: Mosul Residents Reaps Benefits of Highway Clearing Op," 15 Jan 2008; "Op Phantom Phoenix Continues Pursuit of Extremists in Northern Provinces," 16 Jan 2008; "Tips Lead to Detention of 10 AQI During Op Phantom Phoenix," 20 Jan 2008; all at http://troopscoop.typepad.com/updates/2008/01/index.html, Hist Files, CMH.

16. "Operation Iron Harvest January," Institute for the Study of War, n.d., http://www.understandingwar.org/operation/operation-iron-harvest (accessed 16 Sep 2023), Hist Files, CMH.

17. Narrative Memo, 2d Sqdn, 1st Cav Rgt, n.d., sub: Cmd Rpt & Docs, Operation OIF, Phase OIF 2007–2008, 12, 4th SBCT 2nd Infantry Division Folder, 30th MHD Collection, CMH.

realized that this trend would have to stop in the near future, but they were more concerned with near-term results.

Even though the American troops brought capabilities to the fight that the Iraqis lacked, the first few days of the Diyāla offensive were still costly. On 9 January, five soldiers from Troop I, 3d Squadron, 2d Cavalry Regiment (Stryker); an Air Force tactical air combat controller; and an Iraqi interpreter were killed after entering an explosive-rigged house. Nine U.S. soldiers were wounded in the same incident.[18] Al-Qaeda operatives used similar tactics in Mosul, luring police to an apartment building which they blew up, killing several law enforcement personnel and thirty civilians.[19] Although 60 enemy fighters were killed during the course of the Diyāla offensive and another 200 were arrested, as the Americans penetrated deeper into insurgent havens, they discovered that most of their opponents had fled north.

A few days after the start of Phantom Phoenix, President Bush met with General Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait.[20] The president visited with U.S. troops after the conference, complimenting them on how their efforts had transformed Iraq over the past twelve months. He also provided a glimpse of yet-to-be announced policy, saying, "These improvements are allowing some U.S. forces to return home—a return on success that has now begun. One Army brigade and one Marine Expeditionary Unit have already come home, and they will not be replaced. In the coming months, four additional brigades and two Marine battalions will follow suit."[21] The president's words conveyed a message to both the Iraqi government and American enemies: before long, U.S. forces would start to hand over to the Iraqi Army primary responsibility for leading counterinsurgency operations.

Even before the Diyāla push ended, General Hertling's focus began to shift to Mosul. U.S. commanders at the time described the city as the last major urban center with a significant al-Qaeda presence. The timing seemed ripe for assigning Iraqi forces a greater role in surge operations. MNF-I, in conjunction with the Ministry of Defense, approved a recommendation to build up the three northern Iraqi divisions to 135 percent to minimize the

18. Historical Rpt, 3d Sqdn, 2d Stryker Cav Rgt, 3 Feb 2008, 4–5, 4th SBCT 2nd Infantry Division Folder, 30th MHD Collection, CMH.
19. Bing West, "A Report From Iraq," *Atlantic* 301, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2008), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/01/a-report-from-iraq/306667/, Hist Files, CMH.
20. Gates, *DUTY*, 229.
21. White House Press Release, "President Bush Meets with Commander of Multi-National Force–Iraq and Ambassador to Iraq," 12 Jan 2008, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/01/text/20080112-2.html, Hist Files, CMH.



Following reports of nearby small arms fire, an OH–58 Kiowa helicopter moves in to support a joint patrol during Operation Phantom Phoenix. (*Sgt. John Crosby, U.S. Army*)

potential negative impact of impending large-scale combat operations.[22] In addition to increased personnel for units already in the region, Iraqi reinforcements moved nearer to Mosul as the Diyāla push wound down.[23] The Iraqi Army also completed the renumbering effort it had begun several months earlier, allowing MNF-I to discard the temporary practice of identifying brigades using a combination of old and new numbering systems.

The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment helped the Iraqis establish the Nīnawā Operations Command, which coordinated the actions of three Iraqi Army divisions, the National Police, local police, border units, and Iraqi special operations forces operating in Mosul. Maj. Gen. Riyadh Jalal Tawfiq, a Sunni Arab and the commander of the 9th IA Division, received the assignment to take over the brand-new headquarters. In his new role, General Tawfiq passed information to the Nīnawā crisis action cell, which reported through the Baghdād crisis action cell to the prime minister.[24] Maliki's Office of the

22. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 18, 2008 Material Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, CMH.
23. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 30 Jan 2008, , Hist Files, CMH.
24. When fully staffed, the Nīnawā Operations Command consisted of sixty-four personnel drawn from across the Iraqi Army, including seven general officers. Maj. Gen. Riyadh Jalal Tawfiq brought thirty-one soldiers with him; the other slots were filled by personnel



Then Lt. Gen. Riyadh Jalal Tawfiq, commander of the Nīnawā Operations Command, greets enlisted soldiers as he arrives at a military base located near Mosul. (*Patrick Lair, U.S. Army*)

Commander in Chief approved the ministry's choice of Maj. Gen. Qassim Jassim Nazal al-Maliki, a Shi'i officer, to command the 9th IA Division following Tawfiq's transfer to Mosul.[25] Shi'i Arabs now commanded two of the three divisions deployed in and around Baghdād.[26]

OPERATIONS SOUTH AND WEST OF BAGHDĀD

In conjunction with the assault in Diyāla Province, MNF-I initiated operations against the remaining insurgent enclaves south of the capital, partly because al-Qaeda had been retaliating against local fighters who had assisted the Americans during the latter half of 2007. The extremist group

furnished by locally based units familiar with Mosul. Memo, MNC-I C–2 for MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 13 Jan 2008, sub: Iraqi Security Forces Daily Update, ISF Research Folder, MNC-I Historian Files 2008, CMH.

25. Marisa Sullivan, *Maliki's Authoritarian Regime*, Middle East Security Report No. 10 (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2013), 16, Hist Files, CMH.

26. Another Shi'i officer, Maj. Gen. Abd al-Amir Rashid al-Lamiy, commanded the 6th Iraqi Army (IA) Division in Baghdād while a Sunni officer, Maj. Gen. Muther Shaher Nasir al-Azawi, retained command of the 11th IA Division. Both were replaced by Shi'i generals in 2009.

also sought to hem in U.S. troops holding patrol bases in that area by ringing towns such as Arab Jabour with new networks of lethal IEDs. Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch's Multi-National Division–Center accordingly launched Operation Marne Thunderbolt on 10 January 2008. It began with a pair of U.S. Air Force B–1B bombers and four F–16 fighter-bombers delivering ninety-nine precision-guided bombs against forty-seven separate targets.[27] A poststrike assessment indicated the aerial attack killed thirty-five terrorists and destroyed thirteen vehicles.[28]

While consolidating their hold on Arab Jabour, troops from the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), encountered one of the most lethal obstacle barriers of the entire war. Civilian auxiliaries scouting ahead of the lead American elements located no fewer than ninety-seven IEDs on a stretch of road just over 1.6 kilometers in length.[29] The unexpected resistance led General Lynch to redeploy the 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, from Al Anbār to assist the effort. Iraq Army participation remained limited to one battalion of the 6th IA Division covering checkpoints situated between the town and Baghdād. After the Americans disposed of the hidden explosives, they delivered aid to local inhabitants and restored vital services such as water, telephone, and electricity. The willingness of the U.S. troops to stay persuaded residents who fled their homes to return. By mid-February, Multi-National Division–Center had secured all of Marne Thunderbolt's objectives.

The situation in western Iraq also continued to improve because of coalition successes elsewhere. The Iraqis fed U.S. special operations units the information they needed to degrade al-Qaeda's remaining networks in Al Anbār, which resulted in attacks in Ar Ramādi dropping from an average of twenty-five to thirty per day to less than one per week while roadside bomb incidents declined by 90 percent. The senior U.S. Army officer in the city, Col. John W. Charlton, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division, predicted in January that control of the province could be turned over to the Iraqis within sixty to ninety days. The city already hosted 5,100 Iraqi soldiers, 8,100 district police, and 1,700 other security personnel.[30]

27. Dale Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad: The 3d Infantry Division and Task Force Marne in Iraq, 2007–2008*, Global War on Terrorism (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2010), 318.
28. Charles Levinson, "U.S. Airstrike in Iraq One of Largest of the War," *USA Today*, 10 Jan 2008, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2008-01-10-iraq-thursday_N.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
29. Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad*, 324.
30. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 16 Jan 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.



Soldiers from the 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, prepare to move into the southern portion of Arab Jabour in mid-January. (*Sgt. Luis Delgadillo, U.S. Army*)

Gains in the south and west permitted the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) to resume emphasis on fielding logistics units. On 2 February, MNSTC-I's commanding general, Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, explained that approach to a group of defense analysts: "While maneuver has been our primary emphasis, and we are growing like crazy on that, we are starting to grow a more balanced force, and the expectation is that the Ministry of Defense will have a balanced force between 2009 and 2011." He elaborated that the Iraqi Army needed better combat service support capabilities in order to do its job without coalition assistance. "The first priorities for enablers we have put in place are aviation, logistics and life support. Once we get those squared away, we'll go on to the other combat service support specialties."[31]

MNSTC-I also had to accommodate the wishes of Iraqi politicians who were growing more concerned about threats from both extremists and political rivals. In contrast to American political figures and officials, whose protective details consisted of only a handful of civilian law enforcement personnel, their Iraqi counterparts rated brigade or battalion-sized military units. This practice had begun in Iraq following the assassination of King Faisal II in 1958 and continued through the end of the Saddam Hussein era. The prime minister's Protection Brigade, for example, grew to have three

31. Jim Garamone, "Training Leader Briefs on Iraqi 'Enablers,'" American Forces Press Service, reprinted in *Advisor* 5, no. 3 (2 Feb 2008): 5–6, Hist Files, CMH.

infantry battalions, a commando battalion, and a reconnaissance battalion, totaling almost 5,000 officers and soldiers. The Iraqi president, both vice presidents, and a number of top-level Kurdish leaders each had a battalion. Similarly sized formations protected the Joint Headquarters and the Iraqi parliament. The Iraqi component of the Green Zone's security force, which initially consisted of an infantry battalion and a boat platoon, expanded to include four infantry battalions and a tank company.[32] Although MNSTC-I acknowledged the need for such organizations, the sheer volume of no-notice requests from political figures invariably upset fielding plans and siphoned off resources from regular Iraqi Army units.[33]

REDEFINING SECURITY RELATIONSHIPS

By early February 2008, the central government in Baghdād opened discussions on the question of security transition with the United States. Prime Minister Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, the two Iraqi vice presidents, and the leaders of major political blocs met on 3 February to examine the issue before convening with the Americans. Shortly afterward, government spokesperson Ali al-Dabbagh confirmed media speculation that the U.S. and Iraq were planning talks, which would occur during the third week of February, about establishing a long-term strategic agreement. Brett H. McGurk, the National Security Council's Senior Director for Iraq and Afghanistan, explained to reporters, "The purpose of the agreement is to provide basic authorities and protections for U.S. military and civilian personnel serving in Iraq beyond December 31, 2008, when present U.N. [United Nations] authorizations are set to expire, and establish a basic framework for economic, diplomatic and security relations."[34]

The outcome of the negotiations would affect XVIII Airborne Corps, led by Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, rather than Odierno's III Corps. Austin assumed command of MNC-I during a 14 February 2008 ceremony conducted at Camp Victory amid ongoing offensive operations.[35] Less than two weeks later, an unexpected development sparked a degree of optimism

32. Memo, MNF-I staff for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Jan 2009, sub: Iraqi Army Independent Security Forces, 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.
33. Talking Points, MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Jan 2009, sub: M-16 Fielding to Special Units, 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.
34. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 6 Feb 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
35. Sgt. Laura M. Bigenho, "Austin Assumes Control of MNC-I," Army News Service, 25 Feb 2008, http://www.army.mil/-news/2008/02/25/7587-austin-assumes-control-of-mnc-i.html, Hist Files, CMH.

among Austin's staff. On 26 February, Muqtada al-Sadr extended his militia's unilateral ceasefire, which had been in effect since the previous August, for another six months. The U.S. military praised the action, which they saw as a necessary step to cementing recent security gains. Some American commanders viewed the gesture as a way for the Mahdi Army to contribute to national reconciliation, but others felt that Sadr did not have enough control over his followers to ensure the ceasefire held.[36] Some factions within the Mahdi Army broadcast their intent to stop taking instructions from Sadr, who responded, "Many of my close companions have departed for worldly reasons, some of them want to be independent."[37]

Despite U.S. concerns over whether Sadr actually could enforce an extended ceasefire, Prime Minister Maliki declared on 28 February, "National reconciliation efforts have succeeded in Iraq and the Iraqis have once again become loving brothers. . . . We have ended the security instability and we have to chase al-Qaida elements in other places such as Mosul, Diyala and Kirkuk in order to finish the battle for good so that we can concentrate on the reconstruction phase."[38] Many believed the statement was at odds with the actual situation, but Maliki recognized that he had to assuage public concerns in order to halt efforts by competitors to undermine his office. Although he did not single out the situation in Al Başrah, conditions in the port city were favorable for an attempt by Mahdi Army factions to solidify their hold on southern Iraq.

SOUTHERN POWDER KEG

On 17 March 2008, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari publicly claimed that the British had created a security vacuum in Al Başrah when they withdrew to the airport in late 2007. He believed this withdrawal had allowed illegal militias and oil smugglers to flourish, clearing the way for organized crime and sectarian gangs to expand their influence. Although local Iraqi military commanders had sanctioned the British decision, which had led to a decrease in violence directed at coalition troops, events elsewhere suggested the lull would be temporary. When asked if Britain needed to reengage, Zebari responded, "In my view they do. They should not sit there

36. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 27 Feb 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
37. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 12 Mar 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
38. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 5 Mar 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

and do nothing. There are certain responsibilities, especially until the end of this year."[39]

On 21 March, General Petraeus met with the Iraqi national security adviser, Mowaffak al-Rubaie, and Prime Minister Maliki to examine a joint Iraqi-coalition proposal for using military force to subdue Shi'i militias in Al Başrah. The proposal borrowed from the Baghdad Security Plan, beginning with the deliberate placement of combat outposts in key neighborhoods, followed by precision raids by special forces and subsequent large-scale clearing operations with conventional forces. The MNF-I commander recommended waiting until late summer to set the conditions necessary to stifle retaliatory violence by Sadr supporters in other parts of the country. Following the presentation, Rubaie confided to Petraeus that the prime minister did not intend to wait five months before acting. Although Petraeus was taken aback somewhat, the revelation did not surprise Ambassador Crocker, who believed Maliki already had decided to deploy troops in Al Başrah within a few days.[40]

General Petraeus joined Ministry of Defense officials for a meeting in the prime minister's office on 22 March, where he learned the Iraqis were planning to send their forces into Al Başrah within thirty-six hours.[41] Maliki made it clear that he wanted limited American participation in the operation.[42] The Iraqi plan resembled what Petraeus himself had briefed the day before, albeit with abbreviated timelines and simpler goals. Before being politely ushered out of Maliki's office, the U.S. general told the Iraqis, "Let's be careful here now, because we've made some progress, and we need to be thoughtful and deliberate as we move into this."[43] The prime minister departed for Al Başrah on 23 March and established a temporary operations center at an Iraqi military base near the city.[44] Both the interior minister and defense minister arrived the following day, as well as representatives from

39. Luke Baker, "Iraqi Minister Says UK Troops 'Doing Nothing' in Basra," Reuters, 17 Mar 2008, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2008/03/17/uk-britain-iraq-zebari-idUK1778878220080317, Hist Files, CMH.

40. Michael R. Gordon, Eric Schmitt, and Stephen Farrell, "U.S. Cites Planning Gaps in Iraqi Assault on Basra," *New York Times*, 3 Apr 2008, http://nytimes.com/2008/04/03/world/middleeast/03basra.html, Hist Files, CMH.

41. Kim Sengupta, "How Britain's Plan to Pacify South Was Hijacked," *Independent*, 27 Mar 2008, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/how-britains-plan-to-pacify-south-was-hijacked-801213.html, Hist Files, CMH.

42. Gordon, Schmitt, and Farrell, "U.S. Cites Planning Gaps in Iraqi Assault on Basra."

43. "U.S. Advice Unheeded in Basra Campaign: Petraeus," Agence France-Presse, 11 Apr 2008, http://www.spacewar.com/reports/US_advice_unheeded_in_basra_campaign_Petraeus_999.html, Hist Files, CMH.

44. "Fierce Fighting Erupts in Iraq's Basra City," Agence France-Presse, 24 Mar 2008, http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5C8ijfQL67ZnXJbpz_bzl5QZBu3w, Hist Files, CMH.

MNF-I and the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula. When British liaison officers attempted to attend a coordination meeting, Maliki ordered them to leave. Undeterred by the snub, the British officers quietly dispatched a representative to Lt. Gen. Mohan al-Furayji's operations center.[45] Late in the evening of 24 March, General Mohan announced an immediate curfew, prohibited civilian traffic within the city for the next four days, and suspended classes in schools and universities. As the curfew took effect, units from Maj. Gen. Mohammed Jawad Huweidi's 14th IA Division moved into Al Başrah neighborhoods that were not occupied by Sadr's forces.[46]

On the morning of 25 March 2008, Iraqi security forces launched Operation Saulut al-Fursan (Charge of the Knights) against illegal groups operating within Al Başrah. Maliki ordered the attack knowing that additional units were still en route to the port city. The 14th IA Division's 52d Brigade, reinforced by a composite tank/mechanized battalion from the 9th IA Division, spearheaded the push. Once again, the lack of airpower and precision-guided systems, such as multiple-launch rocket systems, prevented the Iraqis from preparing the ground for a major assault in the same fashion as American troops. The well-armed and entrenched militia fighters repulsed the assault using a mix of advanced rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and massive IEDs.

An officer from the composite mechanized battalion related, "The Mahdi armament was much stronger than the Iraqi Army's. We had no heavy mortars while the Mahdi fighters had mortars of all calibers, not to mention the improvised explosive devices they planted everywhere."[47] The long-standing firepower disparity between the American and Iraqi armies, which had existed from the beginning because of MNF-I policy, now worked against the allied desire for Iraq to exhibit greater independence on the battlefield.

The experience of 2d Lt. Muhamad Hussam, a medical officer with the 52d Brigade, highlighted another difference in capabilities. After his unit pulled back following the initial clash, Hussam began searching for casualties left behind. Most of the prone figures he found were dead, but Lieutenant Hussam rescued several wounded soldiers. On his way to his brigade's rally point, Mahdi fighters motioned the ambulance to stop at a checkpoint. They demanded Hussam turn over the wounded to them, but the Iraqi officer

45. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 360.
46. "Fierce Fighting Erupts in Iraq's Basra City."
47. "Soldiers Surrendering to Mahdi Army: Better Safe than Sorry?," *Aswat Al-Iraq*, 15 Apr 2008, http://en.aswataliraq.info/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=76427&1=1.html, Hist Files, CMH.

ordered his driver to step on the accelerator. As the vehicle careened forward, bullets struck Hussam's right arm, leg, and abdomen. Though the riddled ambulance escaped, Lieutenant Hussam wryly noted, when asked about the traumatic experience, "It gave [me] a great appreciation for the advantages of helicopter medical evacuation."[48]

Saulut al-Fursan also broke down because many Iraqi security personnel, both army and police, failed to fight. A postbattle reckoning indicated that 834 enlisted soldiers from the 52d Brigade had surrendered or deserted.[49] In many cases, they were militia members who had infiltrated government ranks, were sympathetic to Sadr's politics, or were from the local area and worried about reprisals against their families. One soldier told the Iraqi media, "I could not fight. I put on civvies with my other comrades. We laid down our weapons and surrendered. I and 30 others stayed inside a house for three days and then we were set free."[50] Thirty-three officers, ranging in rank from lieutenant to major general, were relieved of command or discharged following the debacle.[51] Lack of leadership and motivation also produced considerable loss of equipment. The 52d Brigade alone reported the capture or destruction of 38 light trucks, 12 armed Humvees, 14 personnel carriers, 2 ambulances, 63 machine guns, 962 rifles, and 17 rocket-propelled grenade launchers.[52]

A number of Iraqi officials, including General Mohan, claimed that the lack of surprise, coupled with the absence of British advisory teams, resulted in the 52d Brigade suffering needless casualties.[53] The allegations had a grain of truth; some Western newspapers had carried warnings from talkative government officials of an impending army offensive against Al Başrah for the past two weeks.[54] Equally significant, Maliki's interference had led to the offensive being launched before the arrival of additional forces from Al Anbār. Rather than mounting a coordinated attack against an unsuspecting

48. Sgt. Neil McCabe, "Iraqi Hero Medic Receives MEDEVAC Training," 17th Fires Bde Public Affairs Ofc, 4 Mar 2010, https://www.army.mil/article/35273/iraqi-hero-medic-recieves-medevac-training, Hist Files, CMH.
49. Memo, MNF-I for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 28 Jun 2008, sub: Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) Recent Performance (MoD forces), 3, 2008 Materials Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.
50. "Soldiers Surrendering to Mahdi Army: Better Safe than Sorry?."
51. Memo, MNF-I for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 28 Jun 2008, sub: Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) Recent Performance (MoD forces), 3.
52. Bfg, Coalition Army Advisory Training Team to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 25 Jul 2008, sub: 52d IA Brigade Reconstitution Status," slides 6–7, Hist Files, CMH.
53. Col. Peter R. Mansoor, "The British Army and the Lessons of War in Iraq," *British Army Review* 147 (Summer 2009): 13.
54. James Glanz, "Iraqi Troops May Move to Reclaim Basra's Port," *New York Times*, 13 Mar 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/13/world/africa/13iht-13basra.11023211.html, Hist Files, CMH.



Soldiers from the 2d Battalion, 52d Brigade, file into a CH–47 Chinook helicopter after conducting an air assault mission outside of Al Başrah. The Iraqi troops are not equipped with M16s, because American weapons initially were provided only to units in the Baghdād area. (*Spc. Maurice Galloway, U.S. Army*)

foe, inadequately equipped Iraqi troops had rolled into a prepared ambush. The prime minister reacted to the catastrophe by abruptly announcing that he wanted Mohan replaced. The general and his staff politely ignored Maliki while they reorganized their forces for another attempt.[55]

The setback in Al Başrah triggered a range of reactions on the international scene and within the Iraqi government. On the political front, the prime minister issued a public ultimatum for the militia members to lay down their heavy weapons.[56] When the Sadrist movement claimed that the Baghdād government had singled it out unfairly, al-Dabbagh responded by telling reporters that the Iraqi military effort targeted criminal gangs, not the legitimate supporters of a political faction: "They are a gang, they are a crime gang, they are exploiting the Moqtada name, and we have to control

55. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 360.
56. Marisa Cochrane, "The Battle for Basra: March 2003–May 31, 2008," Institute for the Study of War and *Weekly Standard*, Iraq Report, no. 9 (n.d.): 8, https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/Iraq%20Report%209.pdf (accessed 28 Oct 2024), Hist Files, CMH.

them, we have to defeat them."[57] Sadr responded by ordering his followers to defy government orders to surrender their arms.[58]

Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus jointly agreed that the defeat in Al Başrah handed a victory to Sadr that could result in the surge failing to achieve its goals.[59] To avoid undercutting Maliki's national reconciliation agenda, President Bush declared that the Al Başrah militia groups were operating beyond the Sadr movement's political charter. He also explained to the American media that the prime minister's decision to:

> go after the illegal groups in Basra shows his leadership, and his commitment to enforce the law in an even-handed manner. . . . Prime Minister al-Maliki traveled to Basra to oversee it firsthand. This offensive built on the security gains of the surge, and demonstrated to the Iraqi people that their government is committed to protecting them. There's a strong commitment by the central government of Iraq to say that no one is above the law.[60]

When journalists asked British commanders in Iraq for a comment, spokesperson Maj. Tom Holloway replied, "It is an Iraqi-planned, led, and executed security mission. . . . The Iraqis can deal with the challenges in Basra. Not only that, they should deal with the challenges in Basra."[61] Holloway's response reflected the noninterventionist perspective of an ongoing debate within the British cabinet over whether the remaining British troops openly should assist the 14th IA Division. Until London decided how to address recent events in Al Başrah, it refused to raise hopes that British troops would be committed. The Iraqis, for their part, still did not seem interested in British assistance. When the senior British commander in Iraq, Brig. Gen. Julian R. Free, flew into Al Başrah on 25 March to find out what was going on, Prime Minister Maliki declined to meet with him.

Meanwhile, Iraqi forces resumed their assault against militia forces in the north and central part of the city on 26 March. Mohan tossed out his original plan calling for a methodical advance, replacing it with a bold rush into the

57. Ben Knight, "Iraq's Fate Hangs on 'Charge of the Knights,'" Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 26 Mar 2008, http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/03/26/2199389.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
58. Nabil al-Jurani, "Al-Sadr Defies Iraqi Gov't; 16 Killed in Airstrikes," *USA Today*, 29 Mar 2008, http://www/usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2008-03-29-iraq-saturday, Hist Files, CMH.
59. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 361.
60. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 2 Apr 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
61. Knight, "Iraq's Fate Hangs on 'Charge of the Knights.'"

city. Lacking adequate supporting fires, the attackers made little progress against hit-and-run militia groups employing mortars, IEDs, snipers, and RPGs. A taxi driver from the Al Jumhūrīyah District told reporters that Iraqi armored vehicles were in the main street, but "they [could] not go deep into the neighborhood."[62] The fighting convinced the Iraqi prime minister that his troops needed help. General Austin, accompanied by General Free, helicoptered to Al Başrah to discuss developments with Maliki. During the talks, Maliki completely ignored Free while asking Austin for U.S. military support.[63]

In response to the prime minister's request, Austin ordered Capt. William D. Chesher's Company D, 2d Battalion, 504th Infantry Regiment, to deploy from Tallil Air Base in Dhī Qār Province to Contingency Operating Base Basra.[64] The airborne unit, accompanied by U.S. Air Force tactical air controllers, divided into self-contained platoon-sized elements rather than smaller advisory teams upon their arrival. Their initial priority consisted of gathering information and coordinating drone and strike aircraft employment rather than directly interacting with Iraqi units.[65] The tactical command posts of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, and XVIII Airborne Corps accompanied Company D to oversee Chesher's force and provide MNF-I with information.[66] In addition, MNC-I sent a detachment of 120 U.S. Marine Corps staff personnel to liaise with both the British and Iraqi forces on scene.[67]

On 28 March, a delegation of lawmakers traveled to the Iranian city of Qom to convince Sadr to agree to a ceasefire. They also met with Brig. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, commander of the covert branch of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. The Iraqi group asked Sadr to stand down his militia and requested that Iranian officials stop supplying them with weapons. The Iranians agreed to shut down their border, denying arms and

62. "Iraqi PM Gives Gunmen Ultimatum," *USA Today*, 26 Mar 2008, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2008-03-26-iraq-wednesday_N.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
63. Deborah Haynes and Michael Evans, "Iraq Snubbed Britain and Calls US into Basra Battle," *Times* (London), 10 Apr 2008, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/iraq-snubbed-britain-and-calls-us-into-basra-battle-dclp9bn709z, Hist Files, CMH.
64. "Iraq Snubs UK Troops in Basra Offensive," *Telegraph*, 14 Apr 2008, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1584627/Iraq-snubs-UK-troops-in-Basra-offensive.html; Email, Capt. Daniel J. Tucker to Mark J. Reardon, 14 Jan 2010, sub: U.S. Army Center of Military History Query, Hist Files, CMH.
65. Haynes and Evans, "Iraq Snubbed Britain and Calls US into Basra Battle."
66. Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 1 Apr 2008, sub: Basra Operational Graphic, MNF-I History as of 0811–Story Folder, Hist Files, CMH.
67. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 363.

ammunition to the Shi'i militias in Al Başrah.[68] After two days of talks, a spokesperson for the delegation, Ali al-Adeeb, told reporters, "An agreement was signed. . . . Iran was part of the problem and an effective part of the negotiations."[69]

The fighting diminished in Al Başrah during the talks in part because the flow of arms dried up and also because Sadrists who took their orders from the cleric suspended operations against the Iraqi Army. Unfortunately, the agreement had no impact on criminal gangs, breakaway Sadrist groups, and other Shi'i militias. On 29 March, a roadside IED killed the 50th Brigade's 2d Battalion commander and two bodyguards.[70] Meanwhile, the first visible signs of coalition aid appeared that day when AC–130 gunships blasted three groups of militia fighters, who were shooting at Iraqi forces, and killed sixteen Sadrists. British artillery fired in support of Iraqi troops, destroying a Mahdi Army mortar position in the Al Khalaf neighborhood.[71]

On 30 March, armed fighters stormed the government broadcast station in Al Başrah, driving off the military detachment that had been guarding the facility and seizing their vehicles. A *New York Times* photographer captured images of masked fighters cavorting atop abandoned armored vehicles.[72] The Sadrists followed up by launching a mortar attack against Maliki's command post outside Al Başrah, killing a senior aide to the prime minister.[73] In one of the few instances of clear success during this period, two battalions from the 14th IA Division and a company of Iraqi marines succeeded in wresting control of Al Başrah's port from militia fighters.[74]

The talks in Qom took place as elements of three motor transport regiments continued hauling additional troops, including the 1st IA Division headquarters, the 1st Brigade of the 1st IA Division, and the 26th Brigade

68. Leila Fadel, "Iranian General Played a Key Role in Iraqi Cease-fire," *McClatchy Newspapers*, 30 Mar 2008, http://www/mcclatchydc.com/2008/03/30/v-print/iranian-general-played-key-role.html, Hist Files, CMH.
69. Fadel, "Iranian General Played a Key Role in Iraqi Cease-fire."
70. Robert H. Reid, "Shiite Leader al-Sadr Defies Iraq Gov't," *USA Today*, 29 Mar 2008, http://www.usatoday.com/news/topstories/2008-03-28-4110462503_x.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
71. Al-Jurani, "Al-Sadr Defies Iraqi Gov't; 16 Killed in Airstrikes."
72. Nabil al-Jurani, "Mahdi Army Fighters as They Stormed a State-run Television Center in Basra, Forcing the Iraqi Military Guards Surrounding the Building to Flee and Setting Armored Vehicles on Fire," *New York Times*, 3 Apr 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/images/2008/04/03/world/03basra_CA1.ready.html, Hist Files, CMH.
73. Fadel, "Iranian General Played a Key Role in Iraqi Cease-fire."
74. Qassim Abdul Zahra and Hamid Ahme, "Shiite Cleric Sadr Pulls Fighters off Streets," *International Herald Tribune*, 30 Mar 2008, http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/03/30/africa/ME-GEN-Iraq.php, Hist Files, CMH.



Two Iraqi soldiers dash to a covered position during a firefight with Mahdi Army extremists in Al Maḩmūdīyah. (*Spc. Christopher McKenna, U.S. Army*)

of the 7th IA Division, to Al Başrah.[75] Both brigades hailed from Al Anbār Province, where Sunni tribes and coalition troops finally had driven al-Qaeda from Ar Ramādi. The 1st IA Division's brigade arrived on 30 March but waited another day for its U.S. Marine advisers to arrive before entering combat. The Ministry of Defense also transferred an infantry battalion from the 8th IA Division and two more from the 10th IA Division to Al Başrah. The Iraqi Training Brigade at Kirkush Military Training Base sent over 1,200 replacements for the 14th IA Division, including 600 soldiers who were flown in aboard Iraqi C–130E transport aircraft.[76]

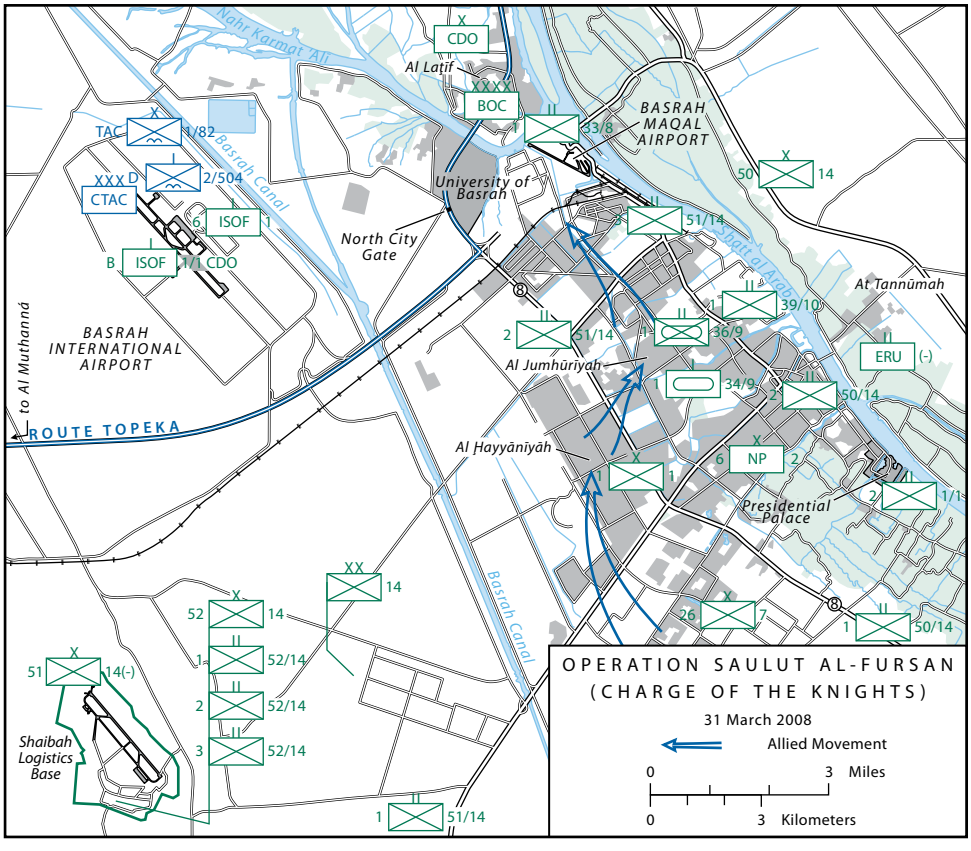
Rather than rely on the Americans, the Iraqis provided support to deployed combat forces, including the delivery of ammunition within six hours of the first requests being submitted. Emergency shipments of food and fuel began concurrently with the movement of reinforcing brigades and battalions. Additional food, fuel, ammunition, and ten pallets of repair parts arrived at Shaibah Logistics Base outside the port city. After the 14th IA Division reported that it lacked sufficient cargo vehicles to support future operations, the 52d Brigade received twenty 5-ton trucks along with a team of ten maintenance personnel.[77]

75. These troops began moving before the initial assault, according to at least one U.S. Army account. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 360.
76. Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 1 Apr 2008, sub: Basra Operational Graphic.
77. Memo, MNF-I for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 28 Jun 2008, sub: Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) Recent Performance (MoD forces), 1.

On 31 March, General Mohan reluctantly asked the British to augment U.S. advisory teams working with the 14th IA Division. Taking their cue from Chesher's example, General Free's 4th Mechanized Brigade created six self-sustaining teams consisting of a total of 150 advisers, force protection personnel, and medics.[78] However, that organizational effort required some time, so the British advisers did not appear until three days after the Iraqi request.[79] Even with the addition of British personnel, only fourteen of the thirty-eight Iraqi units in Al Başrah were accompanied by military transition teams as of 1 April.[80] In the meantime, friendly, enemy, and civilian casualties climbed to 488 dead and over 900 wounded, including 210 militants killed, 600 wounded, and 155 captured.[81]

Although the fighting resulted in tactical setbacks for a number of Iraqi units, it presented the Counter Terrorism Service with a unique opportunity to demonstrate its skills while operating under combined U.S. and Iraqi oversight (*Map 10.2*).[82] On 31 March, elements from the Iraqi special operations forces, accompanied by their American partners and supported by Warrior infantry fighting vehicles from the British 1st Battalion, Scots Guards, targeted a group of Mahdi fighters holed up in an abandoned schoolhouse.[83] The building had served as a staging point for attacks as well as a storage site for weapons, ammunition, and explosives. With coalition aircraft providing support, Iraqi and U.S. special operators stormed the building, killing fourteen militants in a brief firefight. While clearing a building next to the school, they freed six captured Iraqi soldiers.[84] On 3 April, Iraqi special operators seized the leader of a breakaway Mahdi Army

78. Haynes and Evans, "Iraq Snubbed Britain and Calls US into Basra Battle."
79. David Marston, "'Smug and Complacent?': Operation TELIC: The Need for Critical Analysis," *British Army Review* 147 (Summer 2009): 19; "Basra COB—No Desert Oasis—More Like Muddy Glastonbury Without the Music," *Berwick Advertiser*, 10 Jan 2008, http://www.berwick-advertiser.co.uk/news/local-headlines/basra_cob_no_desert_oasis_more_like_muddy_glastonbury_without_the_music; both in Hist Files, CMH.
80. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 364.
81. Colin Freeman and Damien McElroy, "Basra Militants 'Worse Than al-Qa'eda,' Says Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki," *Telegraph*, 29 Mar 2008, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1583252/Basra-militants-worse-than-al-Qaeda-says-Iraqi-prime-minister-Nuri-al-Maliki.html; "Iraq Says More Than 200 Killed in Basra," Reuters, 31 Mar 2008, https://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSHAR41202820080331; both in Hist Files, CMH.
82. U.S. Dept. Def, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2008: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2008 (Section 9010, Public Law 109–289)*, Rpt to Cong., Jun 2008, 59, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA483069.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
83. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 363.
84. "Iraqi Special Operations Forces Kill 14 Criminals in Basra," *Advisor* 5, no. 7 (5 Apr 2008): 18, Hist Files, CMH.



Map 10.2

group who was wanted for kidnapping and murdering members of the Iraqi security forces.[85]

Overall, the fighting in Al Başrah had a positive outcome. One of the most effective units in the Iraqi military had racked up noteworthy accomplishments that contrasted vividly with the disarray and setbacks experienced at the onset of the operation by one of the least effective Iraqi divisions. Although Iraqi officials were glad to have obtained the cooperation of Sadr and the Iranians, the central government redeployed some of its best units within striking range of the port city and maintained silence on when those units would depart from Al Başrah.

85. MNC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "ISF Kill Seven Criminal Members, Detain 16 in Three Separate Operations in Basra," *Advisor* 5, no. 7 (5 Apr 2008): 13, Hist Files, CMH.

MIXED SUCCESS

Even though the 14th IA Division had a disappointing combat debut, other Iraqi units in northwest Baghdād provided U.S. commanders with a positive counterpoint during the same period. Shortly after arriving the previous fall, the 2d Brigade Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division refocused its advisory effort. Instead of allocating equal resources to every partnered outfit, the U.S. brigade concentrated on those Iraqi units that had demonstrated a willingness to learn and performing well in a field rather than garrison setting.[86] Rather than reward indifference and corruption, the Americans devoted proportionally greater mentoring and resourcing to the more aggressive and professional units. That approach differed significantly from the long-standing one-size-fits-all policy followed by MNC-I since spring 2005.

Lt. Col. Joseph S. McLamb, whose 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment, had assumed responsibility for the Kadhimiyah District in northwest Baghdād from the 82d Airborne Division's 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment, concentrated his resources on aiding the Iraqi Army's 3d Battalion, 22d Brigade. His choice had not been a simple one. Paratroopers from the outgoing U.S. battalion related how they had witnessed members of the 3d Battalion, 22d Brigade, fighting alongside Sadrists during a daylong battle in April 2007. That revelation subsequently affected the partnership between the paratroopers and Iraqis as the former's focus shifted from training to weeding out corrupt officers and disloyal soldiers.[87]

Many of the 22d Brigade's original personnel were recruited from Shi'i militias, including some with close ties to Sadr. That was true of several other Baghdād-based Iraqi Army units during the latter half of 2007. Aware of the problem, MNF-I and the Ministry of Defense implemented initiatives that aided the efforts of the 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment, to purge unreliable personnel from the 3d Battalion ranks. Sectarian-minded personnel were split up and transferred to other units, while recruits willing to confront any and all violent factions took their place.[88] These developments led to better cohesion within the Iraqi brigade and enhanced relations with local inhabitants.

McLamb used his own soldiers to form a dedicated military transition team for the 3d Battalion, 22d Brigade. The Iraq Assistance Group, commanded

86. AAR, Op Iraqi Freedom, 1st Bn, 502d Inf Rgt, 2007–2009, ch. 1, 5, Hist Files, CMH.
87. AAR, Op Iraqi Freedom, 1st Bn, 502d Inf Rgt, 2007–2009, ch. 1, 2.
88. Wesley Morgan, "In Northwest Baghdad, Iraqi Forces Stand Up, Slowly," *Long War Journal*, 3 Nov 2008, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/11/in_northwest_baghdad.php, Hist Files, CMH.

by Brig. Gen. James C. Yarbrough, lacked the personnel to provide one because the Iraqi Army's growth over the past twelve months steadily had outpaced General Yarbrough's available resources. The military transition team, led by Capt. Jeffrey T. McKinnon, concentrated on aiding the Iraqi unit's personnel, communications, and medical sections. A second team, detached from Capt. Marlon T. Mallory's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, began teaching the Iraqis how to provide logistical support.

Mallory witnessed the familiar advent of mission creep after the Iraqi battalion commander asked McLamb to improve the overall level of professionalism within his unit. The U.S. commander tasked Captain Mallory with providing the Iraqis an intensive two-week training course on basic infantry skills while continuing to improve their partner unit's logistical capabilities. The fact that Americans were providing refresher training to Iraqi infantry indicated a systemic problem within the Iraqi Army. Neither the Americans nor the Iraqis had made adequate provisions for infantry units to receive sustainment training after they had completed the courses offered by the Iraqi Training Brigade. By comparison, U.S. combat units did not train after arriving in Iraq; instead, they engaged in continuous training when not deployed.

Operational requirements precluded McLamb from pairing his companies with Iraqi counterparts of equivalent size, but he assigned Capt. Brad R. Henry's Company D to dedicate a platoon apiece to three of the Iraqi battalion's four companies while a platoon from Capt. Christopher O. Bower's Company C mentored the fourth company. The U.S. troops conducted daily patrols with the Iraqis, taking every opportunity to show them better ways of collecting intelligence, planning patrols, and covering checkpoints.[89]

A discernible decrease in pedestrian and vehicle traffic coincided with the late March clashes in Al Başrah, which produced growing unease in Kadhimiyah. The eerie calm ended on the morning of 27 March when Mahdi fighters launched a series of attacks across Baghdād against government security forces. The Sadrists achieved an early success, overrunning a checkpoint near Sadr City that was guarded by mechanized elements from the 3d Battalion, 44th Brigade, 11th IA Division. Despite having eleven BMP infantry fighting vehicles, the Iraqi soldiers gave up after only token resistance. Some Mahdi fighters stripped the abandoned armored vehicles while others seized weapons and ammunition from their prisoners.[90]

89. AAR, Op Iraqi Freedom, 1st Bn, 502d Inf Rgt, 2007–2009, ch. 9, 1.

90. The same battalion had been accused of passing M16s to Mahdi fighters earlier in the month. Memo, Multi-National Division–Baghdad for MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 29 Mar 2008, sub: Performance of Iraq Units, MNF-I History as of 0811–Story Folder, Hist Files, CMH.



Stragglers from the 3d Battalion, 44th Brigade, and National Police units are assembled under guard two days after abandoning their positions on 27 March. (*Capt. Jeffrey A. Oster, U.S. Army*)

The poor showing by the 3d Battalion, 44th Brigade, proved to be the exception rather than the rule. Elements of five other Iraqi brigades fended off all Mahdi assaults directed against them. In some instances, the resistance offered by Iraqi soldiers took on a deeply personal tone. Troop B, 1st Squadron, 2d Cavalry Regiment (Stryker), received orders to recover an abandoned checkpoint located on the northwest corner of Sadr City. Upon arrival, the U.S. troops questioned local residents and heard the tale of an Iraqi platoon leader whose soldiers had ignored his orders and obeyed Shi'i militia members. Rather than forsake his duties, the Iraqi lieutenant drew his pistol and shot two militia members before being killed himself. One U.S. soldier later observed, "One thing that had become painfully clear was that no matter how little we cared for the Iraqi Army, . . . that one lieutenant had more balls than the lot of us. He went down swinging in the face of it all. . . . Perhaps more importantly, he gave us reason to hope. Hope that someday, maybe, they could stand up on their own."[91]

The Iraqi Army generally held its ground against the Sadrists, but the national and local police fragmented rather than fight back, allowing Mahdi fighters to flood, unopposed, into gaps that had opened in the security cordons around each district. The 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment,

91. Konrad R. K. Ludwig, *Stryker: The Siege of Sadr City* (Flintridge, CA: Roland–Kjos Publishing, 2013), 199–209.

intervened when a wave of militia threatened to engulf adjacent Iraqi Army units, including the 2d Battalion, 22d Brigade, which was covering a platoon-sized position along an important supply route through the Shi'i-majority Al Shu'ala District, and the 3d Battalion, 22d Brigade, which was holding a position overlooking a pontoon bridge that served as a pedestrian walkway across the Tigris River between Kadhimiyah and Adhamiyah.[92]

Some U.S. units would have shunted aside their Iraqi counterparts in order to take up the fight against the Sadrists. McLamb's troops were capable of handling the Mahdi Army on their own, but if they failed to involve their Iraqi partners, they would risk undoing months of progress. McLamb therefore informed his company commanders, "My read is that the militia is attacking the [Iraqi Army] across the entire battalion [area of operations]. So far, the [Iraqi Army] battalions are holding. The National Police and local police are out of it. The commander's intent for the foreseeable future is pretty simple: do not let the Iraqi Army fail."[93]

He dispatched the bulk of Capt. Jeremy J. Ussery's Company B, aided by a tank platoon, to bolster a checkpoint in Al Shu'ala. Even after the Americans arrived, Mahdi fighters continued to assail the position using RPGs, machine-gun fire, and small arms. McLamb also sent a platoon from Company D to reinforce the Iraqi unit holding the pontoon bridge. The appearance of the U.S. troops heartened the defenders, who had suffered several casualties, with soldiers both killed and wounded. The Iraqi battalion commander arrived at the bridge soon afterward, convincing skeptics among the U.S. troops that the 3d Battalion, 22d Brigade, regardless of losses and past ties to the militia, did not plan on folding this time.

Word soon spread among the 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment, that the Iraqi troops who sided with the Mahdi militia last year were now fighting against the Sadrists. The performance of the government soldiers led one U.S. officer to observe, "It was the first time I've seen an Iraq unit take serious casualties and still hold their ground. . . . People say the Iraqi soldiers don't want to fight, but I'll tell you, these guys fought hard."[94] The willingness of the Americans to support the 3d Battalion, 22d Brigade, convinced the Iraqis that Colonel McLamb's unit would not abandon them. As noted in the 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment's after action review, "These realizations by both sides greatly strengthened the partnership between the

92. Email, Lt. Col. Joseph S. McLamb to Mark J. Reardon, 24 Feb 2011, sub: Revised 1-502 and 3/22/6 IA Section, Hist Files, CMH.
93. Email, Lt. Col. Joseph S. McLamb to Mark J. Reardon, 5 Feb 2011, sub: Extract from Iraqi Army Manuscript, Hist Files, CMH.
94. Morgan, "In Northwest Baghdad, Iraqi Forces Stand Up, Slowly."

two units."[95] The ensuing weeks witnessed a drastic change in the attitude of the population, from outright disdain for the Iraqi Army to respect and gratitude for their performance in battle.

After the Iraqi Army in Baghdād fended off most attacks with varying degrees of U.S. help, the Mahdi Army switched tactics from armed confrontation to street demonstrations and showering the Green Zone with mortars and rockets.[96] In a move designed to encourage sympathy without making any real concession, Sadr issued a public statement on 31 March 2008 renouncing any follower who carried arms against the government. In the same document, the radical cleric asked Maliki to stop targeting the Mahdi Army, release militia fighters not charged with a crime, and declare a general amnesty.

In response, the prime minister's office released a 1 April communiqué claiming that Operation Saulut al-Fursan had produced "security, stability and success" in Al Başrah. He also announced a seven-point plan to stabilize the southern city, including recruiting 10,000 more police and soldiers and enhancing public services.[97] Neither Maliki nor his nemesis appeared willing to set aside their competing political ambitions to enter into meaningful negotiation, relying instead on statements issued through pliant mass media outlets to influence the populace.

CONSOLIDATING IN THE SOUTH

The Mahdi Army defeats in Kadhimiyah and other Baghdād districts resulted in Sadr's representatives agreeing to suspend attacks within the capital. Even as the truce took hold in Baghdād, intermittent fighting continued in Al Başrah. On 4 April, an Iraqi special operations unit came under intense small arms fire after an IED attack against their convoy. The soldiers returned fire, killing two militia members. Close air support called in by U.S. personnel accompanying the Iraqi unit accounted for the deaths of another eight assailants.[98] The skirmish increased tensions as both sides anticipated renewed hostilities.

95. AAR, Op Iraqi Freedom, 1st Bn, 502d Inf Rgt, 2007–2009, ch. 1, 4–5.
96. Sam Dagher, "Green Zone Attack Originated in Sadr City, Say Witnesses," *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 Mar 2008, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2008/0324/p04s02-wome.html, Hist Files, CMH.
97. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, 2 Apr 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
98. MNF-I Press Release 20080408–03, MNF-I Public Affairs Ofc, "ISF Recover Weapons Cache, Kill 10 in Separate Operations in Basra," 8 Apr 2008, http://www.usf-iraq.com/

When the Iraqi military restarted Saulut al-Fursan during the first half of April, it ensured the government forces had several new advantages. The spearhead of the renewed effort consisted of veterans from the 1st and 7th IA Divisions, along with their U.S. Marine advisers. These units were experienced and had purged Sadr sympathizers from their ranks. A number of personnel in the 1st Brigade of the 1st IA Division and 7th IA Division's 26th Brigade also had received training over the previous several years from U.S. Navy special operators in urban combat and tactical reconnaissance skills.[99]

The 14th IA Division watched as veteran comrades dealt with Mahdi-held districts in west and southwest Al Baṣrah using tactics refined in Ar Ramādi. Rather than rush headlong into battle, the newcomers first established bases within key neighborhoods. The government forces resumed offensive operations on 12 April with the goal of clearing the Al Qibla market in southwest Al Baṣrah. Progress remained steady, if unspectacular, for the first few days. On 16 April, the 1st IA Division commander, Maj. Gen. Tariq Abdul Wahab Jassim, met with local sheiks to arrange for sanitation services by promising to pay residents to clean up their streets.[100] At the same time, a Predator drone fired two Hellfire missiles at a militia RPG team that was attempting to ambush an Iraqi unit. The missiles killed four Sadrists and destroyed the vehicle containing ammunition.[101] With help from U.S. firepower, the Iraqis were simultaneously conducting clear and build operations.

American and British troops remained in the background as coalition commanders realized the Iraqi military had to take the lead so it could begin to stand on its own. After establishing a firm foothold in Al Qibla, the Iraqi forces moved northward into the Al Husayn neighborhood, a former Mahdi Army haven, where the familiar pattern of an enthusiastic reception by local residents, methodical house clearing, and distribution of humanitarian aid took place. A large number of rockets and mortar shells, several man-portable

inside-the-force/organization/isf-recover-weapons-cache-kill-10-in-separate-operations.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

99. Dick Couch, *The Sheriff of Ramadi: Navy SEALs and the Winning of Al-Anbar* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 95–97.

100. MNF-I Press Release 20080417–03, MNF-I Public Affairs Ofc, "General Talks Economic Boost with Local Leaders (al-Quibla)," 17 Apr 2008, http://www.usf-iraq.com/news/press-releases/general-talks-economic-boost-with-local-leaders-al-quibla.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

101. MNF-I Press Release 20080416–08, MNF-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Coalition UAV Engages RPG Team, Kills Four Criminals (Basra)," 16 Apr 2008, http://www.usf-iraq.com/news/press-releases/coalition-uav-engages-rpg-team-kills-four-criminals-basra.htm, Hist Files, CMH.

antiaircraft missiles, and seven abandoned Iraqi armored vehicles were recovered during the weeklong second phase.[102]

At the same time, General Mohan and his police counterpart in Al Başrah, Maj. Gen. Abdul Jalil Khalaf, were reassigned. While Sadr's spokespeople attempted to spin their departures as reliefs of command for failure, the two commanders reminded reporters that the Ministry of Defense had dispatched them to spend three months working to improve the situation in Al Başrah, then extended them for another three months, a combined period that ended on 15 April. General Khalaf explained, "We did not let down the government in carrying out our duty in the last crackdown, and we have carried out a lot of difficult tasks and liberated a lot of areas in Basra from the control of the Mahdi Army. . . . The Iraqi government is totally satisfied with our performance in Basra, and we will take higher positions in Baghdad."[103]

Fighting in Al Başrah resumed in earnest on 19 April with U.S. planes and British artillery unleashing a massive firepower demonstration against a nearby stretch of desert wasteland designed to intimidate Mahdi fighters holding out in the Al Ḥayyānīyāh neighborhood.[104] Making use of information provided by local residents, the Iraqi Army methodically moved northward to clear the Al Khalij, Al ʻArabi and Al Sadiqa neighborhoods. During this period, an IED blast killed 1st Lt. Matthew R. Vandergrift, a U.S. Marine adviser to the 1st IA Division. His was the only U.S. combat death in Al Başrah.[105] By 21 April, in the face of slight resistance, the Iraqis captured tons of ammunition including 200 RPG warheads, 140 artillery rockets ranging in size from 60-mm. to 240-mm., 50 60-mm. mortar rounds, 250 rocket propellant pods, 70 IEDs, and a large quantity of plastic explosives.[106]

Although the third phase of the operation focused on locating and confiscating weapons caches, the Iraqi soldiers searching every house and

102. Press Release, U.K. Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2008, "Iraqi Soldiers Continue to Target Militants," http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/MilitaryOperations/IraqiSoldiersContinueToTargetBasraMilitias.htm (page discontinued; accessed 12 Feb 2010), Hist Files, CMH.

103. Amit R. Paley, "Iraq's Top Commanders in Basra are Reassigned," *Washington Post*, 17 Apr 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/16/AR2008041600932.html, Hist Files, CMH.

104. Peter Graff, "US, UK, Unleash 'Firepower Demonstration' in Basra," Reuters, 19 Apr 2008, http://www.reuters.com/assets/print?aid=USL19123735, Hist Files, CMH.

105. "U.S. and Coalition Casualties," CNN.com, n.d., http://premium.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/forces/casualties/2008.04.html (accessed 16 Feb 2010); "Littleton Marine Killed in Iraq," Associated Press, 25 Apr 2008, http://www.leatherneck.com/forums/showthread.php?p=670593; both in Hist Files, CMH.

106. Press Release, U.K. Ministry of Defence, 21 Apr 2008, "Iraqi Soldiers Continue to Target Basra Militias," http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.mod.uk/

building in those neighborhoods placed equal emphasis on providing humanitarian assistance to noncombatants. The British recorded the reaction of residents to the appearance of Iraqi soldiers. "As they moved cautiously through the streets, they were greeted by waving and clapping children and men came out of their houses to shake hands with the soldiers."[107]

Despite significant logistical and tactical obstacles, the Maliki government successfully had mounted a major operation against the Mahdi militia. Col. Peter R. Mansoor, who witnessed developments from the perspective of the MNF-I staff, later summarized the overall impact of Saulut al-Fursan. "Iraqi Army operations in Basra were a critical turning point in the Iraq War—the point at which the government in Baghdad was willing to confront sectarian militias in the Shia heartland. These events completely changed the political dynamics in Baghdad and coalesced political support around Prime Minister al-Maliki when he badly needed it."[108] Success did not preclude more changes in the command structure. Maj. Gen. Mohammed Jawad Huweidi took over the Al Başrah Operations Command after handing over the 14th IA Division to Maj. Gen. Abdul Aziz Nour Suwedi al-Dulaymi.[109]

CONCLUSION

Nineteenth-century military luminary Napoleon Bonaparte observed that "moral[e] is to the physical as three is to one," reflecting his deep belief that motivated personnel, not material, is the most important assets available to a commander.[110] To put it in a quantifiable context, a self-assured soldier is three times as effective as one lacking in conviction and self-confidence. The Mahdi Army consistently had prevailed over Iraqi troops since 2003 because government soldiers lacked the motivation, confidence, and firepower of the Sadrists, but the gulf separating Sadrist and Iraqi Army performance narrowed in the spring of 2008 after government troops successfully confronted their long-time nemesis in Al Başrah. However, that one victory did not suffice to bolster morale among units far from the

defenceinternet/defencenews/militaryoperations/ (page discontinued; accessed 23 Mar 2010), Hist Files, CMH.

107. Press Release, U.K. Ministry of Defence, 21 Apr 2008, "Iraqi Soldiers Continue to Target Basra Militias."

108. Mansoor, "British Army and the Lessons of War in Iraq," 14.

109. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 18 Jul 2009, sub: MoD and MoI Org Charts, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

110. Peter J. Dean, "Napoleon as a Military Commander: The Limitations of Genius," Research Subjects: Napoleon Himself, n.d., https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/napoleon/c_genius.html (accessed 3 Oct 2023), Hist Files, CMH.

scene of battle, leaving MNF-I wondering if the Iraqi government actively would seek another such opportunity to inspire both commanders and ordinary soldiers.

Answering that question would be difficult given Maliki's demonstrated willingness to commit Iraqi security forces without seeking U.S. advice or providing advance notice to MNF-I. Despite the fact that various political parties had chosen him because he represented a minimal threat to the status quo, Maliki actively sought to increase his influence by ostensibly embarking on a personal quest to restore Iraq's status as a major regional power.[111] Attaining that ambition involved not only defeating the insurgency but also holding firm against separatist agitation by the Kurds as well as fellow Shi'a in the oil-rich south.[112] The prime minister used his personal involvement at Karbalā' and Al Başrah to gain power and stature while framing both incidents as examples of Baghdād's commitment to guaranteeing prosperity and security for a united Iraq.

Financial and political interests, rather than purely military considerations, therefore had far more influence on how Saulut al-Fursan began, indicating that the prime minister's vision for his military did not necessarily mirror that of MNF-I. Ordering a recently fielded brigade that lacked not only many items of equipment, but also numerous experienced officers and noncommissioned officers, to attack a forewarned enemy smacked of self-centered opportunism rather than a genuine interest in creating a self-reliant Iraqi Army.[113] In addition, while Saulut al-Fursan persuaded some skeptics—at least temporarily—that Maliki genuinely sought to improve security, it did not ease tensions between Kurds and Arabs, nor did it alter the fact that Muqtada al-Sadr retained complete control of a formidable swath of urban territory adjacent to Baghdād's Green Zone.

The tremendous improvements in security resulting from the surge fueled tendencies to accentuate the positive when examining Al Başrah. Although the Iraqis exhibited little talent for coordinating coalition fire support or clearing obstacle belts, they transferred several brigades from Al Anbār on

111. The same factors drove the selection of Nouri al-Maliki's successor in 2014.

112. Separatism, in this instance, does not reflect dissident beliefs as much as a willingness to fully implement the provisions of Article 140 in the 2005 Iraqi constitution. Stansfield and Anderson, "Kurds in Iraq," 135–36.

113. Based on peacetime experience in the 1990s, the U.S. Army had determined that new units required twelve months to develop adequate cohesion. The Iraqis did not have the luxury of that much time, which led to their units being committed long before accruing that level of cohesion. Maj. Dave Sanders and Col. Mike McGinnis, "Unit Manning the Army's Combat Brigades," Operational Research Center of Excellence Technical Rpt DSE–TR–03–28 (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, Jun 2003), 10, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA419504.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

short notice and without debilitating losses from desertions. As important, Iraqi logisticians not only transported and sustained those forces, but also delivered aid packages to the local populace. Saulut al-Fursan thus reflected the Iraqi Army's first tentative steps toward self-sufficiency, but that goal would not be reached without considerable reinforcement, time, and effort.

The path toward political reconciliation in Iraq offered less cause for optimism. Maliki had spent the previous year strengthening his control over Iraqi special operations forces. Events in Al Başrah had demonstrated that the Iraqi prime minister now felt secure enough to employ conventional military forces to do his bidding, without asking for American permission, against a foe that threatened his hold on political power. In this instance, his confidence lay in the Office of the Commander in Chief ensuring that the army would execute his orders without protest. Al Başrah also had demonstrated that the Iraqi government primarily remained focused on dealing with internal security threats rather than unfriendly nation-states. Although the Americans were beginning to look ahead toward the time the Iraqis could field a more robust force capable of conventional operations, it would not be easy to convince the Iraqis to embrace that vision.

11
Toward a New Dawn: April–December 2008

Al-Qaeda's excessive demands and violence had driven Sunni tribes into an alliance of convenience with the coalition. Even so, Americans struggled not only to understand the Shi'i community but also to gain a greater understanding of the friction between Kurds and Arabs. One observer explained, "The tug of war among the religious parties and the [Shi'i] tribes has emerged as one of the most-significant but also least-understood aspects of Iraq's political scene. It pits leaders from the [Shi'i] core of [Prime Minister Nouri al-]Maliki's coalition against outsiders looking for a way in. . . . Significantly it is also a rivalry between [Shi'a] who favor religious influence on government and those with a more secular vision."[1]

Infighting among the Shi'a overshadowed another emerging conflict, which pitted those who favored the current central government against advocates for regional independence. The former included a surprising coalition—Sunni Arabs, Turkmen, and Shi'i factions not affiliated with the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq—that was opposed to the notion of independence for Kurds and to some southern Shi'i tribes who sought to create a regional government in Al Başrah. The Kurds were the most fervent and organized separatist group, citing Article 140 of the 2005 constitution, which laid out a pathway for determining the future of Kirkūk and other disputed territories. Prime Minister Maliki not only ignored Article 140 but also made it very clear that he actively would defend Iraq's unitary status quo. Academics familiar with the debate observed, "This struggle is not

1. Michael R. Gordon, "The Last Battle," *New York Times Magazine*, 3 Aug 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/03/magazine/03IRAQ-t.html, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).

particularly 'ethnic' and certainly not 'sectarian' in nature. It pits 'centralists' against 'regionalists' in a defining struggle to determine how power is to be structured in Iraq."[2]

SPARRING WITH THE SADRISTS IN BAGHDĀD

Incompatible agendas within the majority sect led to Iraqi special operations forces raiding opposition groups and Sadrists targeting government officials. On 18 January 2008, for example, hundreds of Mahdi Army fighters surrounded the mosque in northwest Baghdād in which National Security Advisor Mowaffak al-Rubaie was attending Ashura services. The Sadrists detained Rubaie for a short while before government soldiers freed him.[3] The incident lent credence to Muqtada al-Sadr's assertions that Maliki could not protect his own senior officials, let alone provide security to Baghdād's residents. Although the kidnapping did not provoke immediate retaliation, it further eroded the Iraqi government's willingness to shield the Sadrists from coalition action.

That development did not make the task of neutralizing Sadr's combatants any easier. His armed followers were divided by motivation and training into three distinct categories. The first consisted of young, unemployed men who saw themselves as defending the Shi'i faith.[4] Elite fighters, organized into so-called Special Groups, many of which received advanced instruction from the Iranians, formed the second. For the third category, American leaders in Iraq clumped those who focused on robbery, kidnapping, extortion, and other criminal activities into what they dubbed Special Group Criminals.[5]

Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) considered Mahdi Army Special Groups to be so radicalized that negotiations with them invariably were

2. Baghdād and the Kurdistan Regional Government both laid claim to an immense swath of territory, including Kirkūk Province. Gareth Stansfield and Liam Anderson, "Kurds in Iraq: The Struggle Between Baghdad and Erbil," *Middle East Policy Council* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 135–36, Hist Files, CMH.

3. "Tensions Rise Between Shiites, al-Sadr," *Seattle Times*, 20 Jan 2008, https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/tensions-rise-between-shiites-al-sadr/, Hist Files, CMH.

4. "Jaysh al Mahdi," Institute for the Study of War, Jan 2009, https://www.understandingwar.org/Jaysh-al-mahdi, Hist Files, CMH.

5. Rpt, Lt. Cdr. Doreen J. Fussman and Maj. Thomas J. Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold—Sadr City, Iraq: Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces Partnering for Iraq, Integrating Forces—Combat Operations, Mar 23–May 20, 2008," 3, MNC-I 2008 Material Folder, MNC-I Collection, CMH.

fruitless.[6] Some Iraqi officials, however, advocated making overtures to the Special Groups in the hopes of persuading them to put down their arms in favor of employing peaceful means to achieve their agenda. Indeed, even some Americans saw Sadr as a pragmatist, open to embracing political rather than violent means to advance his cause. Prime Minister Maliki sided with those who believed that there was no possibility of reasoning with the cleric.[7]

Sadr struck first rather than surrender the initiative to Maliki, choosing the Green Zone in Baghdād as his primary target. The attack took place just before the launch of Operation Saulut al-Fursan (Charge of the Knights), the Iraqi Army's offensive in Al Başrah, which initially led coalition officials to view the attack as a preemptive response to Maliki's crackdown, but subsequent analysis indicated that the Sadrists had been preparing the strike well in advance of the operation. The use of Iranian-supplied rockets and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) with armor-piercing explosively formed penetrators gave credibility to MNF-I suspicions that Sadr's violence was proof that he was succumbing to pressure from Tehran.[8]

The opening round began with rockets blasting government buildings within the Green Zone on 23 March. Sadrists also abducted Tasheen al-Shaikhli, a civilian spokesperson for the Baghdad Security Plan, from his home. Not content with simply portraying the Maliki government as weak and ineffectual, Mahdi militia fighters targeted government security forces by launching a coordinated strike against every 11th Iraqi Army (IA) Division and 1st National Police Division checkpoint around Sadr City.[9] When Iraqi forces in Al Başrah showed no sign of halting operations, Sadr's followers continued pummeling the Green Zone with an average of eighteen indirect fire barrages per day for almost a week. That development served as the

6. A growing number of ordinary Iraqis, angered by Mahdi Army fighters killing government soldiers and outraged by the behavior of swaggering militiamen, agreed with the Americans. Leila Fadel, "Iraq Leader Threatens 'Fight to the End,'" *Tuscaloosa News*, 28 Mar 2008, https://www.tuscaloosanews.com/story/news/2008/03/28/iraq-leader-threatens-fight-to-the-end/27746497007/, Hist Files, CMH.

7. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, *Surge and Withdrawal, 2007–2011* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 371.

8. David E. Johnson, M. Wade Markel, and Brian Shannon, *The 2008 Battle for Sadr City*, RAND Study for Ofc Dep Ch Staff, G–8, HQ, Dept. Army (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), 3, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.7249/op335a.7.pdf; Alissa J. Rubin, "Sadr Asks Followers Not to Attack Iraqi Forces," *New York Times*, 25 Apr 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/25/world/africa/25iht-26iraq.12349417.html; "Al-Sadr: 'Open War' Threat Is Only Against U.S.," NBC News, 25 Apr 2008, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna24318087; all in Hist Files, CMH.

9. Fadel, "Iraq Leader Threatens 'Fight to the End.'"

American government's cue to highlight Iranian involvement in Iraq. In an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation, MNF-I's commander, General David H. Petraeus, flatly stated that "violence in Iraq was being perpetuated by Iran's Quds Force, a branch of the Revolutionary Guards," and then summarized the evidence: "The rockets that were launched at the Green Zone . . . were Iranian-provided, Iranian-made rockets. . . . The groups that fired them were funded and trained by the Quds Force."[10]

Convinced of the need for decisive military action aimed at permanently denying Sadr the ability to use indirect fires against the Green Zone, MNF-I advocated a ground attack to seize launching sites on the periphery of Sadr City. However, the methods MNF-I used to obtain that goal differed greatly from those employed during the previous twelve months. Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) could not rely on preliminary air strikes because virtually every Mahdi Army stronghold had been nestled within heavily populated civilian areas. In recognition of the operational precedents set by Saulut al-Fursan, the Americans could not afford to resume the practice of using Iraqi troops only in a follow and support role without risking protest from Maliki. The change in standard operating procedures meant that MNC-I now needed to integrate less-experienced and lightly equipped allies into the scheme of maneuver without undue risk to either army.

The coalition and Iraqi forces deployed around Sadr City were made up of a mix of newly formed and tested units. Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr.'s 1st Cavalry Division had departed the city after initiating a handover of responsibility for Multi-National Division–Baghdad with Maj. Gen. Jeffery W. Hammond's 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) on 19 December 2007. That process took several months before culminating in mid-February 2008. Hammond's formation—which numbered no fewer than six brigade combat teams with forty-four maneuver battalions—partnered with the 6th IA Division, the recently created 11th IA Division led by Maj. Gen. Muther Shaher Nasir al-Azawi, and portions of the 9th IA Division (Mechanized).[11]

The 11th IA Division's 43d Brigade came under the Karkh Area Command west of the river. General al-Azawi's other two brigades were on the east side—the 42d Brigade deployed in Adhamiyah and New Baghdad Districts while the 44th Brigade had responsibility for Sadr City. Many of the 44th's enlisted ranks hailed from that portion of the capital, and the local ties made it easy for militia fighters to threaten the families of those soldiers. Since its arrival in Baghdād in December 2007, the 44th Brigade had been

10. "Iran 'Behind Green Zone Attack,'" BBC News, 24 Mar 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7311565.stm, Hist Files, CMH.
11. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 351.

confined to working static outposts surrounding Sadr City. Its only exposure to combat had occurred in late March 2008, when Mahdi fighters overran a number of checkpoints in the face of uneven opposition. In addition to its limited experience, the 44th Brigade did not have a full complement of equipment and personnel. A recent product of unit set fielding, its overall combat readiness lagged well behind more mature Iraqi Army formations. The 11th IA Division as a whole lacked a bomb disposal company, engineers, a motor transport regiment, and divisional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets, and it was still trying to become familiar with the equipment it did possess.[12]

The Sadrists opposing Multi-National Division–Baghdad and its Iraqi partners were not affected by political constraints similar to those imposed on coalition forces. Sadr's extension of the freeze on Mahdi Army operations in late February had exempted the Special Groups, which he authorized to resume attacks against the coalition. Citing U.S. aid to the Iraqi Army in Al Başrah as justification for violence, Sadrist rocket crews targeted portions of the Green Zone frequented by Americans as well as U.S. patrol bases near Sadr City in early April. The bombardment killed two American soldiers and wounded seventeen in the Green Zone on 5 April. A second barrage killed a third American and wounded fourteen others at a coalition base 9.6 kilometers south of Sadr City.[13]

The attacks took advantage of seasonal sandstorms that hampered the coalition's ability to use drones and piloted aerial platforms to detect and engage the launching sites. One U.S. Air Force weather expert explained, "The effects of dust storms vary depending on who you talk to. . . . The people it affects the most is aviators. Dust storms affect all types of flying operations. When you have a dust storm you can't get fighters in the air to protect those that need it, medivac units can't take off to help those in need, and for those already in the air, it can prevent them from landing in a safe place or landing period."[14]

Sadr's fighters also relied on Sadr City's dense urban sprawl, which they shared with more than a million other Shi'a, to sustain their efforts and shield

12. Bfg, Coalition Army Advisory Training Team to Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) Cmdg Gen, 7 Oct 2008, sub: 081007 CAATT Update Brief to MNF-I CG, slides 5, 10, and 14, Weekly Update to CG Folder, I Corps Collection, CMH.

13. Ernesto Londono, "Rocket Attacks Kill 2 Soldiers in Green Zone, 1 on U.S. Base," *Washington Post*, 7 Apr 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/06/AR2008040600372.html, Hist Files, CMH.

14. Michelle Moses, "Forecasting Dust Storms in Iraq," TheWeatherPrediction.com, n.d., http://www.theweatherprediction.com/weatherpapers/111/index.html (accessed 5 Jun 2023), Hist Files, CMH.

them from counterfire.[15] Although the radical cleric had relocated to Iran the previous February, his influence still extended throughout Sadr City's hospitals, courts, mosques, and municipal government. To some outside observers, the district appeared as a separate nation within the Iraqi capital, where residents considered Sadr's word as synonymous with the law.

The punishing rocket strikes spurred the Americans to accelerate plans to bring an end to militia groups bombarding the Green Zone.[16] Fortunately for MNF-I, the rocket strikes convinced Maliki to repeal the few remaining restrictions placed on conventional operations in Sadr City. After receiving approval to act from the prime minister's office, Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, the commanding general of XVIII Airborne Corps and MNC-I, authorized armed retaliation against the Sadrists. Multi-National Division–Baghdad selected Col. John H. Hort's 3d Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, which had assumed responsibility for Sadr City from the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, to carry out that task. The Iraqi Army committed the 42d and 44th Brigades to assist Colonel Hort.[17] The key tasks of the combined force included eliminating Special Groups and their leadership, setting the conditions for the introduction of humanitarian aid and restoration of services within the district, and driving a wedge between the Special Groups and Sadr City residents.[18]

Colonel Hort's brigade required Iraqi assistance because it lacked the combat power necessary to accomplish its task. The maneuver components of the 3d Brigade Combat Team consisted of Lt. Col. Daniel R. Barnett's 1st Squadron, 2d Cavalry Regiment (Stryker), and Lt. Col. Michael F. Pappal's 1st Battalion, 68th Armored Regiment. The Iraqi contribution, which included all three battalions of the 44th Brigade, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 42d Brigade, and a tank battalion from the 9th IA Division, tripled the size of the attacking force. Should unexpected developments dictate the need for more American ground units, Colonel Hort had the option of asking for assistance from the 3d Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, deployed in neighboring Adhamiyah.[19]

15. Travel Log, Capt. Jeff A. Oster, 7 Apr 2008, http://www.thetravellog.us/April%207.html (accessed 15 Dec 2008), Hist Files, CMH.
16. Bfg, 3d Bde Combat Team (BCT), 4th Inf Div (ID), to Multi-National Division–Baghdad (MND-B) Cmdg Gen, 16 Apr 2008, sub: 3BCT 4ID: Operation Striker Denial Backbrief, slides 2–10, MNC-I 2008 Material Folder, MNC-I Collection, CMH.
17. Bfg, 3d BCT, 4th ID, to MND-B Cmdg Gen, 16 Apr 2008, sub: 3BCT 4ID: Operation Striker Denial Backbrief, slides 2–10.
18. Rpt, Fussman and Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold," 4.
19. Col. John Hort, "3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Operation Iraqi Freedom, December 2007–March 2009" (presentation, Combat Vehicles Conference, National

BUILDING A WALL

The Iraqis and Americans agreed on a three-phase plan to deal with Sadrist militants bombarding the Green Zone. The Americans never intended to enter the heart of Sadr City, opting instead to gain control of rocket launching sites by securing key neighborhoods such as Jamila and Thawra I. Hort also sought to cut off supplies and access to the opposing fighters by emplacing a concrete barrier along the marketplace road separating southern Sadr City from the northern two-thirds of the district. The 2d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, had brought calm to its area of operations after the paratroopers emplaced 48.2 kilometers of concrete barriers around Adhamiyah and portions of Thawra.[20]

Colonel Hort assigned the task of occupying the rocket launching sites to two battalions from the 42d Brigade, which he augmented with civil affairs teams to provide residents with ready access to long-denied basic services.[21] Although the Americans realized the Iraqi units posed a potential tactical liability, political considerations demanded they have a visible role. To provide ready support to his counterparts while they were clearing insurgents from the area, Hort planned to construct a second joint security station (JSS), designated as JSS Thawra II, overlooking the intersection of two major roads. In addition, both of the U.S. combat battalions assigned to the 3d Brigade Combat Team were prepared to move into the Thawra I and Jamila neighborhoods as soon as possible to set the conditions for follow-on operations.[22]

The second phase called for a combined U.S. and Iraqi effort to secure the 4-kilometer stretch of Al Quds Street, a wide boulevard traversing the Sadr City area from the southeast to the northwest, also known to coalition troops as Route Gold. Next, U.S. forces planned to build a seamless barrier composed of hundreds of 4-meter-high sections of 1.5-meter-wide, steel-reinforced concrete blast walls (known as T-walls because of their shape)

Defense Industrial Association, Dearborn, MI, 12–14 Oct 2009), https://ndiastorage.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/ndia/2009/combatvehicle/Hort.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

20. The walls, composed of interlocked 12-foot-high concrete blocks weighing 6 tons apiece, essentially transformed restive urban neighborhoods into "gated communities." John Spencer, "Stealing the Enemy's Urban Advantage: The Battle of Sadr City," Modern War Institute at West Point, 31 Jan 2019, https://mwi.westpoint.edu/stealing-enemys-urban-advantage-battle-sadr-city/, Hist Files, CMH.

21. Bfg, 3d BCT, 4th ID, to MND-B Cmdg Gen, 16 Apr 2008, sub: 3BCT 4ID: Operation Striker Denial Backbrief, slides 2 and 5.

22. Email, Col. Michael Pappal, former Cdr, 1st Bn, 68th Armd Rgt, to Mark J. Reardon, 6 Jul 2011, sub: RE: Sadr City April–May 2008: Excerpt from CMH Book on Post-Saddam Iraqi Army, Hist Files, CMH.



Iraqi workers paint the concrete barriers known as T-walls that became a semipermanent fixture along Al Quds Street in Sadr City. (*Spc. Daniel Herrera, U.S. Army*)

to seal off Thawra I and Jamila from the northern part of the district. Upon its completion, the barrier would shield residents on the southern outskirts of Thawra from intimidation while also preventing rocket teams from reoccupying launch sites within range of the Green Zone.[23]

The 1st Squadron, 2d Cavalry Regiment (Stryker), had responsibility for the initial 2.2-kilometer stretch of T-walls anchored on the southeast corner of Thawra. Colonel Pappal's 1st Battalion, 68th Armored Regiment, had responsibility for the area from the midway point of the barrier to the western end of the market road, whose American-designated code name changed to Phase Line Gold. Anticipating reinforcements from the 1st Armored Division in the form of Lt. Col. Brian S. Eifler's 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Colonel Hort planned to commit the newcomers to the project only after his brigade staff developed a fuller appreciation of the overall situation.[24]

The final phase involved the 3d Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, and elements from the 9th IA Division securing Route Delta, which bisected

23. Richard Tomkins, "Iraq: U.S. Troops, Shi'ite Gunmen Battle Daily in Sadr City," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 7 May 2008, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1117444.html, Hist Files, CMH.

24. Email, Pappal to Reardon, 6 Jul 2011, sub: RE: Sadr City April–May 2008; Bfg, 3d BCT, 4th ID, to MND-B Cmdg Gen, 16 Apr 2008, sub: 3BCT 4ID: Operation Striker Denial Backbrief, slide 11.



A soldier from the 1st Battalion, 68th Armored Regiment, took over the job of unhooking several hundred T-wall barriers after a sniper wounded the engineer soldier originally assigned to the task. He persisted for days on end, sometimes in the face of intense enemy fire. (*Lt. Col. Michael F. Pappal, U.S. Army*)

Jamila and Thawra I. That would allow construction of a second, albeit smaller 1,350-meter-long T-wall northward along the Delta corridor to a point where it intersected Phase Line Gold. That barrier would restrict enemy movement between both neighborhoods while shielding Iraqi and U.S. logistics vehicles transporting T-wall sections to Phase Line Gold from attack. To reduce the possibility that his brigade's preparatory actions would tip off the Sadrists, Hort settled for initially building a hasty corridor that could be improved upon over time. As a result, the 3d Brigade Combat Team planned to initiate work on Delta beginning 16 April, followed three days later by the start of Phase Line Gold construction.[25] Although overlapping the efforts to construct the barrier, joint security station, and corridor presented some risk, doing so also divided the opposition's attention and resources while giving Sadrists minimal time to react.[26]

After reviewing the resources allocated for all three phases, Colonel Hort realized he needed more troops than he originally had been allotted. He could not ask for Iraqi reinforcements because the 11th IA Division lacked

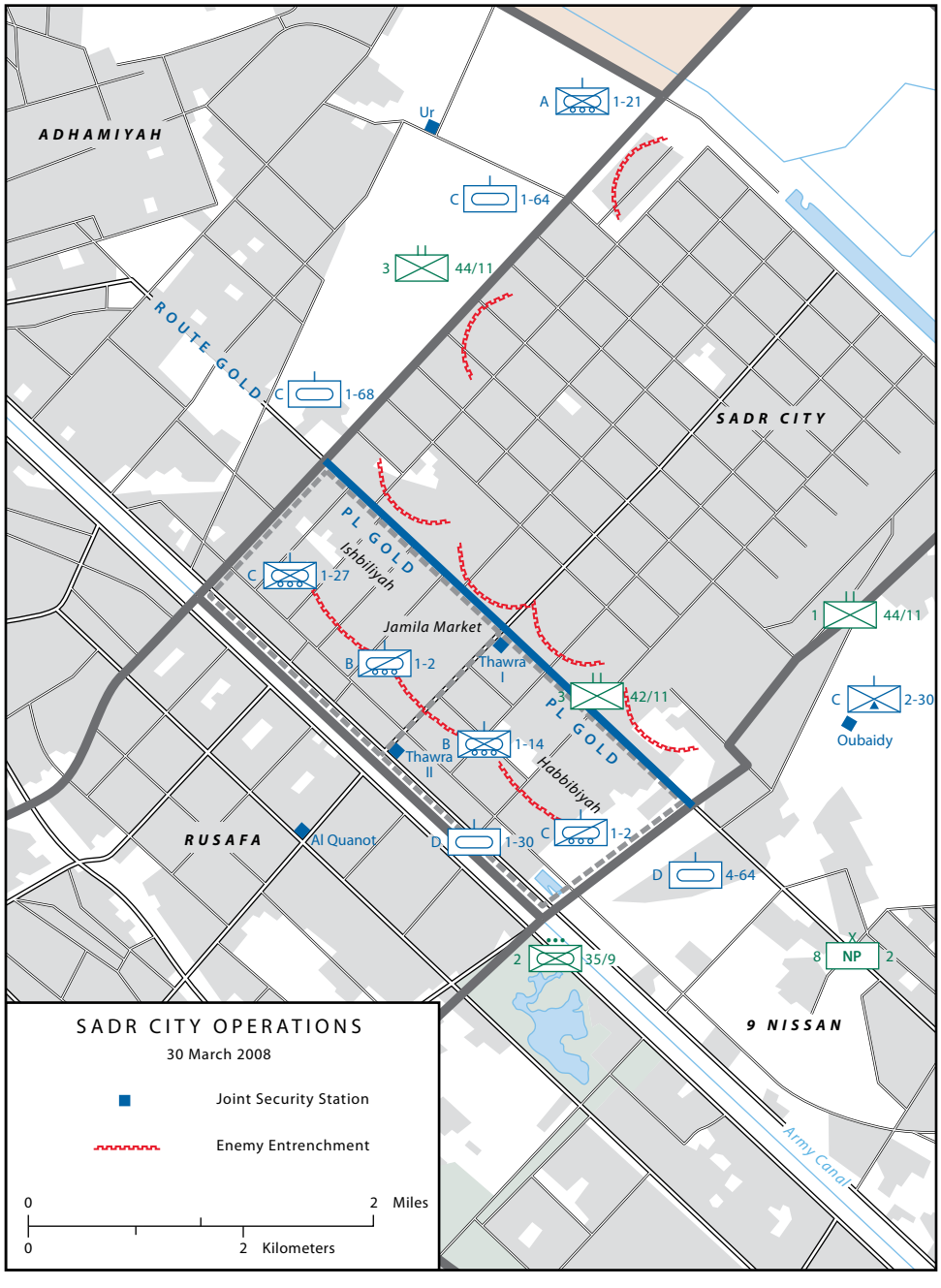
25. Rpt, Fussman and Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold," 22.
26. Bfg, 3d BCT, 4th ID, to MND-B Cmdg Gen, 16 Apr 2008, sub: 3BCT 4ID: Operation Striker Denial Backbrief, slide 11.

not only sufficient experience but also essential organizational components. In addition, while Iraqi units from the 11th IA Division augmented the American positions overlooking the barrier, they could not take part in the construction, nor were they expected to participate in supporting operations against targets such as arms depots and Mahdi Army headquarters, located within Sadr City proper (*Map 11.1*). Multi-National Division–Baghdad responded by providing six company-sized teams that had been siphoned from other American brigades in Baghdād. Three teams went to Pappal's unit while Barnett's squadron received the remainder[27] General Hammond also assigned the 821st Engineer Company to Hort's brigade.[28]

The 3d Battalion of the 42d Brigade initiated the first phase on 6 April.[29] Local sheiks had pledged their support for the Maliki government during recent talks, so the Iraqi unit anticipated meeting little or no resistance. The battalion commander's optimism vanished when Special Group fighters ambushed his lead company. Now realizing the Mahdi Army would mount sustained opposition to the Iraqi Army's presence in southern Sadr City, the 11th IA Division committed the 42d Brigade's 2d Battalion to augment the push.[30] Despite the arrival of more troops, the effort ground to a halt a considerable distance south of Phase Line Gold.

Although the 11th IA Division's initial performance did not meet American expectations, the Iraqis held the ground they gained, albeit with assistance from Colonel Hort's brigade. The residents seemed more cooperative than before, providing information on Special Group fighters. For their part, the Americans did everything they could to help without shunting the Iraqi units aside. Rather than allow the opening assault to bog down, for example, Colonel Barnett's squadron provided food and ammunition to 42d Brigade units when the 11th IA Division's understaffed logistical system was unable to cope.[31] Barnett also persuaded the 42d Brigade to site its forward

27. Email, Pappal to Reardon, 6 Jul 2011, sub: RE: Sadr City April–May 2008; Email, Col. Daniel R. Barnett, former Cdr, 1st Sqdn, 2d Stryker Cav Rgt, to Mark J. Reardon, 1 Jun 2011, sub: RE: U.S. Army Center of Military History–Iraqi Army during Sadr City Opns, Hist Files, CMH.
28. Rpt, Fussman and Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold," 11.
29. Email, Capt. Jeff A. Oster to Mark J. Reardon, 7 Jan 2009, sub: RE:RE:RE: US Army Center of Military History with a question, Hist Files, CMH.
30. Rpt, Fussman and Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold," 2.
31. Deployment History, Capt. Matthew S. Rasmussen et al., n.d., "1st Squadron, 'War Eagles,' 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Deployment History, Operation Iraqi Freedom 07–09, August 2007–October 2008," 54, Hist Files, CMH.


ADHAMIYAH
Ur
A 1-21
C 1-64
3 44/11
ROUTE GOLD
C 1-68
SADR CITY
PL GOLD
Ishbiliyah
C 1-27
Jamila Market
B 1-2
Thawra I
1 44/11
3 42/11
C 2-30
Oubaidy
PL GOLD
B 1-14
Thawra II
Habbibiyah
RUSAFA
Al Quanot
D 1-30
C 1-2
D 4-64
2 35/9
8 NP 2
9 NISSAN
Army Canal
SADR CITY OPERATIONS
30 March 2008
Joint Security Station
Enemy Entrenchment
0 2 Miles
0 2 Kilometers

Map 11.1

headquarters near his squadron command post to enhance the sharing of information.[32]

Personal interaction between U.S. and Iraqi officers emerged as an important factor during the fight to clear Jamila and Thawra I. The 4th Infantry Division Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver, Brig. Gen. William F. Grimsley, commented on how American unit commanders influenced their Iraqi counterparts by repeatedly moving forward to observe events first-hand. "It became very difficult for them not to be out there leading their soldiers. . . . It's an honor thing. . . . They might not want to be there, but once they find out we're there, it's no going back."[33] The interaction involved not only senior officers, but also junior leaders. Nic Robertson, a journalist with CNN, watched as one American officer "cajoled, encouraged, [and] motivated reluctant Iraqi Army soldiers and officers." Robertson realized the U.S. officer "was trying to make them believe in themselves. With a couple of well-earned successes, they shouldn't be so afraid to take on the militias alone."[34] After a week of fighting, the Iraqis were on the verge of obtaining their assigned objectives overlooking Phase Line Gold and on both flanks of Route Delta.

Persistence paid off when construction of JSS Thawra II began on 14 April. By the following day, the 42d Brigade had pushed almost all Special Group fighters north of Phase Line Gold. The hand off between Iraqi and U.S. units took place on 16 April, with the Iraqis assuming responsibility for denying enemy access to rocket-launching sites and continuing the search for hidden fighters and weapons caches in buildings located along Route Delta. The 3d Brigade Combat Team shifted from aiding the Iraqi Army to building the Route Delta corridor and readying the T-wall barrier meant for Phase Line Gold.

The construction of the T-wall barrier started during the night of 22 April, triggering a reaction from Sadrists that far exceeded the reception accorded to the 42d Brigade. One reason was the barrier's proximity to the Jamila market, adjacent to Al Quds Street. Over the past four years, the Mahdi Army had extorted money from merchants utilizing the market to sell produce and other goods—a source of Sadrist income now at risk. The attacks were so fierce that Hort developed unique tactics to reduce friendly

32. The Joint Security Station Thawra II barrier emplacement started on 13 April, followed by the start of the Route Gold barrier emplacement one day later and the Route Delta barrier emplacement on 16 April. Bfg, 3d BCT, 4th ID, to MND-B Cmdg Gen, 16 Apr 2008, sub: 3BCT 4ID: Operation Striker Denial Backbrief, slide 6.

33. Rpt, Fussman and Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold," 6.

34. Nic Robertson, "Firefight in Sadr City," Anderson Cooper 360, CNN, 7 Apr 2008, http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2008/04/07/nic-robertson-firefight-in-sadr-city/html, Hist Files, CMH.



Iraqi soldiers secure an alley in Sadr City on the night of 9 April as heavy gunfire erupts nearby. (*Tech. Sgt. Adrian Cadiz, U.S. Air Force*)

casualties. Each night, companies from both battalions, along with attached engineer teams, moved along secured routes to the line of contact along Phase Line Gold. From there, armored fighting vehicles and dismounted infantry occupied major intersections and key buildings to protect cranes, forklifts, and trucks loaded with barrier material. Throughout the night, security elements responded to attacks against construction teams. As one postbattle report noted, "The wall was like a bug zapper. It drew in the fighters which allowed [coalition forces] to target and destroy these groups."[35]

At first, the barrier teams departed at dawn, returning the next night to resume their task. While the Americans prepared themselves for the following night's work, however, the insurgents replenished hidden explosive devices positioned along Phase Line Gold. Using mounds of garbage, roadside shacks, and other debris as cover, the enemy fighters pushed IEDs into place using long poles or donkey carts, then laid the command detonation wires over the nearest house roof to an adjacent block to shield the trigger operator from detection. On the portions of Phase Line Gold most easily accessible to Sadrist fighters, the Americans dismantled ten to fifteen IEDs per day. The hidden explosives were so dangerous that better-protected main battle tanks

35. Rpt, Fussman and Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold," 17.

and infantry fighting vehicles soon replaced the lightly armored Strykers that originally were assigned to route clearance and security missions.[36]

The reappearance of IED arrays forced the 3d Brigade Combat Team to spend an unanticipated amount of time defusing the devices. Initial countermeasures included removing abandoned cars, garbage, and anything else that served to shield improvised explosives from rapid detection. With the clutter and garbage removed, the Mahdi fighters found it more difficult to emplace IED arrays without being observed and fired upon. To save additional time, the Americans also started destroying IEDs rather than defusing them.[37] Although those actions reduced losses to IEDs, the pace of the nocturnal construction effort still suffered. Throughout this period, the 11th IA Division elements maintained their position overlooking the site, engaged the attacking Special Groups as needed, and provided aid to innocents caught in the crossfire.

ACCELERATING THE TEMPO

A decision by Colonel Hort to switch to around-the-clock operations proved to be an effective means of accelerating the construction effort. However, building the T-walls now required the full attention of several battalions despite the competing missions in the brigade area of operations. Fortunately, the 11th IA Division's overwatch of several lengthy portions of the barrier permitted the Americans to shift more assets to Phase Line Gold. Hort therefore split the daily task between Pappal and Barnett, making each unit responsible for a twelve-hour shift.[38]

In response to the change in U.S. tactics, the Special Groups ramped up their efforts to hit the construction teams with mortar fire, rocket-propelled grenades, and snipers. To counter the uptick, the 3d Brigade Combat Team sited its tanks and aerial assets to cover alleyways and buildings north of Phase Line Gold. Helicopters or armed drones concentrated on interdicting Sadrist attempts to occupy positions overlooking the barrier. When some Mahdi fighters were able to engage the engineers, the Iraqis had to relocate within minutes to avoid being targeted, which limited their effectiveness. As the operation wore on, seasonal dust storms increasingly

36. Email, Barnett to Reardon, 1 Jun 2011, sub: RE: U.S. Army Center of Military History–Iraqi Army during Sadr City Opns.
37. Deployment History, Rasmussen et al., n.d., "1st Squadron, 'War Eagles,' 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Deployment History, Operation Iraqi Freedom 07–09, August 2007–October 2008," 53.
38. Email, Pappal to Reardon, 6 Jul 2011, sub: RE: Sadr City April–May 2008.



A soldier from the 42d Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, uses his radio to check on the status of his troops patrolling the area near a temporary base established by his unit in Sadr City. (*Tech. Sgt. Adrian Cadiz, U.S. Air Force*)

limited the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and attack helicopters, so the Mahdi Army subsequently conducted its attacks whenever low-visibility conditions prevailed.

The arrival of Eifler's 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, in late April permitted the implementation of a new schedule in which all three battalions contributed eight hours to the construction effort. The change reduced a measure of stress on Barnett and Pappal's units while making the best use of their experience. As the barrier approached the anchoring section emplaced by the 1st Battalion, 68th Armored Regiment, Hort notified Colonel Pappal to turn over his unit's responsibilities to Eifler. The process required some time as the missions of securing the T-wall holding yard, route clearance, and construction duties passed between both units.

A series of dust storms during the first several days of May provided an unanticipated opportunity to disrupt the Special Group fighters. Sadrist military leaders, emboldened by the absence of attack helicopters and armed unmanned aerial vehicles, began collecting a sizable force for a massed attack on the construction teams. Learning of their intentions, MNC-I decided to employ extended-range guided multiple-launch rocket system weapons against three command posts utilized by senior Mahdi commanders.[39] The precision-guided rockets, each with a 200-pound warhead and capable

39. Rpt, Fussman and Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold," 11.

of hitting targets at a range of 57.9 kilometers with pinpoint accuracy, eliminated the enemy targets without causing appreciable damage to adjacent homes or the nearby Al-Sadr Hospital. Because the Special Group fighters lacked updated guidance from their leaders, most of whom had been killed or wounded, the planned assault degenerated into an incoherent series of piecemeal attacks.

After intelligence sources indicated that Mahdi fighters were acquiring 12.7-mm. sniper rifles to engage trucks hauling T-wall sections to the Phase Line Gold barrier, coalition forces deployed a 30-person Naval Special Warfare Sea Air Land (SEAL) countersniper team from Al Anbār to Sadr City.[40] The SEALs established themselves in a building overlooking the T-wall. Using tactics developed in Ar Ramādī to safeguard the construction of combat outposts, the marksmen engaged any insurgents who exposed themselves, while also pointing out hidden targets to nearby tanks and infantry fighting vehicles. As the engineers progressed along Phase Line Gold, the Navy snipers shifted from one building to the next utilizing covering fire provided by armored vehicles. The SEALs' advanced skills and tactics neutralized the enemy sniper threat and measurably aided the construction effort.

The final four days of construction did not encounter resistance because the Iraqi government and Sadrist representatives agreed to a ceasefire on 11 May.[41] On the 15th, Colonel Barnett's squadron rotated off the barrier mission to allow the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, to finish the Phase Line Gold T-wall. At the same time, MNF-I and the Iraqi government made arrangements to send several Iraqi brigades and two U.S. battalions north of Phase Line Gold. Fearing further erosion of public support if he continued fighting against his own countrymen, Muqtada al-Sadr issued a statement that he would allow Iraqi troops into northern Sadr City, but his militia would oppose the entry of American troops. Prime Minister Maliki agreed that he would not employ coalition soldiers on the condition that government troops could move freely within the district.[42] Sadr accepted the

40. Email, Barnett to Reardon, 1 Jun 2011, sub: RE: U.S. Army Center of Military History–Iraqi Army during Sadr City Opns; Rpt, Fussman and Sills, "Battle of Phase Line Gold," 13.
41. Deployment History, Rasmussen et al., n.d., "1st Squadron, 'War Eagles,' 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Deployment History, Operation Iraqi Freedom 07–09, August 2007–October 2008," 55–60.
42. AAR, Op Lion Firestorm, 1st Bn, 68th Armd Rgt, 25 Mar–27 May 2008, n.d., 12, Hist Files, CMH.

counteroffer, and Multi-National Division–Baghdad shelved its draft plans to employ U.S. units.[43]

On 20 May, three Iraqi brigades moved north of Phase Line Gold, and the government reasserted control over Sadr City.[44] Despite the violence of past weeks, no shots were fired as Iraqi vehicles passed through gaps opened in the Phase Line Gold T-wall barrier. Residents gazed impassively as tanks, armored personnel carriers, and Humvees streamed into the area, but the situation remained tense. Although Sadr had agreed to hand over security responsibility to Iraqi soldiers and police, he continued to resist calls to disband his militia. For the time being, the Iraqi military contented itself with handing out food and water while looking for hidden weapons and Special Group members refusing to abide by the truce.[45]

THE FIGHT MOVES TO MOSUL

Having lost control of Al Anbār and the enclaves surrounding Baghdād, al-Qaeda had little choice but to flee northward if it wished to maintain a foothold in Iraq. In the midst of the fight for Route Gold, Prime Minister Maliki decided to launch a second Iraqi-led offensive, this time against the dispirited but stubborn jihadist remnants assembling in Mosul. Given that Saulut al-Fursan had forced the cancellation of a previous American effort in northern Iraq, Maliki's decision ostensibly reflected a closer alignment of Iraqi and American priorities. However, the operation also buttressed the prime minister's nationalist platform by visibly projecting Baghdād's military power into the restive north. Nevertheless, the commitment of substantial numbers of Iraqi soldiers for this offensive significantly helped MNF-I because several of the surge brigades had returned to their home stations. In addition, the Americans were not caught off guard by Maliki's decision on this occasion. General Austin thus had the opportunity not only to deploy a task force composed of corps-level surveillance assets and U.S special operators to the area west of Mosul, but also to proactively shrink Multi-National Division–North's area of responsibility in order to allow the

43. Interv, Mark J. Reardon with Maj. Brent A. Schultz, former Cdr, 821st Eng Co, 8 Apr 2011, Hist Files, CMH.
44. "Iraqi Troops Move into Shiite Militia Stronghold," NBC News, 20 May 2008, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna24723075, Hist Files, CMH.
45. Alexandra Zavis and Raheem Salman, "Iraqi Troops Deploy Deep into Sadr City," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 May 2008, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-may-21-fg-iraq21-story.html, Hist Files, CMH.

division's commanding general, Maj. Gen. Mark P. Hertling, to concentrate his available troops more efficiently.[46]

Detailed preparations began on 9 May 2008, when the Nīnawā Operations Command intelligence officer provided the identities and suspected whereabouts of eighty-seven prominent terrorists residing within the city to Brig. Gen. Abdullah Abd-al Karim Sattar, commanding general of the 2d IA Division. Sattar, a Sunni Arab, was the brother-in-law of Prime Minister Maliki, a fact not lost on Kurdish politicians. He also had replaced a Kurdish officer as commander of the 2d IA Division in the wake of the 5th Brigade (formerly 1st Brigade), 2d IA Division's troubled deployment to Baghdād the previous year.[47] On 10 May, the division, supported by the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, launched a series of raids, collectively designated as Operation Lion's Roar. The Americans positioned armored vehicles at key locations around the city to prevent enemy reinforcements from entering while the Iraqis established checkpoints to control movement within Mosul. Search teams fanned out from twenty recently built outposts in key neighborhoods.

Maj. Gen. Riyadh Jalal Tawfiq, in his capacity as head of the Nīnawā Operations Command, informed the public, "I declare the beginning of the military operation today to clean the province of al-Qaeda remnants. . . . I call on all clerics and the heads of tribes to support the security forces in our effort to kick al-Qaeda out."[48] The 3d IA Division, normally responsible for western Nīnawā Province, had flooded the towns surrounding Mosul with nine infantry battalions in order to allow Sattar to conduct the maximum number of raids within the city proper. The raids paid off handsomely as Iraqi and U.S. forces detained 500 suspects between 9 and 13 May. General Sattar instructed his subordinates to interrogate all detainees immediately after capture in preparation for follow-on raids slated to begin within the next twenty-four to seventy-two hours.[49]

In a highly publicized visit reminiscent of Saulut al-Fursan, Maliki flew into Mosul on 14 May and immediately announced his intent to oversee the second phase of Lion's Roar, which he dubbed Operation Mother of

46. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 393–94.
47. Marie Colven, "Al-Qaeda Is Driven from Mosul Bastion after Bloody Last Stand," *Sunday Times*, 6 Jul 2008, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/al-qaeda-is-driven-from-mosul-bastion-after-bloody-last-stand-xskrkpbtqk9; Sam Dagher, "Fractures in Iraq City as Kurds and Baghdad Vie," *New York Times*, 28 Oct 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/28/world/middleeast/28mosul.html, Hist Files, CMH.
48. Waleed Ibrahim, "Iraqi and U.S. Troops Move Against al Qaeda in North," Reuters, 10 May 2008, https://www.reuters.com/article/2008/05/10/idUSL10604217/, Hist Files, CMH.
49. Colven, "Al-Qaeda Is Driven from Mosul Bastion after Bloody Last Stand."



Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki listens to an opening speech during the Sarafiya Bridge opening in Kadhimiyah. (*S. Sgt. Jessica J. Wilkes, U.S. Air Force*)

Two Springs.[50] As Iraqi and American troops worked their way outward from the city's center, they detained several hundred additional insurgents. The spate of tips from the public that led to the capture of so many suspects demonstrated that civilians trusted Iraqi soldiers to protect them against extremist reprisals. Friendly losses amounted to five Iraqi soldiers who were killed when an IED destroyed their armored personnel carrier and an Iraqi captain who was slain by a suicide bomber.[51] The results prompted even Maliki's harshest detractors to praise him. Hussein al-Falluji, a Sunni legislator, stated, "This operation carries a message to many parties inside and outside Iraq . . . to show that Iraqi forces are able to handle security."[52]

Events in Al Başrah, Sadr City, and now Mosul produced some unsettling, although not unwelcome, transformations within the Iraqi Army. Once the fighting in Sadr City ended, General Grimsley observed that senior Iraqi

50. "Iraqi Leader Calls Shots in Mosul," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 May 2008, https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2008-05-15-0805140765-story.html, Hist Files, CMH; Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 395; "Operation Mother of Two Springs," Institute for the Study of War, 29 May 2008, https://www.understandingwar.org/publications/commentaries/operation-mother-two-springs, Hist Files, CMH.

51. Colven, "Al-Qaeda Is Driven from Mosul Bastion after Bloody Last Stand"; Khalid al-Ansary and Waleed Ibrahim, "Iraq PM in Mosul for Offensive Against al Qaeda," Reuters, 14 May 2008, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2008/05/14/uk-iraq-idUKL1478235020080514, Hist Files, CMH.

52. Al-Ansary and Ibrahim, "Iraq PM in Mosul for Offensive Against al Qaeda."

Table 11.1—The Iraqi Army's Authorized versus On-Hand Strength

Unit	Authorized	Assigned[a]	Present for Duty
IGFC	1,145	687	676
1st IA Div	11,652	11,446	9,671
2d IA Div	13,152	13,678	12,494
3d IA Div	9,213	11,424	8,107
4th/12th IA Divs	25,719[b]	26,491	18,003
5th IA Div	12,402	12,526	9,425
6th IA Div	17,091	20,680	14,356
7th IA Div	11,652	11,186	7,690
8th IA Div	14,652	16,557	12,454
9th IA Div (Mech)	12,601	13,105	8,946
10th IA Div	9,963	11,756	10,561
11th IA Div	9,213	8,200	7,555
14th IA Div	8,393	11,247	7,722
Total	156,848	168,983	127,660

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Notes: a. Assigned versus authorized disparities reflect temporary overstrength from Al Başrah and the 30K Replenishment Initiative. *b.* The 4th IA Division controlled 12th IA Division subordinate elements (former strategic infrastructure brigades) until the 12th IA Division's headquarters was activated.

Source: U.S. Dept. Def, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2008: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2008 (Section 9010, Public Law 109–289)*, Rpt to Cong., Jun 2008, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA483069.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

officers were telling Americans what they intended to do, rather than asking for a plan of action as they had in the past. Grimsley attributed the change in mindset to growing Iraqi self-confidence. The emergence of an increasingly assertive attitude within the Iraqi military raised both concern and hope within MNF-I. Some U.S. commanders viewed the newfound aggressiveness with approval, while others felt the Iraqis had little justification to feel so positive.[53]

53. Robert Burns, "US Pleased, Worried, by Newfound Iraqi Confidence," Associated Press, 13 Jul 2008, https://www.deseret.com/2008/7/13/20263704/newfound-iraqi-confidence-pleases-worries-u-s, Hist Files, CMH.

American concerns about the Iraqi Army were not limited to the changing attitudes of its leaders. A combination of battle casualties, the 30K Replenishment Initiative, the fielding of fourth brigades, and the conversion of strategic infrastructure units into standard infantry organizations produced fluctuating personnel levels by the end of May 2008. Although the number of personnel serving in key organizations exceeded authorized strength by almost 12,000 soldiers, only 75.5 percent normally were present for duty because of battle casualties, monthly leave, and absenteeism (*Table 11.1*). On a positive note, the decision by Sunni tribes in Al Anbār Province and other regions to take up arms against extremist groups, a development popularly described as the Sunni Awakening, enabled the 1st and 7th IA Divisions in western Iraq to sidestep most of the recent turmoil.

ADJUSTING TO THE POST-SURGE ENVIRONMENT

Although the Iraqis had proved themselves more capable in recent months, the Baghdād government acknowledged that it still needed help. In June 2008, MNF–I shifted the theater security force, Col. Philip F. Battaglia's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, from Kuwait to southern Iraq to replace Marine advisers and elements of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, originally sent to Al Başrah. The multinational command carved out a temporary joint operating area from the former British area of responsibility, consisting of Al Muthanná, Dhī Qār, and Maysān Provinces, for Battaglia's unit. He reported to the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), then serving as the controlling headquarters for Multi-National Division–Center, and not to the British commander in Al Başrah.[54]

After establishing his headquarters at Contingency Operating Base Adder, located near An Nāṣirīyah in Dhī Qār Province, Colonel Battaglia discovered that criminal elements and rogue insurgent groups who filled the security vacuum beyond the Al Başrah city limits were loath to surrender the areas they had come to dominate. As a result, the 4th Brigade Combat Team soon found itself combating deeply entrenched criminal and insurgent gangs while establishing partnerships with the 10th IA Division headquarters, its four subordinate brigades, three provincial police forces, one National Police brigade, and the 11th Brigade of the Directorate of Border Enforcement.[55]

54. Interv, Mark J. Reardon with Col. Philip F. Battaglia, former Cdr, 4th Bde, 1st Cav Div, 13 Feb 2012, Hist Files, CMH.

55. Philip F. Battaglia and Curtis Taylor, "Security Force Assistance Operations: Defining the Advise and Assist Brigade," *Military Review* 90, no. 4 (Jul-Aug 2010): 2.



Iraqi soldiers taking part in a combined air assault, code-named Operation Chelsea Creek, watch from prone positions as the UH–60 helicopters that delivered them to the objective depart to pick up more troops. (*Pfc. Christopher McKenna, U.S. Army*)

Although Battaglia's 4th Brigade Combat Team received little or no specialized advisory training before arriving in Kuwait, it contained a sufficient number of personnel who previously had worked with Iraqi security forces to ensure mission success. The advisory mission was so resource intensive that Colonel Battaglia designated it as the brigade main effort. His 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, drew the mission of assisting the Al Muthanná and Dhī Qār provincial police forces in addition to mentoring and supporting the 39th and 40th Brigades of the 10th IA Division. The task of mentoring the National Police, provincial law enforcement in north Maysān, and the 10th IA Division's 38th Brigade fell to the 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment. The brigade's reconnaissance element, the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, aided the 11th Brigade of the Directorate of Border Enforcement, while the 5th Battalion, 82d Field Artillery Regiment, worked with the 10th IA Division's 41st Brigade and provincial police in south Maysān.[56] MNC-I's willingness to commit an entire brigade to the advisory

56. Bfg, 4th BCT, 1st Cav Div, 14 Apr 2009, sub: Forging the Advise and Assist Brigade: 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, slide 3, Hist Files, CMH.

function reflected a growing awareness that the Iraqi military would take on a much more prominent role after the surge and the reduction of five American brigades.

The transfer of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, from Kuwait to Iraq had solved one problem, but it did not address other issues certain to arise with the impending departure of additional American brigades. The Ministry of Defense sought to fill potential gaps in security by increasing the number of Iraqi combat units. With few near-term options available, the Iraqis tentatively settled on using Kurdish personnel, including a complete Peshmerga armor brigade, as the nucleus for two new infantry divisions, provisionally identified as the 15th and 16th IA Divisions.[57] The ministry planned to base the 15th IA Division at Erbil, Kurdistan's capital city, while the 16th IA Division garrisoned in As Sulaymānīyah, located 88.5 kilometers east of Kirkūk near the Iran-Iraq border. Defense leaders also considered a third unit, tentatively designated as the 17th IA Division, for activation in the Baghdād area.

Acknowledging that training facilities lacked the capacity to provide replacements to existing divisions while also generating the 15th and 16th IA Divisions, the Ministry of Defense approached the challenge in incremental fashion. The new divisions would receive one battalion apiece from Besmaya starting in mid-May 2008, with additional battalions coming from successive training cycles until both organizations had two brigades, albeit minus their headquarters companies and supporting elements.[58] That process hit a snag in the form of security requirements for the impending January 2009 provincial elections, as the prime minister wanted the new divisions to contribute to election security even though they were still building up.[59] The ministry revised the milestones for each division to reflect a lengthy pause following the fielding of two of their four infantry brigades. Activating the remaining brigades, as well as all supporting troops, would be deferred until after voting ended.[60]

57. Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) listed the Peshmerga 1st Armored Brigade as the core of the 16th Iraqi Army (IA) Division. A similar identification had not been made for the 15th IA Division. Rpt, Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq (MNSTC-I), 3 Oct 2008, "Iraqi Army Task Organization and Leadership," 28, I Corps Folder, MNC-I Collection, CMH.

58. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 16 Sep 2008, sub: The Iraqi Armed Forces–Army, Navy, and Air Force–Organization Chart, 17–18, ISF Folder, I Corps Collection, CMH.

59. Bfg, 1 May 2008, sub: 2008-04-30 General Babakir Weekly Meeting Final English, 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

60. A MNSTC-I report dated mid-September 2008 noted, "5 May 08 MinDefletter (#3/1/3378) states that units cannot generate in 2008 due to lack of funding." See Bfg, MNSTC-I, 16 Sep 2008, sub: The Iraqi Armed Forces–Army, Navy, and Air Force–Organization Chart.

The effort to create the 15th and 16th IA Divisions encountered further challenges as the value of crude oil fell during the first half of 2008. The Ministry of Defense had calculated its 2009 budget based on past trends in petroleum prices. With nondiscretionary spending such as salaries and life support for personnel accounting for 60 percent of its projected budget, the ministry did not have the flexibility to cover the shortfall by moving around its own money. Iraqi overtures for additional U.S. funding fell on deaf ears. Although faced with a potential $10 billion defense deficit, Prime Minister Maliki decided he could not divert spending to the military from social programs before the January 2009 elections.[61] Reducing the defense budget solved at least one problem for the prime minister; he eliminated the cost of creating the two new divisions, composed of a mix of Arab and Peshmerga personnel, without opening himself to accusations of sectarianism from Kurdish leaders.

Separatist tensions, rather than funding shortfalls, actually had sealed the fate of both divisions. In July 2008, Maliki sent the Iraqi Army into northeastern Iraq as part of an effort code-named Operation Bashaer al-Kheir (Omens of Prosperity), ostensibly to clear out al-Qaeda remnants before the 2009 provincial elections.[62] In reality, the Iraqi troops were arresting Sunnis who served with the American-sponsored Sons of Iraq program in Diyālá.[63] The Ministry of Defense's decision to use Arab units also sparked fears of a land grab among Kurdish leaders. When Iraqi troops reached Khānaqīn, a Kurdish-majority town located in Diyālá Province, several thousand Peshmerga fighters barred the further advance of government forces. A military clash appeared imminent after the Kurds ignored a demand to give way. The confrontation ended only after American commanders persuaded Kurdistan Regional Government President Massoud Barzani to personally broker a compromise with Maliki. The troops from both sides withdrew 24.1 kilometers, leaving the local police responsible for the town's security.[64]

Public statements by Kurdish officers in the Iraqi Army before the standoff had served to heighten simmering tensions. A battalion commander in the

61. Bfg, MNF-I to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 23 Dec 2008, sub: General Odierno Budget, Manning Briefing, slide 1, 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

62. Bashaer al-Kheir is also translated as "Augers of Prosperity." Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 412–13; Brian Katulis, "Standoff in Khanaqin," Center for American Progress, 29 Aug 2008, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/standoff-in-khanaqin/, Hist Files, CMH.

63. Claire Russo, "The Maliki Government Confronts Diyala," Institute for the Study of War, 23 Sep 2008, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/maliki-government-confronts-diyala, Hist Files, CMH.

2d IA Division had remarked, "If the Arabs do not change now, things will get worse and I see confrontation."[65] A brigade commander in that same division proclaimed his loyalties were first and foremost to Kurdistan. "If I were made to choose, I would not even think for a second—I would leave the Army. . . . We have sacrificed too much fighting the Ba'thists."[66] Another Kurdish battalion commander, after noting that insurgents played a part in stoking ethnic tensions, conceded, "Al-Qaeda uses this as a tool."[67] The fact that Baghdād had appointed an Arab rather than a Kurd to oversee the Nīnawā Operations Command and had replaced a Kurdish division commander with a Sunni Arab did not help matters.[68]

The opinions expressed by Kurdish officers contrasted with the Iraqi government's portrayal of the army as a symbol of national unity. Those efforts were bearing fruit, as reflected in a June 2008 survey where 54 percent of Iraqis perceived their army as a national versus sectarian institution, as compared to 39 percent in September 2007.[69] The Iraqi government hailed the diverse backgrounds of senior Army officers as a reflection of its commitment to proportional representation.[70] Another positive indicator came when the National Accord Front, the largest Sunni Arab parliamentary bloc, publicized its intention to rejoin Maliki's cabinet after a year-long boycott. The announcement followed Maliki's decision to act against Shi'i militias in Al Baṣrah and Sadr City.[71] The prime minister also had promised to accept into government security forces a portion of the 80,000 former Sunni dissidents helping the American military.[72]

64. This incident is one example of "Kurdish distrust toward the intentions of Maliki, and Arab animosity toward what is viewed as Kurdish expansionism." Stansfield and Anderson, "Kurds in Iraq," 136–37.
65. Dagher, "Fractures in Iraq City as Kurds and Baghdad Vie."
66. Dagher, "Fractures in Iraq City as Kurds and Baghdad Vie."
67. Missy Ryan, "Kurd-Arab Tensions May Threaten Iraq Calm," Reuters, 13 Nov 2008, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-kurds-arabs-idUSTRE4AC06E20081113/, Hist Files, CMH.
68. Doc., "20080113 Ninewa Operations Command Establishment," 13 Jan 2008; Doc., "20080506 2nd IA Div and Voting INTSUM," 6 May 2008; both in MNC-I Historian Folder, I Corps Collection, CMH.
69. Bfg, MNF-I to U.S. Central Cmd (CENTCOM) Cmdg Gen, 6 Jun 2008, sub: CENTCOM VTC – 6 Jun 2008 – ISF-Way Ahead, slides 4–5, 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.
70. Bfg, MNSTC-I, n.d., sub: Iraqi Army Division ORA [Operational Readiness Assessment] May 08, ISF Folder, I Corps Collection, CMH.
71. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2 Jul 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
72. Farook Ahmed, "Sons of Iraq and Awakening Forces," Backgrounder 23, Institute for the Study of War, 21 Feb 2008, 2, https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/Backgrounder%2023%20Sons%20of%20Iraq%20and%20Awakening%20Forces.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

Bashaer al-Kheir also exposed how sectarian interests were driving Iraqi special operations to an unprecedented degree. Just before sunrise on 18 August, a heliborne special operations team from the Counter Terrorism Service arrived in Baʿqūbah to detain Diyālá's provincial governor, Raad Rashid al-Timimi.[73] The sudden appearance of the raiders sparked a gun battle that killed al-Timimi's administrative assistant and wounded four members of his security detail. The Iraqi special operators then arrested the head of the Diyālá Province security committee, Hussein al-Zubaidi, and the president of Diyālá University, Nazar al-Khafaji, while also managing to get into a firefight with police accompanied by American troops. The Iraqi Islamic Party, the country's largest Sunni faction, said in a statement that the raids were a sign that "sectarianism remains the sole motive of the security forces."[74] General Petraeus lodged an angry formal protest, prompting Maliki to order an investigation that predictably failed to deliver tangible results.[75]

Although the Ministry of Defense shelved plans to field the 15th and 16th IA Divisions, the 17th IA Division escaped a similar fate because Baghdād always had planned to fill it with Arabs rather than Kurds. Instead of generating new units, the ministry ordered the 6th IA Division to transfer eight infantry battalions to the new division. They included all six battalions and the headquarters of the 25th Brigade along with two other battalions and the 55th Brigade headquarters previously slated for the 15th Division.[76] The 25th Brigade then split off three of its battalions to form the 23d Brigade.[77] Additional personnel came from the 12th IA Division, itself still in the process of forming. The Ministry of Defense also notified the overstrength 1st through 5th IA Divisions to be prepared to transfer additional personnel to meet needs not filled by the 6th or 12th IA Divisions.[78] Despite these measures, the new division had only 21 percent of its authorized number

73. The raid apparently was caused by the Diyālá provincial council firing the Ministry of Interior–appointed provincial police chief, who had replaced 4,000 police officers with Badr militia personnel over the past year.

74. "Sunnis Outraged Over Diyala Raids, Arrests," *Brattleboro Reformer*, 20 Aug 2008, https://www.reformer.com/local-news/sunnis-outraged-over-diyala-raids-arrests/article_cfa19777-0449-50b2-ba32-8831bfa0392e.html, Hist Files, CMH.

75. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 414.

76. The Ministry of Defense issued Order No. 64 on 27 May 2008, directing the creation of the three new divisions. Memo, 3 Jun 2008, sub: The Iraqi Armed Forces, Army 17th Div, Organization Chart, 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

77. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 16 Sep 2008, sub: The Iraqi Armed Forces–Army, Navy, and Air Force–Organization Chart.

78. Bfg, 4 Jul 2008, sub: IAF Personnel Update, "JHQ Numbers," 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

of commissioned officers. Vehicles, radios, night vision devices, and repair parts were also sorely lacking.[79]

Swapping battalions and personnel provided the 17th IA Division with a reasonable core of infantry units, but assembling the divisional troops and physical infrastructure was more difficult. The former, which included a motor transport regiment and signal, military police, engineer, reconnaissance, and explosive ordnance disposal companies, had to be built from scratch at an estimated cost of $86 million. Construction of the division's base facilities, which included buildings for the headquarters, troop housing, training center, and logistics, remained out of reach because the $45 million needed would not be available until fiscal year 2009. Until the new installations were in place, the 17th IA Division's subordinate elements remained colocated with their former divisions.[80] The lack of resources led to the 17th IA Division being relegated to a static security mission—which involved guarding 252 checkpoints and 100 outposts—until it received its remaining units (*Table 11.2*).[81]

ADAPTING PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS EVOLVING NEEDS

The challenges of fielding the 17th IA Division, in addition to an identical set of unresolved issues associated with generating the 14th IA Division, provided an opportunity to advance Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik's goal to improve ministerial capacity. Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) mentors challenged their counterparts to master new responsibilities while honing skills they already had. During 2007, ministry officials learned to provide basic life support, design force structure, educate civilian workers, and understand the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) process. Advisers also steered the Iraqis toward developing human resource management and payroll systems; implementing policies and procedures to receive, account for, and distribute equipment; overseeing construction projects; and conducting effective strategic planning.[82]

79. Memo, Joint HQ Advisory Support Team for MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 16 Oct 2008, sub: Trip Report, 17th Division HQs, 25th and 55th Brigades, 13–15 Oct 2008, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.
80. Memo, 3 Jun 2008, sub: The Iraqi Armed Forces, Army 17th Div, Organization Chart.
81. Memo, Joint HQ Advisory Support Team for MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 16 Oct 2008, sub: Trip Report, 17th Division HQs, 25th and 55th Brigades, 13–15 Oct 2008.
82. Bfg, MNF-I to CENTCOM Cmdg Gen, 6 Jun 2008, sub: CENTCOM VTC – 6 Jun 2008 – ISF-Way Ahead, slide 37.

TABLE 11.2—FORMING THE 17TH IRAQI ARMY DIVISION, JUNE 2008–FEBRUARY 2010

17th IA Division

Overview
- Created by directive from the prime minister dated 27 May 2008
- Deployed south of Baghdād in northern Bābil Province
- Military transition teams initially assigned only at brigade level

Structure
- Three brigades, with a fourth brigade (initially the 57th but later the 60th) tentatively planned for December 2009 to February 2010
- Nine infantry battalions (eight combat ready, one understrength) provided by the 6th IA Division
- Initially lacking division headquarters (planned for June to September 2009) and division troops: motor transport regiment, signal company, military police company, engineer company, reconnaissance company, and explosive ordnance company
- Two new brigade headquarters (resourced but not yet formed)

Equipment
- General weapon type: AK47 (1,173 M16s assigned to the 25th Brigade, with additional M16s planned for 2010–2011)
- Trucks and other vehicles diverted from August 2008 Foreign Military Sales shipment
- Humvees transferred from strategic infrastructure battalions, Ministry of Defense, and February 2009 batch delivered by U.S. forces in country

Personnel
- 9,950 personnel transferred with the 23d and 25th Brigades, 6th IA Division
- 2,247 personnel assigned from the October 2008 Iraqi Army basic training cycle

23d Bde, 17th IA Div			25th Bde, 17th IA Div			55th Bde, 17th IA Div		
• Battalions already exist • Redesignation required • Acquire equipment and personnel originally allocated to the 46th Bde, 12th IA Div			• Brigade headquarters and battalions already exist • Redesignation required • Equipment and personnel already acquired			• Battalions already exist • Redesignation required for 1st and 2d Bn • Reconstitution required for 3d Bn • Acquire equipment and personnel originally allocated to the 48th Bde, 12th IA Div		
1st Bn	**2d Bn**	**3d Bn**	**1st Bn**	**2d Bn**	**3d Bn**	**1st Bn**	**2d Bn**	**3d Bn**
formerly 3d Bn, 4th Bde, 6th IA Div Al Saqr Base	formerly 5th Bn, 4th Bde, 6th IA Div Al Saqr Base	formerly 3d Bn, 1st Bde, 6th IA Div Al Radwaniyah, Areen, Al Asad	formerly 1st Bn, 25th Bde, 6th IA Div Al Latifah	formerly 2d Bn, 25th Bde, 6th IA Div Al Maḥmūdīyah	formerly 3d Bn, 25th Bde, 6th IA Div Al Maḥmūdīyah	formerly 4th Bn, 25th Bde, 6th IA Div Al Maḥmūdīyah	formerly 5th Bn, 25th Bde, 6th IA Div Al Saqr Base	formerly 6th Bn, 25th Bde, 6th IA Div Al Latifah

17th Division Training Command
No funding or resources; will depend on other units through 2010.

17th Location Command
No funding or resources; will depend on other units through 2010.

Legend: Generated Units | Not Planned; Not Resourced

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Source: Talking Points, Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq (MNSTC-I) Cmdg Gen, 6 Jun 2008, sub: PM, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH); Memo, 3 Jun 2008, sub: The Iraqi Armed Forces, Army 17th Div, Organization Chart, Babakir and MoD Subfolder, 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH; Slide, Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team, 11 Jul 2008, sub: 17th IA Division; Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 24 Jul 2008, sub: Babakir Agenda; both in Hist Files, CMH.

Cultural differences accounted for many problems encountered by American mentors working with the Ministry of Defense. The Iraqi preference for a strongman management model, which used rapid decision making and personal intervention as hallmarks of dynamic leadership, made it difficult to adhere to a long-range plan. Iraqi officials also faced a greater personal administrative burden because most were loath to delegate their authority. The lack of cooperation between ministries, another legacy of a deposed regime which had pitted one official against another, compounded internal inefficiencies. Although some ministerial advisers made little or no progress due to bureaucratic squabbles, other advisers succeeded in convincing their counterparts to adopt several policies favored by the Americans. One example occurred when the Iraqis agreed to rotate infantry battalions out of combat to attend refresher training. During the first year of that program, however, the ministry released only 7 out of 165 Iraqi infantry battalions to participate.[83]

MNF-I furthered the ministerial development process by directing advisers to stop intervening when logistical issues impacted Iraqi Army operations.[84] Although the original concept made sense from the multinational command's perspective, implementation of the potentially disruptive policy with little or no preparation produced uneven results. The military transition teams unofficially had been providing their partners with a workaround solution for sustainment challenges since 2003. In a few Iraqi Army formations, advisers managed to teach unit commanders to master the techniques required to ensure their troops received fuel and ammunition from Ministry of Defense stockpiles. For the most part, however, frustrated military transition teams were forced to intercede to ensure delivery of fuel and ammunition.[85] Advisers who followed MNF-I's edict by cutting off that

83. These included the 3d IA Division's 1st Battalion, 9th Brigade, and the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 11th Brigade; the 5th IA Division's 2d and 3d Battalions, 21st Brigade; the 2d Battalion, 28th Brigade, 7th IA Division; and the 1st Battalion, 40th Brigade, 10th IA Division. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. Dubik, *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2009), 12–13, https://understandingwar.org/report/building-security-forces-and-ministerial-capacity-iraq-primer, Hist Files, CMH.

84. Interv, Mark J. Reardon with Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. Dubik, former MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 31 May 2023, Hist Files, CMH; Interv, Maj. Thomas Urquhart, United States Forces–Iraq, with Maj. Michael Egan, former Director of Training, Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission–Army, 16 Nov 2009, 2–4, 9, 14, Hist Files, CMH.

85. Lt. Col. Seth W. B. Folsom, *In the Gray Area: A Marine Advisor Team at War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 84, 96, 107–8, 140–42, 152–53, 167.

assistance not only ended up poisoning their working relationship with the Iraqis, but also sowed seeds of mistrust between both armies.[86]

General Dubik published his final assessment of the Iraqi security forces in early July 2008. It highlighted efforts to reduce the Iraqi reliance on direct coalition aid while offering suggestions about generating additional force structure. In his opinion, the improved security conditions offered a window of opportunity to shift from generating maneuver forces to creating combat support and combat service support units. The latter pair of categories included command and control, engineers, fire support, supply, maintenance, and rotary-wing aviation capabilities, also referred to as enablers by the Americans. MNSTC-I first had to persuade the Ministry of Defense to resource those initiatives. That task proved to be extremely difficult because the Iraqis balked at releasing combat-experienced junior leaders to serve as instructors at training schools.[87]

Attempts to enhance command and control met with the most success, in large part because the Iraqis recognized the advantages of fielding divisions that could coordinate the actions of all subordinate elements efficiently. Baghdād faced a two-tiered challenge when it came to accomplishing that goal. First, the speed at which brigades were generated during the surge meant that the 12th, 14th, and 17th IA Divisions still lacked fully equipped and staffed headquarters. That situation had to be rectified before those organizations could operate at their full potential.[88] Second, the lack of secure radios meant that insurgent groups could monitor Iraqi Army communications. MNSTC-I made some progress toward acquiring 8,285 hand-held, 1,523 portable, and 2,516 vehicle-mounted single-channel ground and airborne radio systems for tactical units. However, given the Iraqi government's preelection spending priorities, there was no funding to provide higher headquarters elements with comparable equipment.[89] Although intradivision communications were more secure, the radio channels between army and police units, as well as provincial operations centers and divisions, remained vulnerable.

MNSTC-I also sought to convince the Ministry of Defense to field divisional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance units modeled on existing U.S. organizations. That program required a host of expensive items, including voice-intercept and direction-finding systems, unmanned

86. Folsom, *In the Gray Area*, 70.
87. Interv, Urquhart with Egan, 16 Nov 2009, 14.
88. Bfg, MNSTC-I, 16 Sep 2008, sub: The Iraqi Armed Forces–Army, Navy, and Air Force–Organization Chart.
89. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 20, 2008 Material Folder, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, CMH.

aerial vehicles, and secure communications gear. Given the price tag, the Iraqis made a tentative commitment, contingent on available funding, to generate company-sized units for some but not all of their divisions. The first three would go to the 11th, 12th, and 14th IA Divisions so there would be one each in the central, northern, and southern regions of Iraq.[90] The Americans remained enthusiastic about expanding the companies into battalions despite the ministry's lukewarm support for the less ambitious version of the initiative.[91]

Providing the Iraqi Army with better aviation support posed a far more complex proposition, and it was one that MNSTC-I had even less influence over. Unlike the U.S. military, the Iraqi Air Force owned only rotary-wing aircraft. Because the Ministry of Defense initially had placed a high priority on employing aviation for border security and oil pipeline surveillance, it had made little effort to procure aircraft capable of supporting ground units in a combat situation. In this time of fiscal constraint, the ministry balked at any suggestion to acquire modern transport helicopters and rotary-wing gunships because of their considerable cost. MNSTC-I thus predicted that the Iraqis would remain dependent on American aviation support for the foreseeable future.[92]

Overhauling the Iraqi Army's logistical system was a long-deferred and increasingly formidable task. The generation of combat units had outpaced the allocation of funding for additional sustainment significantly and consistently since late 2006. The assistance provided by Iraqi logisticians to maneuver battalions in Al Başrah and Mosul indicated that support capabilities had improved somewhat, but those skills were distributed unevenly across the force, as evidenced in Sadr City, where the 11th IA Division had needed considerable American assistance. The Iraqis could not let that trend continue if they wanted to conduct operations of increasing sophistication, size, and duration. However, the prime minister's office showed little interest in acquiring that capability, as evidenced by plans to generate three more infantry divisions without bothering to field divisional sustainment elements. The MNSTC-I assessment had suggested creating a

90. Bfg, Coalition Army Advisory Training Team (CAATT) to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 2 Dec 2008, sub: Coalition Army Advisory Training Team, slide 15, Weekly Updates to MNF-I CG Folder, I Corps Collection, CMH.

91. Although the instride assessment stated that the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance units would be formed as battalions, follow-on Coalition Army Advisory Training Team updates indicated that company-sized elements would be organized before the formation of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance battalions. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 21.

92. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 23.



Col. Edward F. Dorman, the senior logistician for U.S. military operations in Iraq (*left*); Brig. Gen. Muniem, the director for electrical, mechanical, and engineering at the Ministry of Defense (*center*); and Brig. Gen. Keith C. Walker, the assistant division commander for operations of the 1st Infantry Division, listen to a briefing during a logistical symposium held on 27 October 2008. (*Spc. Kiyoshi Freeman, 3d Expeditionary Sustainment Command*)

theater transportation regiment, twelve divisional logistics battalions, and a fuel distribution company, but that initiative had zero chance of progressing without the Ministry of Defense's backing.[93] General Dubik acknowledged that the Iraqis were not making decisions "as the Americans would," but he believed they were arriving at workable solutions.[94]

A combination of funding shortfalls and the recruiting freeze conspired to limit the initial phase of the enablers program to three intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance companies; one military police company; and one signal company. MNSTC-I temporarily set aside plans to field additional units after deciding to prioritize the creation of an explosive ordnance disposal regiment and a motor transport regiment, plus reconnaissance platoons for existing motor transport regiments, six engineer battalions, twenty mortar platoons, twelve ordnance parks, and twelve field workshops.[95] The mortar platoons were an Iraqi priority, so the Ministry

93. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 23.
94. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 5.
95. Bfg, 21 Apr 2009, slide entitled "Defense ISF Build Matrix for 2009," I Corps Collection, CMH.

of Defense placed more emphasis on their creation than the enablers recommended by MNSTC-I.[96]

FOREIGN MILITARY SALES RECONSIDERED

General Dubik's final report also touched upon FMS in Iraq. Since 2005, the Iraqis had employed the program, which gave them a transparent and corruption-free process, on eighty-three occasions, purchasing equipment and services valued at an estimated $2.8 billion. However, General Dubik felt the Ministry of Defense could not grow and evolve if it continued to rely on that system as its only means of procurement. He believed the Iraqi government needed the ability to pursue direct contract partnerships with commercial arms dealers in other countries and thus recommended that the ministry employ alternate procurement options to meet training, equipping, and sustainment requirements.

Two recurring issues may have contributed to Dubik's recommendations. The first centered on the amount of time needed to process an FMS transaction. It typically took a month for the Ministry of Defense to put together the initial request, more than three months for the U.S. bureaucracy to approve the package, and a further thirty days for the Iraqis to prepare the required acceptance documents. Although the Iraqi bureaucracy could turn around cases within those timelines, on occasion, the initial request and acceptance paperwork languished for months in the ministry. The second issue centered on the period of time before suppliers delivered the requested equipment or services. The Iraqis were, in many instances, competing with the U.S. armed services for the same types of American-built equipment, and manufacturers had little excess capacity. As a result, less than half of the items purchased since 2003 had been delivered as of mid-2008. The percentage would have been even lower except that a number of long-delayed orders had arrived in recent months.[97]

In addition to those lags in the process, MNSTC-I also had to deal with U.S. policy restrictions that affected the sale of arms and equipment to foreign nations. One major roadblock resulted from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency's inability to grant Iraq "dependable undertaking status," a category that allowed countries to pay for their equipment purchases in

96. Bfg, MNSTC-I to I Corps Cmdg Gen, 25 Apr 2009, sub: MNSTC-I [JHATT] Command Brief V34, slide 3, I Corps Collection, CMH.

97. For example, only 10 percent of items and equipment ordered in 2007 arrived that year. Memo, MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen for MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 3 Jul 2008, sub: End of Tour Report, 35–36.

installments.[98] This meant that the Iraqi security ministries had to pay in full before any delivery. An American policy institute pointed out the drawback:

> The Iraq FMS problem would appear to undermine an important part of the Administration's approach to national security. Simply put, there is little need for the United States to build partners' capacities in those nations with very good credit ratings. The countries that need the help generally are poor, with inadequate infrastructure, spotty governance and more than a little corruption. If its long-term strategy is to be successful, the Administration needs to devise a way of funding military sales to countries with bad credit ratings. The immediate problem is to find a way to sell Iraq the U.S. military equipment it wants and needs.[99]

Lacking legislative backing, President George W. Bush's administration had little or no chance of amending a series of presidentially directed arms sales restrictions that had begun with President James E. "Jimmy" Carter Jr.'s conventional weapons transfer policy of May 1977.[100]

The sluggish pace of acquisitions from U.S. sources exerted considerable constraints on the Iraqis' ability to generate force structure and sustain existing units. After MNSTC-I brought the problem to the attention of MNF-I, which in turn approached U.S. Central Command, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates established a special FMS task force. With representatives from the Joint Staff, Central Command, and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, it examined the problems affecting Iraqi packets as it sought to develop a standardized procedure for tracking

98. Dependable undertaking status is legislatively regulated by Sections 22 and 29 of the Arms Control Export Act, not by officials in the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. Memo, Def Security Cooperation Agency for Def Contract Agency, Def Logistics Agency, Missile Def Agency, National Security Agency, et al., 2 Sep 2020, sub: Dependable Undertaking Update and Clarification, Defense Security Cooperation Agency Policy Memo 20-14, E-SAAM 375, https://www.samm.dsca.mil/policy-memoranda/dsca-20-14, Hist Files, CMH.

99. American legislative restrictions thus presented the Iraqi government with two options: forego the purchase altogether or seek similar equipment from other sources. Daniel Gouré, "Iraq's Bad Credit Rating Shouldn't Block U.S. Military Sales," Lexington Institute, 15 Oct 2009, https://www.lexington institute.org/iraqs-bad-credit-rating-shouldnt-block-u-s-military-sales/, Hist Files, CMH.

100. Memo, Elizabeth Field, U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, for Honorable Robert Menendez, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 9 Sep 2019, sub: Conventional Arms Transfer Policy: Agency Processes for Reviewing Direct Commercial Sales and Foreign Military Sales Align with Policy Criteria, GAO–19–673R, 1, https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-673r.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

requests, contracts, and deliveries. New procedures approved by Secretary Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael G. Mullen reduced the FMS request timeline from five months to two and a half months and equipment started flowing into theater at a somewhat faster rate, but the task force could not change the fact that FMS required constant attention to meet wartime needs.[101]

A prime example of how peacetime methods were ill-adapted to combat situations emerged when a contract for new radios stalled because of Department of Defense contracting regulations. The MNF-I commander deemed the equipment essential to providing the Iraqi Army with secure communications, and the items originally were slated for delivery in November 2007. That schedule got scrapped when a competing vendor protested the award of the original contract, initiating a mandatory review process that delayed delivery for more than three months. In another instance, MNSTC-I attempted to acquire up-armored Humvees, which had been turned in by U.S. units that had received new mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles. Rather than wait for stateside factories to deliver new Humvees, MNSTC-I sought to transfer 8,500 used ones to the Iraqis for the nominal fee of $1,000 each. After defense procurement officials in the United States learned of the plan, they insisted on charging $11,000 per vehicle. As a result, the Iraqis only could afford to buy about half the desired quantity in 2008, leaving the rest to be purchased in 2009. Increasing the cost deprived Iraqi soldiers of enhanced battlefield protection and slowed MNSTC-I's plans to refocus maintenance training and spare parts acquisition from supporting a wide variety of light tactical platforms to supporting a single vehicle.[102] The delays in awarding contracts and producing equipment continued to erode Iraqi confidence. After dealing with a host of difficulties similar to the radio and Humvee problems, MNSTC-I decided to restrict FMS use to the procurement of long-term services and major equipment acquisitions.

HARBINGERS OF CHANGE

General Dubik's 2008 assessment cited many instances of progress and promises of improvement, and the suggestions contained in that document would be overseen by his successor, Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, who assumed command of MNSTC-I in early July. Commissioned as an infantry officer after graduating from West Point in 1976, General Helmick had served in

101. Dubik, *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity*, 19–20.
102. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 282.

troop and staff positions with the 82d Airborne Division, the 1st Cavalry Division, the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), the 101st Airborne Division, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Just before arriving in Iraq, Helmick had led the Southern European Task Force based in Vincenza, Italy.[103]

After spending several weeks meeting with officials in Baghdād, General Helmick visited Iraqi and U.S. units in outlying areas. The risks of traveling in Iraq were never more apparent than when a suicide bomber rammed a car into the mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicle transporting Helmick, an Iraqi general, and the Multi-National Division–North Assistant Division Commander Brig. Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III on 24 August. The attack, which occurred outside the main gate of Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, left a crater 5 feet wide and 10 feet deep in the road. The generals' vehicle suffered enough damage to be classified as irreparable, but the driver of the explosives-laden car was the only casualty. Coalition officials characterized the incident as a random act rather than the deliberate targeting of a senior U.S. officer.[104]

Several weeks after the Mosul incident, newly promoted General Raymond T. Odierno assumed command of MNF-I from General Petraeus during a 16 September ceremony in Baghdād. Odierno was returning to Iraq at a time when the Maliki government accepted a growing share of its own internal security obligations.[105] One week before the change of command, the Iraqi military had assumed responsibility for securing Al Anbār, the eleventh of eighteen provinces to be transferred to Iraqi control and the first which bordered the capital of Baghdād.[106] Before the end of October, coalition forces also would turn over both Bābil and Wāsit Provinces.[107]

MNSTC-I initially followed Dubik's parting guidance, but the certainty of an eventual coalition withdrawal prompted MNF-I to instruct Helmick to modify those priorities. In addition to shifting emphasis from tactical

103. "Helmick Takes Helm of Training Mission in Iraq," American Forces Press Service, 3 Jul 2008, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/21159/helmick-takes-helm-training-mission-iraq; "Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, Commanding General, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq and NATO Training Mission–Iraq," official biography, n.d., http://www/nato/int/shape/bios/other/helmick.htm (accessed 8 Nov 2012); both in Hist Files, CMH.
104. Sean D. Naylor, "A Close Call for 2 Generals in Iraq," *Army Times*, 22 Nov 2008, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/11/army_generals_112208w/, Hist Files, CMH.
105. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 17 Sep 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
106. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 3 Sep 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.
107. Iraq Weekly Status Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 29 Oct 2008, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/c24956.htm, Hist Files, CMH.



In the Al Ḩayyānīyāh District of Al Başrah, more than 3,000 Iraqis showed up for a recruiting event to fill 1,000 available positions. This occurred several times following Operation Saulut al-Fursan. (*U.S. Marine Corps*)

advising to building ministerial capacity, Helmick became the point person for the American effort to persuade the Iraqi Army to learn how to wage conventional warfare instead of focusing solely on developing its counterinsurgency skills. Although Baghdād appeared willing to discuss that topic, the Ministry of Defense's interest lay with acquiring conventional weapons systems rather than implementing the necessary doctrinal and force structure changes.

As 2008 ended, the Iraqi Army numbered thirteen infantry divisions and one mechanized division. Smaller units included 52 brigade headquarters, plus 174 maneuver, 6 infrastructure and 6 special operations battalions. Not all of these were ready for intensive combat. One division headquarters (the 12th), five brigade headquarters (the 41st and 45th through 48th), thirteen infantry battalions, fourteen engineer companies, fourteen bomb disposal companies, and two motor transport regiments (the 11th and 14th) were still being formed. In addition, because of equipment shortfalls, five battalions within the 12th IA Division and one from the 2d IA Division still operated under the strategic infrastructure battalion table of organization and equipment.[108]

108. Bfg, CAATT to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 2 Dec 2008, sub: Coalition Army Advisory Training Team, slide 4.

Over the course of 2008, the Counter Terrorism Service had transitioned entirely to the command and control of the government of Iraq, with U.S. special forces advisers continuing to work alongside Iraqi special operations units.[109] Elements of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces Brigade carried out operations without coalition support before and after that period.[110] The National Counter Terrorism Strategy, developed with assistance from U.S. advisers and approved by Maliki, provided guidelines for such operations.[111] In theory, every special operations mission had to pass through three levels of review before approval, with coalition personnel involved at every stage. Although Iraqi military personnel coauthored the strategy, their government did not intend to allow U.S. operators to validate every special operations mission. Indeed, a preview of this desire for autonomy came when the prime minister's office made it clear that every operation involving Iraqi special operations forces required Maliki's permission rather than American approval.[112]

The prime minister had multiple reasons for exercising tight control over the special operations forces. By approving every mission, Maliki could choose to warn individuals who were being targeted, to cancel a raid outright, or to order a strike against someone whom the special operations commanders otherwise would not have considered targeting. In this instance, however, the prime minister claimed he had not ordered the raid.[113] The incident at the governor's office in Diyālá Province lent impetus to long-standing U.S. concerns about the special operations forces' new direction. When apprised of the disturbing trend, MNF-I threatened to end altogether U.S. support for the Iraqi special operations forces. The Counter Terrorism Service, at the

109. U.S. Dept. Def (DoD), *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriation Act of 2008 (Section 9010, Public Law 109–289)*, Rpt to Cong., Sep 2008, 57, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA487170.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

110. DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Sep 2008, 53.

111. David Witty, "The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service" (Washington, DC: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 2015), 21, Hist Files, CMH.

112. Anthony H. Cordesman and Adam Mausner, *Withdrawal from Iraq: Assessing the Readiness of Iraqi Security Forces* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), 178–79.

113. Shane Bauer, "Iraq's New Death Squad: America Has Built an Elite and Lethal Counterterrorism Force. But Who's Calling the Shots?," *The Nation*, 3 Jun 2009, https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/iraqs-new-death-squad/; Joel Wing, "Government Continues Its Crackdown on Diyala Sons of Iraq," Musings on Iraq: Iraq News, Politics, Economics, Society, 27 Oct 2008, https://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/10/government-continues-its-crackdown-on.htm; Ned Parker and Usama Redha, "Elite Iraqi Troops Storm Governor's Office in Diyala," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 Aug 2008, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-aug-20-fg-iraq20-story.html; all in Hist Files, CMH.

insistence of its U.S. advisers, initiated a review of the revised process, but that review ultimately went nowhere and accomplished nothing.[114]

In the midst of the ongoing controversy, the Counter Terrorism Service initiated an ambitious expansion program with the goal of more than doubling the organization's personnel to about 8,500. The additional personnel would serve mainly in support roles and as part of a planned second brigade headquarters overseeing the regional commando companies, which recently had been upgraded to battalions.[115] When the expansion program was adopted, Iraqi special operations forces numbered only 3,150 people out of 4,100 authorized positions, which ensured that considerable time and energy would be needed to attain the expansion goal. The government did not offer immediate support, as evidenced by the under-manned Iraqi Army's refusal to supply more personnel following the imposition of a recruiting freeze in September.[116] In addition, only 855 individuals out of 2,000 volunteers had passed the selection and assessment phase of special operations training just before the decision to expand.[117] By September 2008, the Counter Terrorism Service numbered 4,160 personnel, woefully short of the 8,500 soldiers required to fill both special operations brigades, the training schools, and the dedicated combat service support elements.[118]

The September freeze—enacted due to concerns over rising payroll costs—also affected the creation of additional conventional force structure. Recruits en route to or in the midst of their basic training courses were allowed to join the Iraqi Army, but the generation of unit-set-fielding brigades ended with the 11th IA Division's 4th/45th Brigade. This brigade was the fifty-third out of fifty-seven planned brigades. Rather than halt training completely, the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team channeled its energies into building enabler units such as signal, engineer, logistics, and transportation

114. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 18; Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 543.
115. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 12.
116. Rpt, Joint Forces Special Ops Component Cmd–Iraq, Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 9, Hist Files, CMH.
117. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 13.
118. As of December 2007, Iraqi special operations forces had filled 3,500 of its 4,100 authorized positions. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 12; DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2008 (Section 9010, Public Law 109–289)*, Rpt to Cong., Dec 2008, 31, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Measuring_Stability_and_Security_in_Iraq_ 2008-12.pdf; DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2008 (Section 9010, Public Law 109–289)*, Rpt to Cong., Jun 2008, 35, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA483069; both in Hist Files, CMH.

units. However, that initiative soon ran afoul of the same constraints that ended the fielding of brigades. As a last resort, MNSTC-I initiated several programs that included rotating Iraqi units back to Camp Taji for a month of refresher training and converting a counterinsurgency academy for battalion and brigade commanders into a school that taught combined arms operations.[119]

Not all recent decisions by the central government caused comparable consternation, in part because the Americans did not immediately recognize their implications. For example, Baghdād's eagerness to acquire U.S.-made tanks reinforced MNF-I's belief that the Ministry of Defense supported American proposals to transform the Iraqi Army into a conventional force. In reality, it reflected Maliki's desire to reduce American influence within his armed force by making Iraqi units capable of independent operations. Following a decision to purchase 140 M1A1 Abrams vehicles, MNSTC-I sent a batch of 4 tanks to Besmaya for the purpose of qualifying twenty-eight Iraqi soldiers as instructors. These individuals were responsible for providing individual-, platoon-, and company-level training to personnel assigned to four armor battalions, each equipped with thirty-one Abrams tanks, destined for the 9th IA Division. Ten more M1A1s were slated to arrive in March 2009, followed by another eight vehicles over the next several months, for the purpose of company- and platoon-level instruction. The remaining 118 tanks were scheduled to arrive in late 2010, with deliveries complete by May 2011.[120]

Because of its interest in the maintenance-intensive M1A1s, Baghdād incentivized Iraqi participation in a series of MNSTC-I-inspired sustainment exercises held during October 2008. The Americans tasked each Iraqi division to order a package of spare parts from the Taji National Depot. After each subordinate brigade submitted a spare parts request, the division logistical officer dispatched a convoy of trucks to pick up the requested items from the national depot. When the convoy returned, the senior logistician distributed parts to the chief logistical officers of each brigade. The exercise ended with the division dispatching a "report of actions completed" to the appropriate regional or garrison support unit, which then closed the loop by forwarding that information to the national depot.

Only the 8th IA Division achieved all goals. Two more Iraqi Army divisions, the 2d and 3d, completed all of the tasks except for sending the

119. The total of fifty-seven Iraqi Army brigades reflected four per division for thirteen divisions and five brigades for the 9th IA Division (Mechanized). Interv, Urquhart with Egan, 16 Nov 2009, 2, 7–8.

120. Bfg, MNSTC-I to Ministry of Def, 9 Nov 2008, sub: Iraqi Army M1A1 Tank Training Update to Iraqi Minister of Defense, 4 Archive 2008 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.



Soldiers from the 2d Battalion, 34th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, occupy a checkpoint in the Thawra I area of Sadr City on 15 June 2008. (*M. Sgt. Cohen A. Young, U.S. Air Force*)

final acknowledgment. Three other divisions met all requirements apart from conducting a rehearsal for the convoy and acknowledging the receipt of items. The chief logisticians of the 14th and 17th IA Divisions performed well until they attempted to distribute items to subordinate brigades. The 1st and 12th IA Divisions failed to meet minimum standards in three or more areas of evaluation.[121] MNSTC-I logistical experts thereafter went to work on remedial training plans tailored to address each Iraqi division's weaknesses.

A lengthy series of diplomatic meetings between Washington and Baghdād brought about major changes in how U.S. troops interacted with their counterparts on the battlefield. On 16 November, the twenty-eight-member Iraqi cabinet approved the security agreement that had been under negotiation for many months, but that consent came with the caveat that a public referendum on the agreement would be held mid-2009.[122] In practical terms, the United States accepted a ban on American forces raiding homes without Iraqi approval, acknowledged the right of Iraqis to search shipments of weapons and packages entering the country, and considered allowing Iraq's legal system to prosecute American troops for certain serious crimes.

121. Bfg, CAATT to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 2 Dec 2008, sub: Coalition Army Advisory Training Team, slide 16.

122. Ahmed Rasheed and Khalid al-Ansary, "Iraq Parliament Passes U.S. Security Pact," Reuters, 27 Nov 2008, http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/11/27/us-iraq-idUSLQ17155120081127, Hist Files, CMH.

In return, the U.S. gained temporary legal protections for American forces and property in Iraq.[123]

On 17 November, Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari and U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker signed the document in an official ceremony.[124] Ten days later, the 275-member Iraqi parliament ratified both the security agreement (sometimes referred to as a status of forces agreement) and a strategic framework agreement. The latter established the foundation for a long-term bilateral relationship between the two countries.[125] On 14 December, President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki signed the agreement in Baghdād during a ceremony that gained international attention when a disgruntled Iraqi journalist sitting with the press corps removed his shoes and threw them at the American head of state.[126]

That same month, General Odierno visited the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, in southern Iraq. Colonel Battaglia provided a detailed briefing on his unit's interaction with the provincial reconstruction teams, the police, and the 10th IA Division. A week after the general departed, several officers from Odierno's staff came to Battaglia's command post and explained that they were developing a concept in which a combat brigade would be employed in a dedicated "advise and assist" mission.[127] The visit also produced tangible benefits over the next several months as seven military transition teams, six border transition teams, a National Police transition team, a civil affairs company, a military police company, a helicopter detachment, and a Romanian infantry battalion joined Battaglia's force.[128]

123. "IRAQ: Cabinet Approves Plan for Total U.S. Troop Withdrawal in 2011," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 Nov 2008, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2008/11/iraq-a-new-sofa.html, Hist Files, CMH.
124. "Iraq and US Sign Agreement," Al Jazeera, 17 Nov 2008, http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2008/11/200811171724940377 5.html, Hist Files, CMH.
125. White House Press Release, "Statement by the President on the Agreements with Iraq," 27 Nov 2008, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/11/20081127-1.html, Hist Files, CMH.
126. White House Press Release, "President Bush and Iraq Prime Minister Maliki Sign the Strategic Framework Agreement and Security Agreement," 14 Dec 2008, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/12/20081214-2.html, Hist Files, CMH.
127. Email, Col. Philip F. Battaglia, former Cdr, 4th Bde, 1st Cav Div, to Mark J. Reardon, 17 Nov 2011, sub: RE: RE: RE: RE:Query from CMH Historian, Hist Files, CMH.
128. Bfg, 4th BCT, 1st Cav Div, 14 Apr 2009, sub: Forging the Advise and Assist Brigade: 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, slide 4.

CONCLUSION

Developments during the second half of 2008 served as a signpost for future events. Whether or not their portents would be heeded was another matter entirely. The use of government troops to suppress the Sons of Iraq program in Diyālá Province made it clear that while Baghdād did not object to members of the "awakening" joining the local police in Sunni-majority Al Anbār, American-sponsored irregular groups in mixed provinces would not receive the same consideration. In fact, the central government's aggressiveness in Diyālá signaled that it considered them a security threat. The growing dismay among Iraqi Sunnis over Baghdād's actions motivated some former insurgents to resume providing support and shelter to extremist groups rather than bind themselves to a government that viewed them as a potential menace.

The subject of increased autonomy for some regions of Iraq also fed the unrest. Even though Saulut al-Fursan had quashed separatist rhetoric in southern Iraq, tensions in the north grew as a result of the Khānaqīn incident. Baghdād initially responded by reassigning Kurds from senior positions within the divisions north of Baghdād, then began including lower-level commanders, which in turn sparked a Kurdish exodus from the enlisted ranks. Events in Diyālá and elsewhere also had made enlistment rates drop among the Sunni Arab community in the north, forcing the central government to replace Kurds with Shi'a hailing from south of Baghdād. Lacking local ties, Shi'i soldiers were far more likely to desert while on leave, with the result that divisions formerly composed of Kurds, who had a personal stake in protecting northern Iraq, now experienced increased absenteeism and wavering morale. Within eighteen months, tensions increased to the point at which Kurdish-majority Iraqi Army brigades were refusing to take orders from Baghdād.[129]

Amidst this disquieting situation, the Americans shifted their advisory focus from the tactical to the ministerial level while preparing to ramp up deliveries of equipment needed for conventional operations. In addition, both MNF-I and MNSTC-I grappled with the potential impact of an inevitable drawdown of American forces in Iraq. While the Bush administration believed the surge had degraded extremist groups to the point at which the Iraqis could deal with them unassisted, unresolved Sunni

129. Ben Van Heuvelen and Patrick Osgood, "Amid Rising Ethnic Tension, Kurdish Brigade Soldiers Stop Taking Orders from Baghdad," *Washington Post*, 10 Jun 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middleeast/amid-rising-ethnic-tension-kurdish-brigade-soldiers-stop-taking-orders-from-baghdad/2013/06/10/e3faa8d4-d1f7-11e2-9f1a-1a7cdee20287_story.html, Hist Files, CMH.

and Kurdish grievances threatened to set the conditions for a resumption of the insurgency. The difficulties that surfaced when MNF-I sought to persuade the prime minister to integrate a large number of irregular Sunni volunteers into the Iraqi security forces offered yet another example of the naiveté that afflicted U.S. policymakers. In this instance, that optimism did not bode well for plans to convert the Iraqi Army to a conventional force. Rather than accept the far more complex reality emerging in the post-surge era, top U.S. decision makers allowed such notions to feed their favored belief that the United States and Iraq shared identical strategic priorities.

12
An Incomplete Transformation: January 2009–December 2011

The end of the surge set the stage for major shifts in the strategic landscape affecting both Iraq and the United States. The Iraqis prepared for provincial and national elections that would determine Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's political prospects while the strategic framework agreement laid out both future Iraqi-U.S. relationships and American plans to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq. Although welcomed by many Iraqis, the departure of U.S. forces would give unprecedented levels of responsibility to the Iraqi Army. The prospect of Iraqis assuming new missions of larger and more complex scope, with fewer mentors and much less support, was concerning enough for the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) to postpone internal reorganization plans. Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) approached the matter from a different perspective, intending to use the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's experience as a blueprint for a more effective advisory program requiring fewer American units.

Although Iraqis and Americans had worked together to forge an effective long-term partnership, the surge had not solved all of Iraq's underlying problems. The role of al-Qaeda in the violent upheavals of early 2006 had eclipsed the fact that the rise in civilian deaths was due as much or more to the latest stage of a multisided Iraqi power struggle that began following Saddam Hussein's ouster. The decisive American-led offensives had crushed al-Qaeda and reduced civilian deaths by 90 percent by the end of the surge in July 2008, but they did not ameliorate grievances felt by major ethnic and sectarian communities in Iraq. Kurds and Arabs harbored ill will toward each other, Sunnis still refused to come to terms with their fall from power,



American convoys began departing Iraq as the troop levels dropped following the surge. Here, a group of U.S. military vehicles enters Kuwait in September 2010. (*Spc. Bradley J. Wancour, U.S. Army*)

and Shi'a remained determined never to allow either minority to edge them out of the ascendant position they recently had attained.

The American government, which underwent a change of leadership in early 2009, reoriented its strategic attention from Iraq toward Afghanistan, the Pacific, and Europe. Iraq's Shi'i-majority government welcomed the shift in the United States' attention, in large part because it guaranteed a lesser degree of external interference in Iraq's internal affairs. The Iraqis did not actively seek United Nations assistance in addressing unresolved post-surge issues. As a result, no one assumed responsibility for resolving the problems that had taken Iraq to the brink of open civil war in summer 2006.[1]

PREPARING FOR CHANGE

President Barack H. Obama, who took office on 20 January 2009, had vowed during his election campaign to end the Iraq conflict "responsibly" and bring home all American brigades within the first sixteen months of

1. Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 160–61.

his presidency.[2] The State Department's priorities also altered with the new administration, placing less emphasis on Iraq and deeming other initiatives more important to the nation's global interests.[3] Iraq topped the National Security Council's agenda during its first meeting on 21 January 2009, but the discussion focused on pulling out U.S. troops rather than reshaping the post-surge environment to produce a lasting solution in Iraq. The White House subsequently tasked the Department of Defense with determining whether it would be best to withdraw all combat troops within sixteen, nineteen, or twenty-three months of the order being issued.

When queried by U.S. Central Command, General Raymond T. Odierno, the MNF-I commander, and Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker preferred the twenty-three-month timeframe. They believed alternative options were based on an overly optimistic assessment by stateside intelligence agencies, a stance which was not surprising because MNF-I had not concurred with any national intelligence estimate on Iraq that had been issued during the past three years.[4] Meanwhile, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates privately lobbied for pulling out all U.S. combat forces within nineteen months and leaving behind an advisory contingent of several thousand military trainers. On 26 February 2009, President Obama notified congressional leaders that U.S. maneuver units and logistical elements would depart Iraq within nineteen months, leaving behind a residual force of trainers.[5]

The announcement had a major impact on preparations for the upcoming Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) transition between Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III's XVIII Airborne Corps and Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr.'s I Corps. The ramifications affected subordinate elements as well, after MNF-I asked that each multinational division receive a dedicated advisory brigade. Not only would the mix of brigades change from this point onward, but as part of the drawdown, each advisory brigade would take the place of two or more conventional brigades. There would be fewer corps-level sustainment units as well. To offset the reduction in combat power, advise and assist brigades (AABs) deploying to Iraq received additional civil affairs,

2. Michael R. Gordon, "In the U.S. Exit from Iraq, Failed Efforts and Challenges," *New York Times*, 22 Sep 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/23/world/middleeast/failed-efforts-of-americas-last-months-in-iraq.html, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).

3. Christopher R. Hill, *Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 347, 357–58.

4. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, *Surge and Withdrawal, 2007–2011* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 457–58.

5. Robert M. Gates, *DUTY: Memoirs of A Secretary at War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 324–26.

rotary-wing aviation, military intelligence, military police, and explosive ordnance disposal assets.[6]

Conceding that the changes were significant enough to warrant further study, General Odierno allowed General Jacoby additional time to work with General Austin's staff to determine jointly how to employ fewer brigades more efficiently. The final draft concept, as modified by I Corps, doled out a wide range of responsibilities to each brigade's combat and combat support battalions, all of which would be reorganized to ensure they could provide force protection, develop Iraqi security forces, and improve civil governance. To maximize unit cohesiveness and focus efforts, each battalion would dedicate a minimum of one company to each mission. This approach allowed brigade commanders to organize tasks for different situations by swapping companies to provide each battalion with the resources it needed for a particular mission.[7]

The I Corps staff also recommended creating five multifunctional security transition teams per brigade to replace specialized army, police, and border enforcement training teams. The new groups would work with Iraqi Army divisions and brigades rather than battalions. A pair of field grade officers would lead each security transition team, with the AAB providing all other personnel, equipment, and training. From MNF-I's perspective, this structure made sense because it reduced both personnel needs and the need for predeployment advisory training.

After taking Jacoby's input into account, Austin briefed Odierno on the final configuration of the modified AAB organization. The MNF-I commander reminded Austin that the new model had to apply equally to Stryker, armor, and infantry organizations, and converted organizations also had to retain some capability to conduct combat operations. Armed with Odierno's guidance, the MNC-I staff provided critical input to U.S. Army Forces Command as it reconfigured six stateside units into AABs before sending them to Iraq between spring 2009 and late summer 2010.[8]

General Jacoby anticipated dealing with other challenges, including transferring resources from Iraq to Afghanistan, ending conventional U.S. combat operations in Iraq, and reducing the American presence in

6. Bfg, n.d., sub: I Corps After Action Review: Advisory and Assistance Brigade (AAB), slide 1, I Corps Collection, CMH.

7. Bfg, Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 8 May 2009, sub: Advisory and Assistance Brigade (AAB) Overview, slide 8, AAB Overview (7 May 09) Folder, I Corps Collection, CMH.

8. Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 8 May 2009, sub: Advisory and Assistance Brigade (AAB) Overview, slide 5.

Iraq to 50,000 troops by 31 August 2010.[9] In his opinion, I Corps would not accomplish those tasks successfully unless the Iraqis were capable of assuming security responsibilities. The requirement to ensure Iraqi security forces were adequately prepared spurred Jacoby into sending his future plans cell to Iraq well in advance of the remainder of his staff. The early deployers worked so well with their departing XVIII Airborne Corps counterparts that both units adopted the informal slogan, "Two Corps, Two Years, One Fight."[10] General Austin sponsored several lengthy visits by Jacoby to allow him to gain first-hand knowledge of the country and meet senior Iraqi leaders.[11]

To most efficiently use the skills of his staff, Jacoby concentrated on helping the Iraqis improve their ability to exercise command and control. During predeployment training at Fort Lewis, Washington, the I Corps commander informed his staff that the key to long-term success would be establishing solid partnerships with the Iraqis. Instead of having his troops merely provide guidance to their Iraqi counterparts, Jacoby envisioned a more formal relationship between I Corps and the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC). That goal would be difficult to achieve, however, because the IGFC lacked both the personnel and the skills needed to align itself functionally with I Corps. The Iraqi officer chosen to lead the partnering effort, a brigadier general in charge of the plans section, personally undertook the task because his staff did not have the knowledge to do it. His appointment then required a U.S. brigadier general to take charge of the I Corps end of it, a task which normally would have been given to a colonel.

A second major issue arose from conflicting perceptions within the Iraqi Army of the IGFC's authority and mission. Unlike MNC-I, the IGFC did not control all lower-level commands. The Baghdād Operations Command, for example, answered directly to Prime Minister Maliki, an arrangement that produced some unwanted friction. IGFC relationships with individual Iraqi Army divisions depended on whether their commanders were linked to senior Iraqi government officials by family ties or patronage arrangements,

9. Resources being transferred to Afghanistan primarily consisted of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets such as Predator drones and logistical units. The intratheater reapportionment accelerated on 1 December 2009, when President Barack H. Obama announced that 30,000 additional U.S. troops would be deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 494.

10. Interv, Mark J. Reardon with Robert S. Rush, former I Corps Op Iraqi Freedom Historian, 29 Nov 2011, Hist Files, CMH.

11. AAR, I Corps, Sep 2008–Apr 2009, 14 Sep 2011, Command Group Operations: Preparations for Deployment, pt. I, ch. 1, I-1-9, I Corps Collection, CMH.

leading American officers to question the rationale for the IGFC's continued existence.[12]

The Iraqis in turn were leery of the motives of the I Corps commander and his staff. One senior officer later recounted that he "initially questioned why LTG [Lt. Gen.] Jacoby wanted to work closely as part of a partnership" and wondered, "Do they trust Iraqis? Do they not?"[13] Always having been treated as junior partners, the Iraqis remained skeptical that Jacoby's I Corps would treat them any differently. Some Iraqi officers felt that, even though XVIII Airborne Corps had been helpful, its staff appeared far more comfortable "working on their own side" of the fence.[14] The Iraqis adopted a wait-and-see attitude before the arrival of I Corps.

POLITICS AND SECURITY

The first major test of the Maliki government following the surge came when local elections in fourteen of Iraq's eighteen provinces took place on 31 January 2009. Three of the nonvoting provinces were part of Iraqi Kurdistan, while Kurds and Arabs were unable to reach a power-sharing agreement in the fourth nonvoting province of Kirkūk.[15] Security preparations in Arab-majority provinces neighboring Kurdistan ratcheted up simmering ethnic tensions. On 23 January, the *Kurdish Globe* described the movements of four Iraqi Army brigades in Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn Province as suspicious. In reality, the 46th Brigade of the 12th Iraqi Army (IA) Division and the 16th Brigade of the 4th IA Division had transferred, respectively, from Kirkūk and eastern As Sulaymānīyah Province to Tikrīt to augment polling security. These units were backfilled by two newly reorganized strategic infrastructure brigades, redesignated as the 47th and 48th Brigades of the 12th IA Division, which deployed to Kirkūk for training. (*See Table 12.1.*) Both were 30 percent understrength because their 3d Battalions had yet to complete

12. AAR, I Corps, Apr 2009–Mar 2010, 30 Nov 2011, Partnering with the Iraqi Security Forces, pt. I, ch. 3, I-3-3, I Corps Collection, CMH.
13. Interv, Robert S. Rush and Lt. Col. Gregory A. Daddis, MNC-I Cmd Historian, with Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan Majid, Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) Cmdg Gen, 14 Sep 2009, I Corps Collection, CMH.
14. Interv, Lt. Col. Gregory A. Daddis, MNC-I Cmd Historian, with Maj. Gen. Abdel Amir Rashid Yarallah, IGFC Ch Staff, 17 Aug 2009, I Corps Collection, CMH.
15. Martin Chulov, "Iraq Elections: Polls Close as Security Clampdown Keeps Violence at Bay," *Guardian*, 31 Jan 2009, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/31/iraq-elections-politics, Hist Files, CMH.

their initial course of instruction.[16] Although the press coverage reflected unfounded concern, the scrutiny of Iraqi Army movements indicated that the July standoff in Khānaqīn continued to influence Kurdish views of Maliki's agenda.

One week after the article's publication, 7 million Iraqis flocked to the polls to select 440 provincial officials from a slate of 14,431 candidates. This election differed from its predecessors because Sunnis, who now recognized that boycotting elections had left them unrepresented in parliament and having far less influence within the government, turned out in larger numbers. Iraqi forces, with American troops conspicuously absent, provided effective security for 6,500 polling places. A single mortar attack in Tikrīt, 128.7 kilometers north of Baghdād, caused no damage or casualties.[17] Defense analyst Frederick W. Kagan observed, "When the Surge in Iraq began in January 2007, no one imagined that two years later Iraq would plan and conduct provincial elections with limited Coalition assistance and presence, that those elections would proceed smoothly and peacefully, and that the United Nations special envoy would be able to certify its legitimacy immediately."[18]

Less dramatic changes were also taking place in Baghdād as the Iraqi government negotiated with representatives of 91,000 civilian volunteers who had participated in the U.S.-inspired Sons of Iraq program.[19] MNF-I, which lacked the authority to guarantee security-sector employment for volunteers, now prevailed upon Maliki to offer some sort of long-term lifeline to the groups. The prime minister added that responsibility to the tasks assigned to the government's Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation, which had been formed in August 2007 under Bassima al-Jaidri.[20]

The initial meetings between al-Jaidri, coalition commanders, and other government representatives were underwhelming. On a positive note, the

16. D. J. Elliott, "Iraqi Army Movements in Kirkuk and Salahadin," *Long War Journal*, 24 Jan 2009, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/01/iraqi-army-movements.php, Hist Files, CMH.
17. Chulov, "Iraq Elections: Polls Close as Security Clampdown Keeps Violence at Bay."
18. Claire Russo, "Capitol Hill Briefing Notes: Provincial Elections in Iraq," Institute for the Study of War, n.d., https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISW%20Hill%20Briefing%20Provincial%20Elections.pdf (accessed 18 Nov 2023), Hist Files, CMH.
19. The Americans signed 800 separate contracts with local groups between 2007 and 2008. The groups were ethnically composed of 80 percent Sunnis, 19 percent Shi'a, and 1 percent others. Greg Bruno, "Finding a Place for the 'Sons of Iraq,'" Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder, 23 Apr 2008, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/finding-place-sons-iraq, Hist Files CMH.
20. Newsletter, *Dog Face Daily* 1 no. 269, 3d Inf Div, Sfc. Kerensa Hardy, "Group to Transition Sons of Iraq," 6 Feb 2008, Hist Files, CMH.

TABLE 12.1—IRAQI ARMY BRIGADES, 2010–2011

1st IA Div (QRF)	2d IA Div	3d IA Div	4th IA Div	5th IA Div	6th IA Div	7th IA Div
1st Bde	5th Bde (Mtrzd)	9th Bde (Mtrzd)	14th Bde	18th Bde	22d Bde (Mtrzd)	26th Bde
2d Bde	6th Bde	10th Bde (Mtrzd)	15th Bde	19th Bde	24th Bde (Mtrzd)	27th Bde
3d Bde (Mtrzd)	7th Bde (Mtrzd)	11th Bde (Mtrzd)	16th Bde	20th Bde (Mtrzd)	54th Bde (Mtrzd)	28th Bde
4th Bde	8th Bde (Mtrzd)	12th Bde	17th Bde	21st Bde	56th Bde (Mech)	29th Bde (Mech)

8th IA Div	9th IA Div (Mech)	10th IA Div	11th IA Div	12th IA Div	14th IA Div	17th IA Div
30th Bde (Mtrzd)	34th Bde (Mech)	38th Bde (Mtrzd)	42d Bde	46th Bde (Mtrzd)	50th Bde (Mtrzd)	23d Bde
31st Bde (Mtrzd)	35th Bde (Armd)	39th Bde	43d Bde	47th Bde	51st Bde	25th Bde
32d Bde	36th Bde (Armd)	40th Bde (Mtrzd)	44th Bde	48th Bde	52d Bde	55th Bde
33d Bde	37th Bde (Mtrzd)	41st Bde	45th Bde	49th Bde	53d Bde	60th Bde[a]

Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Note: *a*. forming

Source: Weekly Synchronization Bfg, Coalition Army Advisory Training Team (CAATT), 11 Feb 2008, sub: Army Force Generation 2008–2010, Thomas L. Hendrix Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH); Jessa Rose Dury-Agri, Omer Kassim, and Patrick Martin, *Iraqi Security Forces and Popular Mobilization Forces: Orders of Battle* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2017); Info Paper, "The Iraqi Armed Forces–Army 17th Div Organization Chart," CAATT, 3 Jun 2008, Hendrix Collection, CMH.

Maliki government had taken over paying monthly salaries for more than half of the Sons of Iraq fighters by November 2008, relieving the United States of that cost. However, Iraqi officials were unwilling to absorb more than 20 percent of them into the army and police, despite American suggestions that most if not all of the volunteers should receive security-related jobs.

Government representatives cited defense budget cuts, driven by plunging oil prices, as a rationale against inducting a larger number of them into the ranks of the Iraqi Army. Additionally, many Sons of Iraq participants could not read or write, which, like the financial constraints, prevented them from entering the police force.[21] Although the reconciliation committee promised to provide vocational training to the remaining 80 percent of the volunteer fighters, the government had made little progress toward establishing those programs.[22]

Dissatisfaction among volunteer groups ballooned after monthly payments failed to materialize on time and promises of meaningful employment seemed increasingly less genuine. That soon morphed into anger, fed by a sense of betrayal, when Iraqi security forces pursued former insurgents while taking no action against Shi'i death squad members. Fighting erupted in Baghdād's Fahdil neighborhood in late March 2009 when government forces detained a Sons of Iraq leader accused of theft, embezzlement, murder, and blackmail. The three-day battle not only reflected the profound disappointment among volunteers, but also heightened Maliki's concern that they would form an opposition political party.[23] The appearance of American troops from the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, convinced the volunteers to disarm, which brought the fighting to an end.[24] Relations between the government and the groups hit rock bottom soon afterward, when Baghdād issued a formal decree disbanding the Sons of Iraq.[25]

TAILORING FORCE STRUCTURE FOR THE MISSION

The first dedicated advise and assist unit sent to Iraq, Col. Peter A. Newell's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, initially had access to very little information about its future role. The Fort Bliss, Texas–based

21. Gordon Alanko, "When Sons of Iraq Grow Up," *Long War Journal*, 14 Apr 2008, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/04/when_sons_of_iraq_gr.php, Hist Files, CMH.
22. Bruno, "Finding a Place for the 'Sons of Iraq.'"
23. Lulu Garcia-Navarro, "Iraq Paramilitary Group Targeted, Despite Success," National Public Radio, 4 Sep 2008, https://www.npr.org/2008/09/04/94229791/iraq-paramilitary-group-targeted-despite-success, Hist Files, CMH; Daniel P. Bolger, *Why We Lost: A General's Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2015), 260–64.
24. S. Sgt. James Selesnick, "ISF Restoring Peace in Fadhil," 30 Mar 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/18982/isf_restoring_peace_in_fadhil, Hist Files, CMH; Bolger, *Why We Lost*, 265–66.
25. Martin Chulov, "Iraq Disbands Sunni Militia that Helped Defeat Insurgents," *Guardian*, 1 Apr 2009, https://www.guardian.com/world/2009/Apr/02/iraq-sunni-militia-disbanded, Hist Files, CMH.



Iraqi soldiers assigned to the 10th Motor Transport Regiment, 10th Iraqi Army Division, along with soldiers from the 27th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, prepare to depart Contingency Operating Base Adder in southern Iraq. The Iraqi troops provided convoy security for the American vehicles. (*U.S. Army*)

brigade was preparing for an upcoming rotation to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, when rumors of major changes that would affect its scheduled deployment to Al Başrah first surfaced.[26] Although the reports had not been confirmed officially, Newell's staff tackled the challenge of simultaneously figuring out how to reconfigure the brigade for a substantially different set of tactical responsibilities while continuing to prepare for a traditional combat mission. With few sources of information available, they reached out to Col. Philip F. Battaglia's brigade in Al Başrah and soon learned that the security environment in southern Iraq had improved materially as a result of constant cooperation between Battaglia's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and the Iraqis. Colonel Newell therefore concluded that he would not have to confront violent extremists to the degree he first had envisioned. Instead, his brigade could now concentrate its efforts on helping the Iraqis more efficiently manage their own security affairs.

The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division's January 2009 rotation at the Fort Irwin National Training Center provided the first opportunity to test how that could be accomplished. Newell arranged for

26. Info Paper, "4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division Advise and Assist Information Paper," 2d Bn, 29th Field Arty, 23 Jul 2009, 1, https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/18479102, Hist Files, CMH.

the center's instructor-umpires to inject challenging advise and assist opportunities into the standard training scenario. The updated training plan featured frequent interaction with role-players representing Iraqi politicians, security personnel, and ordinary citizens. Formal notification of the brigade's new mission came during its deployment to Fort Irwin. The message provided enough amplifying information for Newell to assign specific tasks, tentatively, to subordinate battalions. Lt. Col. William A. Walski's 2d Squadron, 13th Cavalry Regiment, drew the mission of mentoring the Department of Border Enforcement, and Lt. Col. Michael R. Eastman's 2d Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, would support provincial reconstruction teams. Lt. Col. Robert L. Menist's 4th Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, and Lt. Col. James J. Gallivan's 1st Battalion, 77th Armored Regiment, both would work alongside the Iraqi Army and the National Police.[27]

Upon his brigade's return to Fort Bliss, Newell asked for predeployment assistance from subject matter experts throughout the Army. Civil affairs trainers traveled from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to teach a three-week course to sixty of the brigade's commissioned and noncommissioned officers. Utilizing nearby El Paso, Texas, as a hands-on classroom, the brigade conducted assessments of the local area to gain familiarity with tasks it could be called upon to perform in Iraq. All of the brigade's soldiers took courses in basic Arabic and the history of Iraq; 250 personnel received advanced cultural awareness and language instruction; and key leaders attended the Department of State Foreign Service Institute's training course for provincial reconstruction teams.[28]

Evolving mission needs drove Colonel Newell to make further adjustments to his brigade's table of organization and equipment. He directed each maneuver company to create intelligence support teams to enhance the collecting, sharing, and processing of information vital to the advisory mission. The diminished emphasis on conventional combat tasks led to the decision to send only one standard configuration company, troop, or battery per battalion to Iraq. The rest exchanged their tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and howitzers for mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles and M1151 Humvee enhanced armament carriers. Most of the tracked vehicle drivers and mechanics had to retrain so that they could operate and maintain wheeled vehicles.

27. Info Paper, "4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division Advise and Assist," 4.
28. Gary Sheftick, "Deploying Brigade to Test 'Advise and Assist' Concept," 1 May 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/20528/deploying_brigade_to_test_advise_and_assist_concept, Hist Files, CMH.

As the brigade's June deployment date drew nearer, Newell dispatched an advance team to Al Başrah in February 2009. The group learned from XVIII Airborne Corps that the brigade would inherit partnerships with three provincial (Al Muthanná, Dhī Qār, and Maysān) governors, three provincial reconstruction teams, three provincial chiefs of police, the four brigades of the 10th IA Division, one Department of Border Enforcement brigade, one commando battalion, one highway patrol battalion, and several police emergency and tactical response units. The site survey team returned to Fort Bliss to report that the three provinces were not similar to one another and the distances between them were too great to support a functionally organized approach.[29] The team's insights necessitated the partial reapportionment of unit responsibilities along geographical rather than functional lines. The armor and infantry battalions each would assume exclusive Iraqi Army and police mentoring responsibilities for an entire province (Al Muthanná and Dhī Qār) while sharing responsibility for the third province (Maysān), because of the disproportionate number of Iraqi Army and police units arrayed along the border with Iran. The brigade's cavalry squadron would retain its original mission of working with the border enforcement brigade, and the field artillery battalion would support the overall civil affairs mission by maintaining a provincial reconstruction team in each of the three provinces.[30]

REDEFINING PARTNERSHIP

General Jacoby assumed command of MNC-I on 4 April 2009 at Camp Victory in Baghdād.[31] At that time, Americans and Iraqis still held differing notions about how to prepare for the transition. Some leaders in both communities advocated removing U.S. advisers from Iraqi Army and police units, while others recommended developing closer ties. General Jacoby himself opted for redefining partnership as the "operational relationship between Iraqi and coalition forces whereby all operations are conducted 'By, With, and Through' the Iraqi Security Forces."[32]

The first transition had started four days earlier when British Maj. Gen. Andrew Salmon formally turned over responsibility for overseeing

29. Info Paper, "4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division Advise and Assist," 4–5.
30. Info Paper, "4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division Advise and Assist," 7.
31. "I Corps 3-Star Takes Command of MNC-I," *Army Times*, 4 Apr 2009, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2009/04/army_jacoby_mnci_command_040409/, Hist Files, CMH.
32. AAR, I Corps, Apr 2009–Mar 2010, 30 Nov 2011, Partnering with the Iraqi Security Forces, pt. I, ch. 3, I-3-1.

security in Al Başrah to U.S. forces. The handover necessitated a redrawing of operational boundaries that led to Multi-National Division–Center temporarily absorbing the responsibilities of the British-led Multi-National Division–South East long enough for MNC-I to create Multi-National Division–South.[33] The 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) took control of the new regional command after its headquarters redeployed to Contingency Operating Base Basra.[34] Four weeks later, the incoming 34th Infantry Division replaced the 10th Mountain Division in that role.[35]

Jacoby's staff had fewer than sixty days to refine and execute the plan to remove U.S. forces from the major Iraqi cities within MNC-I's area of responsibility. Several months earlier, Prime Minister Maliki had asked for a comprehensive assessment of the readiness of Iraqi security forces coupled with a close look at the likely threats to urban areas. The IGFC commander, Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan Majid, along with Generals Odierno and Austin, had developed the Joint Security Assessment System. The system began with separate evaluations by the Americans and the Iraqis of each brigade and battalion, after which all parties arrived at a mutually agreed-upon overall rating. They then compared Iraqi unit readiness against known threats within a population center to determine whether the area required additional security forces. Cities with low threat levels and capable army and police units became candidates for providing reinforcements to those in need.

Although the assessment assumed all U.S. forces would leave Iraqi cities, Prime Minister Maliki signaled his willingness to allow some Americans to remain in major urban areas after the 30 June deadline. On 28 February, he publicly had mentioned that U.S. withdrawals would be executed in a responsible and orderly fashion. Two weeks later, he informed reporters that he supported a "conditions based" withdrawal, meaning that U.S. troops might be allowed remain in cities where the insurgents posed a significant threat. An I Corps briefing slide recorded the prime minister as saying, "Any

33. Multi-National Div–South Public Affairs Ofc, "British Transfer Control in Basra to MND-South," 1 Apr 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/19071/british-transfer-control-in-basra-to-mnd-south/, Hist Files, CMH.
34. Spc. Darryl L. Montgomery, "MND-South Headquarters Now Fully Equipped," 20 Apr 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/19890/mnd_south_headquarters_now_fully_equipped, Hist Files, CMH.
35. Pfc. J. P. Lawrence, "Transfer of Authority: 34th Infantry Division Assumes Control of MND-S," 21 May 2009, The Red Bull Report, 1–2, https://static.dvidshub.net/media/pubs/pdf_7238.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

withdrawals must be done with our approval and in coordination with the Iraqi Government."[36]

Three weeks into Jacoby's command, the prime minister's flexible stance on U.S. troops in Iraqi cities changed abruptly. On 26 April, coalition special operations forces killed the wife and brother of Sheik Ahmed Abdul Sada during a raid targeting a Sadrist cell in Al Kūt. The Iraqi media claimed that coalition forces had conducted the raid without notifying Baghdād. That information gained credence when a defense ministry spokesperson announced that two Iraqi Army officers were being detained for "permitting the Americans to carry out a security operation . . . without the knowledge of the defense ministry or the Iraqi government."[37] Acknowledging the growing public furor over the deaths, Maliki described the raid on state television the following day as a breach of the security agreement. He also stated that the persons responsible should be put on trial.[38]

The Al Kūt incident was not the first time that the alleged actions of U.S. troops had produced public unrest following the signing of a security agreement. In February, Muqtada al-Sadr's organization had claimed that American special operations forces had killed sixteen civilians during a firefight in a Baghdād mosque. The televised testimony of an Iraqi special operations officer and a hostage freed from a torture chamber in the mosque, both of whom supported the U.S. version of events, served to diffuse that crisis.[39] Without similar corroboration regarding the April incident, the situation in Al Kūt escalated into a serious test of the security agreement. Prime Minister Maliki announced, "There is no thought or intention on the part of the government to ask for an extension of those forces. On the basis of a field assessment we don't need them, and there is no request."[40]

Repercussions from the incident affected relationships between U.S. and Iraqi units. In Al Başrah Province, Colonel Battaglia noticed a distinct coolness from members of the Iraqi Army and police after the event became public knowledge. "Partners we had worked closely with for months immediately declined to support any future combined training or

36. Bfg Slide, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2009, sub: Al Kut Incident, I Corps Collection, CMH.
37. Steven Lee Myers, "After a U.S. Raid, 2 Iraqis Dead, Protests and Regrets," *New York Times*, 26 Apr 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/world/middleeast/27iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH.
38. Myers, "After a U.S. Raid, 2 Iraqis Dead, Protests and Regrets."
39. Lara Logan, "Iraqi Soldier Backs U.S. on Deadly Raid," CBS News, 11 Feb 2009, http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-500257_162-1454661.html, Hist Files, CMH.
40. Bfg Slide MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 15 May 2009, sub: Al Kut Incident.

operations."[41] Fortunately, normal relations eventually resumed, in large part because of the solid bond between Battaglia's brigade and its Iraqi partners. In areas where U.S. forces did not have as strong a relationship with the Iraqis, it took much longer for tensions to subside.

Another disturbing event followed soon after. On 2 May, an Iraqi soldier opened fire on U.S. troops at a combat outpost 19.3 kilometers south of Mosul, killing Spc. Jake R. Velloza and Spc. Jeremiah P. McLeery of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment. Their comrades killed the attacker, but not before he wounded three more Americans. Ministry of Defense officials described the turncoat as a Sunni cleric from an Iraqi unit near Mosul.[42] Although MNC-I believed that the attack was an insurgent attempt to sow mistrust between U.S. and Iraqi troops before the 30 June handover, Iraqi officials failed to uncover indisputable evidence supporting that suspicion.[43]

The insider attack gave some American commanders ample reason for concern. The drawdown of U.S. troops, coupled with the growing emphasis on their advisory role, meant that U.S. forces would be called upon to operate in small teams, far removed from other coalition troops. Explaining the problem to reporters, retired Army lieutenant colonel and policy analyst John A. Nagl noted, "American advisory teams are going to be spread more widely and spread more thinly across Iraq, and so the teams are going to be at higher risk."[44] Brig. Gen. Keith C. Walker, who had taken over the Iraq Assistance Group from Brig. Gen. James C. Yarbrough in July 2008, responded by noting that advisory teams would not depend on security and other types of support from a distant or otherwise occupied U.S. headquarters once more AABs arrived.[45] In fact, the number of military transition teams would decrease in concert with the overall withdrawal plan, requiring them to turn over their responsibilities to their brigade counterparts.

41. Philip F. Battaglia and Curtis Taylor, "Security Force Assistance Operations: Defining the Advise and Assist Brigade," *Military Review* 90, no. 4 (Jul-Aug 2010): 5.
42. Brian Murphy, "Betrayal: Iraqi Soldier Kills Two U.S. Soldiers," NBC, 3 May 2009, http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/archive/Betrayal-Iraqi-Soldier-Kills-Two-US-Soldiers.html; "Two Fort Hood Soldiers Killed in Iraq," KWTX, 5 May 2009, http://www.kwtx.com/home/headlines/44360752.html; both in Hist Files, CMH.
43. Four incidents between December 2007 and February 2009 largely were confined to the northern Iraq region, which led Americans to identify insurgent subversion—rather than genuine ill-will between Iraqi and U.S. personnel—as the cause. Murphy, "Betrayal: Iraqi Soldier Kills Two U.S. Soldiers," 3 May 2009; "Two Fort Hood Soldiers Killed in Iraq," 5 May 2009.
44. Campbell Robertson and Stephen Farrell, "Ambush by Ally Chills Trust in Iraqi Units," *New York Times*, 7 May 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/07/world/middleeast/07mitts.html, Hist Files, CMH.
45. Robertson and Farrell, "Ambush by Ally Chills Trust in Iraqi Units."

The incident on 2 May also confirmed that previous coalition offensives had pushed surviving insurgent groups toward Mosul. When General Jacoby had visited northern Iraq before assuming command, he learned firsthand that, in some ways, the situation still resembled pre-surge Baghdād. Although the Iraqi government agreed that the time to eliminate the insurgent sanctuaries in Mosul had arrived, Prime Minister Maliki's options to do so remained limited by the fact that many Iraqi security forces still were needed in Baghdād and Al Baṣrah to ensure the compliance of Shi'i militia groups. Also, reverberations from the Khānaqīn standoff still impacted the security situation around Mosul. Fiscal problems forced the Ministry of Defense to cancel plans to create the 15th and 16th IA Divisions, while the program to replace Kurdish personnel with Arabs had produced personnel turnover significant enough to impact combat readiness in existing northern units.

FALLOUT FROM A CHANGING ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Falling global oil prices in spring 2009 resulted in revenue projections falling far short of the Iraqi government's original budget forecasts. The ensuing fiscal debate was particularly volatile for newly elected national and provincial lawmakers, many of whom gained their seats by blaming predecessors for failing to deliver public services. After lengthy deliberations, the Iraqi parliament tentatively agreed to accept a $64 billion budget rather than the initial $79 billion proposal. The Americans tried to persuade the Iraqis to allocate a minimum of $8.23 billion for the Ministry of Defense, but that argument gained little or no traction, and parliament eventually approved a $4.5 billion defense budget that included $2.9 billion in nondiscretionary spending.[46] The remaining $1.6 billion allocated for operating costs and force modernization represented less than one-third of the total sought by MNF-I.[47]

In order to meet diminished budget allocations, the ministry halted procurement of T–6A Texan II training aircraft, C–130J transports, Bell 407 armed scout helicopters, naval coastal patrol vessels, and light armored

46. "New Threat to Iraq's Military: The Drop in Oil Prices," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 13 May 2009, http://www.gazette.com/articles/iraq-53855-oil-budget.html, Hist Files, CMH.
47. Bfg, 4 Feb 2009, sub: Budget Brief Update, slide 2, Gen O & MoD Budget Brief Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.



CWO Robert Grosnick pilots a training version of the Bell 407 over northern Iraq. These platforms were used to teach Iraqi Army pilots to operate and maintain Bell 407 armed scout helicopters, which were delivered in 2011. (*Spc. Amie J. McMillan, U.S. Army*)

vehicles.[48] Plans to construct billets and work areas for M1A1 training, thirteen divisional sustainment regiments, and ten mechanized battalions were also shelved.[49] Of the three new divisions considered during 2008, only the 17th IA Division, assembling in southwestern Baghdād, survived the budget axe.[50] A moratorium on military recruiting led to the Iraqi Army transferring 500 soldiers to the Navy so the latter could take responsibility for securing the Khawr al ʻAmiyah oil terminal at Al Faw.[51]

Budget shortfalls also exerted a significant impact on the special operations community even though Maliki continued to show a personal interest in expanding that force. The 1st Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) Brigade had only 67 percent of its authorized personnel as of February 2009. The Counter Terrorism Service and Counter Terrorism Command headquarters were in worse shape, respectively, at 40 and 48 percent. It did not help matters in April 2009 when the Iraqi government eliminated an

48. Def Security Cooperation Agency News Release, Transmittal No. 09–73, "Iraq—Light and Medium Utility Helicopters," 19 Nov 2009, Hist Files, CMH. The agency's 2008 announcements about Foreign Military Sales spanned the period of 12 March 2008 (No. 08–44) to 10 December 2008 (No. 09–11).
49. Bfg, 4 Feb 2009, sub: Budget Brief Update, slide 5.
50. Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, Sep 2009, sub: ISF/CF Partnership, slides 1–3, 10, 14–15, I Corps Collection, CMH.
51. Kim Gamel, "Iraqi Budget Woes Force Security Hiring Freeze," Fox News, 20 Mar 2009, http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2009Mar20/0,4670,MLIraqHiringFreeze,00.html, Hist Files, CMH.

$800 monthly supplement paid to Iraqi special operations forces personnel.[52] The special operations commander told interviewers, "We don't know who we fall under. . . . We get our salaries from the MoD [Ministry of Defense], yet parliament has not approved our status."[53]

Despite fiscal constraints, Prime Minister Maliki directed the ministry to provide 1,400 candidates for the Counterterrorism Assessment and Selection Course by June 2009. That initiative failed because of the high percentage of personnel who could not complete the grueling training course, which was held at the Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School in Baghdād.[54] The program consisted of the three-week Counterterrorism Assessment and Selection Course followed by the twelve-week Operator's Training Course or the forty-seven-day Commando Course.[55] To free up more personnel for tactical operations, all training courses eventually shifted from the direct control of the 1st ISOF Brigade to the Counter Terrorism Service headquarters.[56] On 1 July 2009, the Ministry of Defense announced the activation of a second special operations brigade headquarters, which allowed the Iraqis to realign operational responsibility. The new formation assumed control of the four regionally affiliated special operations battalions, while the 1st ISOF Brigade focused primarily on Baghdād.[57] The new headquarters, however, aggravated personnel shortfalls within the counterterrorism forces. By the end of the year, the 1st and 2d ISOF Brigades, together with support and command elements, were woefully understrength.[58]

Two items offset the operational impact of the diminished state of readiness among special operations units. The coalition's special operations forces' presence did not shrink at the same rate as the U.S. conventional footprint. At least 4,000 American special operations personnel remained in Iraq, with no plans to downsize anytime soon.[59] The Ministry of Defense also tapped two Iraqi Army and two National Police brigades to work with

52. Rpt, Joint Forces Special Ops Component Cmd–Iraq (JFSOCC-I), Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 10, Hist Files, CMH.
53. Interv, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) with Maj. Gen. Fadhil Jamil al-Barwari, 1st Bde Iraqi Special Ops Cmd, 3 Nov 2009, 6–7, Hist Files, CMH.
54. U.S. Dept. Def (DoD), *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2008* (Section 9010, PL 109–289), Rpt to Cong., Dec 2008, 53, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Measuring_Stability_and_ Security_in_Iraq_2008-12.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
55. David Witty, "The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service" (Washington, DC: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 2015), 8, Hist Files, CMH; Rpt, JFSOCC-I, Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 10–11.
56. Rpt, JFSOCC-I, Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 11.
57. DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Rpt to Cong., Dec 2008, 55.
58. Rpt, JFSOCC-I, Apr 2010, "Iraqi Special Operations Forces: An Overview," 8–9.

Iraqi special operations forces on a habitual basis. That augmentation, although welcome in terms of the increased number of boots on the ground for special operations missions, gave Americans some cause for concern. The ministry assigned the 6th IA Division's 54th and 56th Brigades to this task, citing their high level of training, extensive resourcing, and ties to the prime minister as the rationale for selection. However, both brigades were Shi'i formations that were loyal to Maliki above all others, which meant their orders came from the Office of the Commander in Chief rather than the IGFC or their parent headquarters.[60]

In addition to having troop strength and funding problems, Iraqi special operations personnel had received a great deal of negative publicity for their participation in questionable partisan activities. In some quarters, the Iraqi special operations forces became known as the "dirty force" or the "dirty brigade," or even the "Fedayeen al-Maliki."[61] Their commander, Maj. Gen. Fadhil Jamil al-Barwari, rejected the accusations, insisting that the Iraqi special operations forces "work for Iraq under the Iraqi flag," and will "enforce the law, human rights, and the rules of engagement."[62] In an effort to offset allegations of sectarianism, General al-Barwari and his U.S. advisers dedicated a small media cell to help promote a more positive image of the special operations forces.[63] The public affairs group devoted considerable energy to counteracting negative rumors by highlighting recent victories over al-Qaeda and other extremist groups. Some Iraqis began referring to the 1st ISOF Brigade as the "Golden Brigade," but many others were not as easily swayed.[64]

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59. Steven Lee Myers, "Special Ops and the 'End of Combat' in Iraq," *New York Times*, 17 Sep 2010, https://archive.nytimes.com/atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/17/special-ops/, Hist Files, CMH.
60. Richard R. Brennan Jr. et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and Disestablishment of United States Forces–Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), 187n6.
61. Interv, CALL with al-Barwari, 3 Nov 2009, 9–10; Shane Bauer, "Iraq's New Death Squad: America Has Built an Elite and Lethal Counterterrorism Force. But Who's Calling the Shots?," *The Nation*, 3 Jun 2009, https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/iraqs-new-death-squad/; Marisa Sullivan, *Maliki's Authoritarian Regime*, Middle East Security Report No. 10 (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2013), 12, https://www.understandingwar.org/report/malikis-authoritarian-regime; both in Hist Files, CMH.
62. Interv, CALL with al-Barwari, 3 Nov 2009, 9–10.
63. Jeffrey A. Ledesma, "Media Department Helps Place ISOF in History Books, Act as Perfect Prototype for Future Cells," Combined Joint Special Ops Task Force–Arabian Peninsula Public Affairs Ofc, 28 Jul 2009, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/36902/media-department-helps-place-iraqi-special-operations-forces-history-books-act-perfect-prototype-future-cells, Hist Files, CMH.
64. Witty, "Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service," 12.

On the plus side, the budget debate provided Iraqi lawmakers with a pretext to dismantle organizations that no longer fit into the post-surge security agenda. The Office of the National Security Advisor topped the list of potential eliminations. After Shatha al-Mousawi, a Shi'i member of the finance committee, pointed out that the Office of the National Security Advisor employed 377 workers despite being authorized only 16 employees, parliament unanimously voted on 30 April 2009 to eliminate Mowaffak al-Rubaie's staff.[65]

LEAVING THE CITIES

The Iraqis initially wanted only 500 U.S. troops to remain in the capital after 30 June 2009, whereas MNC-I asked to retain a minimum of 3,000 American personnel. The talks about which U.S. forces would stay, their responsibilities, and their location therefore took precedence during the period leading up to the withdrawal. In fact, a follow-on offensive in northern Iraq by U.S. and Iraqi units remained on hold until negotiations were concluded. For the most part, MNC-I acceded to the prime minister's desires rather than argue. The Ministry of Defense complicated matters by instructing the Baghdād Operations Command to dismantle all joint security stations visible from major highways or located within Shi'i neighborhoods in the city. Once the Iraqi troops began tearing down their portion of the bases, colocated U.S. units had little option but to follow suit or depart.

At a mid-June conference, General Jacoby, along with Maj. Gen. Daniel P. Bolger, whose 1st Cavalry Division had replaced Maj. Gen. Jeffery W. Hammond's troops as Multi-National Division–Baghdad in February 2009, agreed to reduce U.S. force numbers in Baghdād, limit public discussion of the drawdown and turnover, and downplay the residual American presence by avoiding high-visibility areas. Jacoby reaffirmed his commitment to advising and assisting the Iraqis and promised that U.S. troops would not operate within any city without being asked. Their conciliatory attitude persuaded Maliki to allow thirteen joint security stations and 2,835 American personnel to remain in the capital beyond 30 June.[66]

Dealing with other aspects of the transition, namely agreeing upon the rules under which U.S. forces would operate, was just as complicated. The

65. "Iraqi Parliament to Dissolve the Office of the National Security Advisor," National Council of Resistance of Iran–Foreign Affairs Committee, 2 May 2009, http://ncr-iran.org, Hist Files, CMH.

66. AAR, I Corps, Apr 2009–Mar 2010, 30 Nov 2011, Partnering with the Iraqi Security Forces, pt. I, ch. 3, I-3-7.

experience of U.S. military commanders turned out to be as much of an obstacle as the attitude of Iraqi politicians. Although MNC-I stressed strong partnership relations between U.S. and Iraqi units, American forces typically planned and prepared unilaterally for an operation, bringing the Iraqis into the picture just before the operation began. Often, the Iraqis received only a secondary role as coalition units concentrated on the main task. Given that U.S. division, brigade, and battalion commanders were conditioned to those methods, the challenge of adjusting their mindset seemed daunting. Jacoby therefore invested as much time talking to his own subordinates during May and June as he spent meeting with the Iraqi government.[67]

The American departure from major cities provided further impetus for bringing together senior representatives of both commands. General Jacoby championed the initiative because he recognized that fewer U.S. units in population centers meant less information flowing upward through coalition channels. The new entity, dubbed the Combined Partnership Operations Center, facilitated liaisons between staffs. Colocating the center with the IGFC on Camp Victory, where the Iraqi headquarters had been located since 3 May 2006, offered a means to ensure critical information reached both Iraqi senior leaders and General Jacoby via proven channels. MNC-I's selection of the IGFC as the operational lynchpin conferred additional authority and responsibility on the Iraqi headquarters (*Chart 12.1*). Iraqi commanders who had bypassed the IGFC in the past now had to send their reports through the IGFC or risk violating the security agreement.

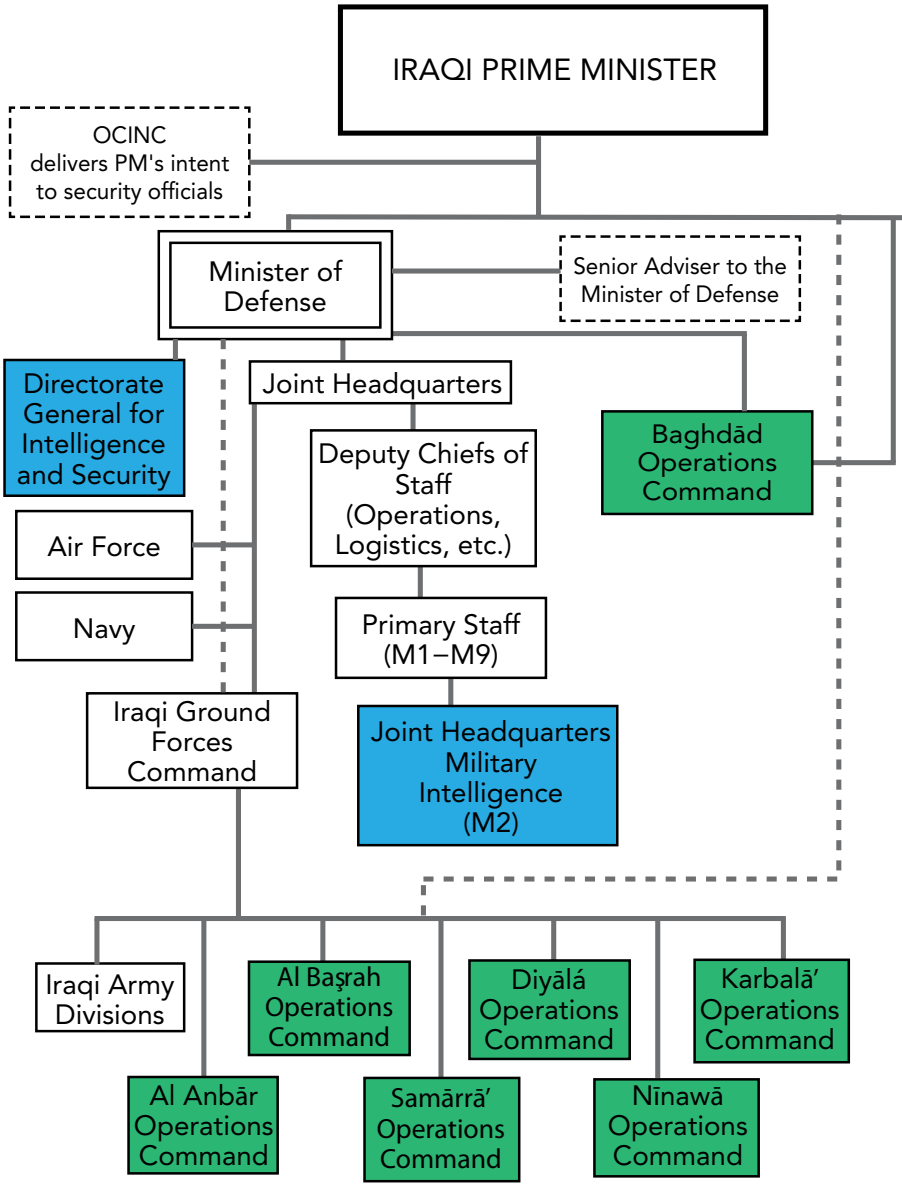
In mid-May 2009, I Corps selected 300 U.S. officers and enlisted soldiers to staff the new facility.[68] Even though both armies provided personnel, I Corps contributed the bulk of the equipment and infrastructure. The center's responsibilities included maintaining a shared vision of the battlefield, serving as the main coordination node between the U.S. and Iraqi armies, and facilitating combined planning.[69] As the Americans created new organizations such as the Combined Partnership Operations Center, they also dissolved those that they considered no longer relevant. As the June 30 date drew closer, MNC-I sought to identify which partnership arrangements still were needed and which no longer were required. Given that the arrival of the first AAB eliminated the need for specialized advisory schools and

67. AAR, I Corps, Apr 2009–Mar 2010, 30 Nov 2011, Partnering with the Iraqi Security Forces, pt. I, ch. 1, I-3-8.

68. Brig. Gen. Peter C. Bayer Jr., "Back in the Fight—I Corps as Multi-National Corps–Iraq," Association of the U.S. Army, *ARMY* 59 no. 9 (2 Sep 2009): 37–38, https://www.ausa.org/sites/default/files/Bayer.pdf.

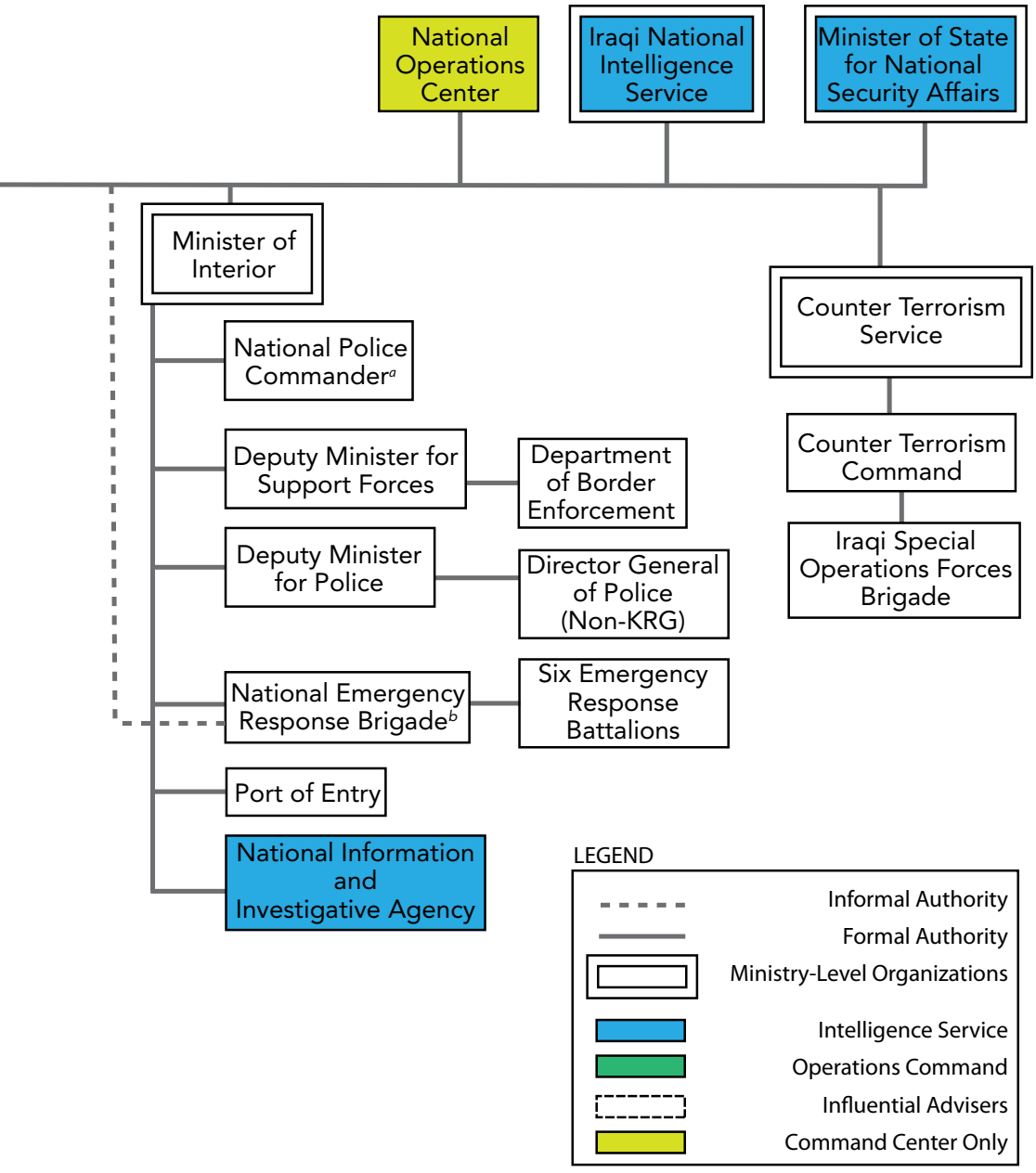
69. Bfg, MNC-I to MNC-I Cmdg Gen, 28 Jul 2009, sub: Combined Partnering Operations Center CPOC-101 Briefing, slide 2, I Corps Collection, CMH.

CHART 12.1–IRAQI SECURITY FORCES COMMAND AND CONTROL



Notes: a. The National Police was renamed as the Federal Police on 1 August 2009. *b.* The Ministry of Interior added resources to the National Emergency Response Unit and redesignated it as a brigade after assuming direct control of the formation in Summer 2007.

CHART 12.1– IRAQI SECURITY FORCES COMMAND AND CONTROL (CONTINUED)



Key: See Chart and Table Abbreviations, pages 561–62.

Source: Command Brief Template, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, 2007–2008, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC.

coordinating bodies, MNF-I disbanded General Walker's Iraq Assistance Group at Camp Victory on 3 June 2009.[70]

Colonel Newell's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, conducted a transfer of authority with Colonel Battaglia's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, on 4 June 2009.[71] Twenty-six days later, residents of cities across Iraq watched as U.S. troops turned over their bases to Iraqi soldiers. Prime Minister Maliki commemorated the occasion by reminding his audience that the handover represented a major development in Iraqi-American relations, describing "the moment that U.S forces would withdraw from populated areas as a great victory for the Iraqi people."[72] Although some in Washington were deeply offended by that phrase, the new U.S. ambassador, Christopher R. Hill, interpreted the words as part of a larger message reminding constituents that "the Iraqi forces that would soon take over checkpoints and mobile patrols would have their problems doing so. He was bracing people for more casualties to follow."[73]

The responsibility for urban areas now fell exclusively on the Iraqi forces while U.S. troops stood by ready to assist if called upon. The MNC-I and IGFC commanders cohosted a joint video teleconference to explain implementation of the new policy to fifty-two subordinate general officers. General Jacoby characterized the meeting as an example of "partnership at the highest level" at which frank and open discussion occurred.[74] The Iraqi minister of defense, who also sought to defuse potential tensions, asked U.S. forces to maintain a low profile during the first week of July to demonstrate to the Iraqi public that their own security forces had assumed the lead.[75] Similar meetings took place on the local level to sort out how things would work. Some Iraqi officers expected U.S. forces to remain on their bases permanently, while others forbade the Americans from traveling anywhere without an Iraqi escort. Many U.S. commanders, especially those nearing the end of a long deployment, were irritated by what they perceived as unreasonable rules and restrictions. General Jacoby reminded his subordinates of their responsibility to evaluate how their actions influenced

70. MNC-I Public Affairs Ofc, "Iraq Assistance Group Cases Colors," 3 Jun 2009, http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=26800&Itemid=128, Hist Files, CMH.
71. Sgt Frank Vaughn, "Long Knives Give Way to Highlanders in Ceremony," 9 Jun 2009, http://www.theredbulls.net/newsjune2009/208-long-knives-give-way-to-highlanders-in-ceremony/ (page discontinued; accessed 20 Mar 2011), Hist Files, CMH.
72. Hill, *Outpost*, 362.
73. Hill, *Outpost*, 362.
74. Bayer, "Back in the Fight," 38.
75. AAR, I Corps, Apr 2009–Mar 2010, 30 Nov 2011, Partnering with the Iraqi Security Forces, pt. I, ch. 3, I-3-9.

U.S.-Iraqi relationships rather than expend unnecessary effort on "winning the small arguments over checkpoints."[76] None of these irritations or arguments escalated to the point at which they required the intervention of Iraqi or American senior leaders.

INTERPRETING FUTURE NEEDS

American efforts to reshape the Iraqi Army into a conventional force continued. The Center for Army Analysis, in response to a request from MNSTC-I, provided General Odierno in late June 2009 with a detailed U.S. look at projected Iraqi Army requirements through 2020. Using a scenario in which a notional regional threat attempted to seize the Al Başrah oilfields, the think tank examined various organizational mixes to determine which would be most effective in the defense. The Americans also sought to determine if the Iraqi Army would need to remain as large as its current size once counterinsurgency responsibilities passed to the police and special operations forces. Postulating that main battle tanks and artillery would be the most effective conventional systems, the analysis concluded that providing more of both to the Iraqi Army would allow it to defeat a limited invasion by another nation-state using five or six divisions rather than the fourteen it currently had.

After perusing the center's findings, Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick's staff at MNSTC-I calculated that a defending force of a half-dozen divisions needed a minimum of two self-propelled artillery battalions, four M1A1 Abrams battalions, ten mechanized infantry battalions, and ten towed artillery battalions. MNSTC-I planned to allocate the M1A1s, along with the infantry fighting vehicles, to the 9th IA Division as well as a second division that would be converted into a mechanized formation. The 9th IA Division would receive one artillery battalion equipped with U.S.-manufactured M109A5 155-mm. self-propelled howitzers while the composition and assignment of the second self-propelled battalion remained in limbo for the time being. The towed artillery battalions, equipped with American-made M198A2 155-mm. howitzers, would be allocated to selected infantry divisions.[77] Because

76. AAR, I Corps, Apr 2009–Mar 2010, 30 Nov 2011, Partnering with the Iraqi Security Forces, pt. I, ch. 3, I-3-9.

77. Although the 9th Iraqi Army (IA) Division had two battalions of T72 tanks and Yugoslav-made BVP M80 infantry fighting vehicles, its remaining inventory consisted of obsolete T55 tanks, BMP1 infantry fighting vehicles, and MTLB armored personnel carriers. Bfg, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 24 May 2009, sub: Stay Behind Equipment: Briefing to GEN Odierno, Commander, MNF-I, slides 14–18, Kirkland

the Iraqis were acquiring American-made weapons that they never before had operated, the Foreign Military Sales packages had to include provisions for instructing the soldiers on their upkeep, function, and employment. Without this transfer of knowledge, the howitzers likely would sit unused in motor parks. On the other hand, if the Iraqis displayed no interest in sustaining that expertise once the initial instruction concluded, the same outcome would occur.

MNSTC-I also sought to identify where tanks and artillery could be obtained from U.S. stockpiles in the region. Helmick advocated transferring surplus U.S. items already in country to the Iraqi Army for two reasons: it reduced the cost of transporting materiel back to the United States and it fulfilled Iraqi needs without the expensive purchase of new items. After taking other logistical and operational factors into account, MNSTC-I implemented a plan calling for the handover of enough surplus equipment also to field five engineer battalions, a bridging company, a heavy-equipment transport company, and an engineer well-drilling company.[78] The initiative fell short of meeting all equipment needs simply because American units performing counterinsurgency operations did not deploy to Iraq with the full complement of heavier weapons needed for conventional combat.

The equipment transfers began as MNSTC-I initiated a major reorganization during the first half of 2009.[79] The restructuring trimmed 555 personnel spaces and split Helmick's staff into two components: the Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission (ITAM) and the Iraq Security Assistance Mission (ISAM). Most functions remained in place but received new designations. For example, the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team became ITAM–Army, and the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team became ITAM–Police. Meanwhile, ISAM's structure mirrored ITAM's.[80] However, MNF-I added a new cell, designated as the Partnership Strategy Group–Iraq, to MNSTC-I. It had the mission of guiding a multiyear downsizing and restructuring effort that would end with the activation of the U.S. Embassy's Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq (OSC-I) on

Collection, CMH; D. J. Elliott, "Iraqi Security Force Order of Battle–2009 Notes," [30 Apr 2009], http://home.comcast.net/~djyae/site/?/page/Iraq_Order_of_Battle/ (accessed 3 Apr 2011), Hist Files, CMH.

78. Bfg, MNF-I to MNF-I Cmdg Gen, 24 May 2009, sub: Stay Behind Equipment: Briefing to GEN Odierno, Commander, MNF-I, slides 14–18, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

79. Bfg, Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq (MNSTC-I) to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, n.d., sub: MNSTC-I Evolution: Mission Statement and Task Organization, slide 4, I Corps Material Folder, I Corps Collection, CMH.

80. Bfg, MNSTC-I to MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 5 Oct 2009, sub: Command Brief Historic–MNSTC-I (Master) V49_3, slides 5, 12, 5 Current 2009 Folder, Kirkland Collection, CMH.

1 October 2011.[81] OSC-I would face a daunting task, having only a fraction of the personnel that had been assigned to MNSTC-I.[82] The MNF-I operations order outlining agency responsibilities during the drawdown tasked OSC-I with the following major projects: (1) oversee fielding of M1A1 tanks, M109A5 howitzers, M88A2 recovery vehicles, tank transporters, and mobile bridging equipment in order of priority to the 9th, 5th, 10th, 14th, 2d, 7th, and 12th IA Divisions; (2) maintain existing partnership programs with the 3d, 5th, 7th and 10th IA Divisions; (3) train and equip eight Kurdish Regional Guard brigades; (4) improve the Iraqi Army's ability to provide sustainment to maneuver forces; and (5) assist with the creation of two more joint operational commands.[83] Whether OSC-I could accomplish those missions would depend on both governments agreeing on the conditions under which a residual American military training presence could operate after U.S. combat troops departed.

SECTARIAN TENSIONS REKINDLED

The transfer of American forces from most Iraqi cities heralded the next significant operational test for the Iraqi Army. Extremist offshoots and other insurgent groups were making good their crippling losses as supplies and reinforcements streamed across the Syrian border into northwestern Iraq. Al-Qaeda began a campaign of coordinated bombings starting in northern Iraq. Post-Khānaqīn limitations on patrolling in certain areas to reduce the chances of inadvertent clashes between Iraqi security forces and Kurdish fighters made it easier for insurgents to mount their opening strikes. On 7 August 2009, a truck bomb detonated outside a Turkoman mosque located on Mosul's northern outskirts, killing 37 and wounding 276.[84] Three days later, a pair of heavily laden flatbed trucks exploded in the village of Khaznah, located 43.4 kilometers southwest of Erbil, killing 43 and wounding 220.[85]

81. The Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq would case its colors in January 2010, with its commanding general becoming the deputy commanding general for advising and training for the newly established United States Forces–Iraq. Brennan et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 158–67.
82. Brennan et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 168–69.
83. Brennan et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 178–79.
84. Sam Dagher, "43 Killed in Attacks Against Iraqi Shi'ites: Hundreds Wounded In, Near Baghdad," *New York Times*, 8 Aug 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/08/world/middleeast/08iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH.
85. Sam Dagher, "Sectarian Bombings Pulverize a Village in Iraq," *New York Times*, 11 Aug 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/11/world/middleeast/11iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH.



Soldiers assigned to the 3d Battalion, 52d Brigade, 14th Iraqi Army, prepare to assault an objective during a live fire exercise on Tealeaf Island near Al Başrah on 25 October 2010. (*S. Sgt. Michael Casteel, Joint Combat Camera Center–Iraq*)

On 19 August, a series of explosions damaged government and commercial buildings in Baghdād. The final casualty count in the capital numbered 100 killed and more than 500 wounded. American journalists speculated the bombings were "intended to inform the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki that the guerrilla opposition has not been defeated, and that the prospects of his establishing a stable government that runs roughshod over other groups are low."[86]

The terrorist attacks resumed on 25 October 2009 when explosive-laden vehicles blasted the Baghdād provincial government and Justice Ministry, killing 153. In light of the impending national elections, reaction to the bombings took on a political dimension after the parliament's defense and security committee called on the prime minister to appear before them to answer questions. Soon afterward, government spokespersons announced, "The commission of inquiry into the double attacks on Sunday ordered the arrest of 13 officers of various ranks, and 50 other members of the security forces for failing to efficiently carry out their duties."[87] The incident also led

86. Juan Cole, "Baghdad Erupts Once Again," *Salon*, 19 Aug 2009, https://www.salon.com/2009/08/19/cole_3/, Hist Files, CMH.

87. "Police, Soldiers Held Over Bombs," Agence France Presse, 30 Oct 2009, https://www.news.com.au/world/breaking-news/police-soldiers-held-over-bombs/news-story/

to Lt. Gen. Abboud Qanbar's abrupt transfer from the Baghdād Operations Command to the lesser post of acting secretary general of the Ministry of Defense.[88] Prime Minister Maliki replaced Qanbar with Lt. Gen. Ahmed Hashem Awoudeh.[89] Rather than attribute the blasts to the usual acts of defiance by a weakened insurgency, one media outlet pointed out that the bombings came two days after parliament passed new voting laws and agreed to delay the upcoming 2010 elections.[90]

CHANGEOVER AT MNSTC-I

As Iraqi troops ramped up operations in Baghdād and Mosul, General Helmick turned over command of MNSTC-I to Lt. Gen. Michael D. Barbero on 7 October 2009. A 1976 West Point graduate, Barbero would be the organization's last commanding general. He was uniquely qualified for furthering the Iraqi military's future development having commanded both the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and the U.S. Army Infantry Center at Fort Benning, Georgia. No stranger to Iraq, General Barbero had served there previously as the assistant division commander for the 4th Infantry Division and as the chief operations officer of MNF-I.[91] The latter assignment had provided Barbero with regular opportunities to interface with senior Iraqi Army and Ministry of Defense officials, so he did not need weeks or months to build essential relationships with key counterparts.[92]

These personal bonds proved useful within four days of taking command. After hearing repeated rumors of Iraqi plans to make a unilateral major arms purchase from a third party, Barbero gained an appointment with the minister of defense and succeeded in persuading him not to pursue the weapons deal any further. Given the Iraqi culture's emphasis on personal

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de206d3196fb77f6404c3e6 b2cbe8f5e, Hist Files, CMH.

88. "Iraqi PM Fires Baghdad Security Chief," *Albawaba News*, 9 Dec 2009, https://www.albawaba.com/news/iraqi-pm-fires-baghdad-security-chief, Hist Files, CMH.

89. "Iraq PM Fires Baghdad Security Forces Chief," *Tehran Times*, 12 Dec 2009, https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/209638/Iraq-PM-fires-Baghdad-security-forces-chief, Hist Files, CMH.

90. "Baghdad Security Chief Fired After Bombings," BBC News, 9 Dec 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/mobile/middle_east/8404927.stm, Hist Files, CMH.

91. David Ahearn, "Q&A: Lt Gen Michael D. Barbero," *Ground Combat Technology* 2, no. 4 (Sep 2011), http://www.ground-combat-technology.com/gct-home/351-gct-2011-volume-2-issue-4-september/4740-qaa-lt-gen-michael-barbero.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

92. Interv, Lt. Col. Robert Kirkland, United States Forces–Iraq (USF-I) Historian, with Lt. Gen. Michael D. Barbero, Dep Cmdg Gen Advising and Training for USF-I, 10 Feb 2010, 4, I Corps Collection, CMH.

relationships, a lengthy period otherwise would have been required to foster the rapport necessary to influence the decision.[93] Barbero's ability to gain access to ministry officials was invaluable on numerous occasions during his tenure.

The new MNSTC-I commander recognized that, despite the perceived success of the surge, he faced different rather than fewer challenges than his predecessors. Maliki's efforts to bind the Iraqi Army to himself personally created growing apprehension among Kurds, Sunnis, and Shi'a alike. Motivated by the prime minister's refusal to hold a plebiscite on the status of Kirkūk, the various Kurdish factions coalesced into a coordinated body determined to press for more autonomy. The Sunni community formed an alliance with former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi to gain a greater voice and avoid a repetition of previous electoral defeats.[94] The Shi'a entered the election period split into two factions.[95] Each of the competing political blocs sought more influence over the security services and a larger share of the national oil revenue.[96]

The recent decision to send the 115,000 American combat troops remaining in Iraq home by 31 December 2011, as well as the withdrawal of all other coalition forces, affected every level of command. The major American headquarters—which included MNF-I, MNC-I and MNSTC-I—collapsed into a single organization designated as United States Forces–Iraq (USF-I). The first step in that process called for a 41 percent reduction in the number of overall staff positions, which led to the MNC-I and MNSTC-I commanding generals respectively assuming the duties of the USF-I deputy

93. Interv, Kirkland with Barbero, 10 Feb 2010, 5.

94. Two secular parties—the Kurdistan Democratic Party led by the region's president, Massoud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan headed by Iraq's national president, Jalal Talabani—dominated the Kurdish coalition. Former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a secular Shi'i, joined forces with Sunni politicians Saleh al-Mutlaq and Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi to run on a nonsectarian platform. "FACTBOX–Political Alliances Ahead of Iraq's 2010 Election," Reuters, 21 Oct 2009, https://www.reuters.com/article/latest Crisis/idUSLF559498, Hist Files, CMH.

95. The Shi'i split emerged when Nouri al-Maliki expressed a desire to form a broad national coalition in summer 2009, but his subsequent policies did not match that message. "Iraq PM Set to Break with Shiite Coalition in January Polls," *Daily Telegraph*, 13 Aug 2009, https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/iraq-pm-set-to-break-with-shiite-coalition-in-january-polls/news-tory/f382941bc04d8212a6b87f57bbdbe80f, Hist Files, CMH.

96. These feelings emerged before the election when Maliki used the de-Ba′athification laws to bar leading Sunni candidates from running for office. "Influential Group Threatens to Boycott Iraqi Election," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 9 Jan 2010, https://www.rferl.org/a/Influential_Group_Threatens_To_Boycott_Iraq_Election/1924762.html, Hist Files, CMH.

commanding general for operations and the USF-I deputy commanding general for advising and training.[97]

Residual tactical forces in Iraq underwent a similar reshuffling beginning in early 2010. The new United States Division–North assumed the former responsibilities of Multi-National Division–North. In the central and western part of the country, United States Division–Center successively absorbed Multi-National Division–Baghdad in early January followed by Multi-National Force–West on 23 January. United States Division–South retained responsibility for nine southern provinces when it shed the Multi-National Division–South designation. The new regional commands accorded growing priority to advisory duties as the Iraqi military assumed responsibility for maintaining security within its nation's borders. As a result, each division included a pair of AABs as well as logistical units, which were needed to support the ongoing drawdown.

The elections took place on 7 March 2010 with little violence. Maliki and his Islamic Da′wa Party allies within the State of Law political coalition that had been formed before the 2009 provincial elections were confident they would gain the 120 of 163 seats required for a majority in the 325-member parliament. Postelection negotiations could cobble together a governing coalition. However, even that cautious forecast proved to be optimistic. Based on results released on 26 March, Ayad Allawi's coalition won 91 seats while Maliki's State of Law coalition accrued a mere 89. Shortly after, President Jalal Talabani flew to Tehran to broker discussions among the major Shi'i parties about choosing a candidate for prime minister by consensus preparatory to forming a coalition government.[98]

Extremist elements viewed the political disarray as the window of opportunity they needed to further reassert their influence within Iraq. A series of bombings and other attacks led to Maliki lifting operational restrictions on coalition special operations forces and permitting targeted raids that thwarted future terrorist plots. On 11 March 2010, Iraqi police arrested Manaf Abd al-Rahim Rawi, mastermind of the August bombings and head of al-Qaeda in Baghdād, as he attempted to meet a colleague in the Mansour District. The Iraqis then lured this other terrorist leader into a

97. DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2010* (Section 9010, PL 109–289), Rpt to Cong., 29 Apr 2010, iv, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdf/March%209204%20SecDef%20Signed%2029%20Apr%202010_1D80.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
98. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 507–9.

trap, arrested him as well, and persuaded him to reveal the location of other extremist leaders hiding outside Tikrīt.[99]

On 18 April 2010, U.S. personnel and soldiers from the 54th Brigade, 6th IA Division, cordoned off the rural compound. After a failed attempt to convince the occupants to surrender, the troops stormed the buildings, but two terrorist leaders detonated suicide bombs rather than be taken prisoner.[100] However, the safe house yielded a trove of documents and data about al-Qaeda that allowed counterterrorist units to eliminate almost 80 percent of the group's senior leadership in Iraq during the next several months.[101] Although Al-Qaeda in Iraq/the Islamic State of Iraq (AQI/ISI) had suffered serious setbacks, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi now stepped into the leadership role and took charge of rebuilding the terrorist organization. As part of that process, AQI/ISI relocated to eastern Syria, where security forces had been forced to flee by a popular uprising against President Bashar al-Assad. AQI/ISI took over large areas of ungoverned territory, where it patiently recruited and trained more followers before ultimately rebranding itself as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in April 2013.

The summer of 2010 found Iraq in a precarious political situation despite reduced levels of violence. Six years of brutal infighting had ensured that political emotions were unlikely to subside, even though Allawi and Maliki both had clear paths to power. Although the new parliament opened on 14 June 2010, months of tense negotiations remained before Maliki's political future could be determined. The growing internal strife not only consumed Iraqi and American attention for the first half of 2010, but it also overshadowed AQI/ISI's resurrection. Both factors would gain sufficient momentum and, ultimately, would undermine American plans to transform the post-surge Iraqi Army from a counterinsurgency-oriented

99. The Islamic State of Iraq traced its roots to Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, originally formed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Jordan in 1999. In January 2006, Zarqawi brokered a merger with five other Iraqi insurgent groups to form the Mujahideen Shura Council. In October of that year, the Mujahideen Shura Council renamed itself the Islamic State of Iraq. Steven Lee Myers, "Iraqi Officials Say Arrest Led to Dismantling of Al-Qaeda Unit," *New York Times*, 23 Apr 2010, http://archive.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2010/04/23/iraqi_officials_say_arrest_led_to_dismantling_of_al_qaeda_unit/; Qassim Abdul-Zahra, "Militant Led Iraqis to Al Qaida Chiefs," Associated Press, 30 Apr 2010, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/36876627/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/militant-led-iraqis-al-qaida-chiefs/#.X2NmEIeSncs; both in Hist Files, CMH.

100. Abdul Hameed Bakier, "Internet Jihadists React to the Deaths of Al Qai'da's Leaders in Iraq," *CTC Sentinel* 3, no. 5 (20 May 2010), https://ctc.usma.edu/internet-jihadists-react-to-the-deaths-of-al-qaidas-leaders-in-iraq/, Hist Files, CMH.

101. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 503–5.

organization into a force capable of waging conventional war against nation-state opponents.

During this period, Maliki took steps to exert more control over Iraqi security forces. In addition to replacing hundreds of personnel assigned to intelligence branches of the Ministry of Defense with his own supporters, the prime minister filled division command positions with politically reliable senior officers. Shi'i generals commanded eleven of fourteen divisions by 2011, with one Kurd and two Sunnis making up the remaining trio. The former commanded the 3d IA Division, and the latter led the 7th and 17th IA Divisions. Shi'i officers led both divisions stationed near Baghdād, and Maliki loyalists controlled all of the personal protection brigades in the Green Zone.[102]

As the negotiations on the composition of the Iraqi government continued, General Barbero took charge of Foreign Military Sales deals that were designed to provide the Iraqi Army with M1A1 tanks and the Iraqi Air Force with F–16 fighters. The 140 M1A1 main battle tanks slated for delivery in 2010 were upgraded versions of an earlier model that had been replaced by M1A2 variants in the U.S. Army. The tanks destined for the Iraqi military came with second-generation forward-looking infrared thermal sights, urban survivability combat upgrades, driver's thermal viewers, improved engines, and embedded diagnostics.[103] The Abrams tanks were distributed across the four battalion-sized armor "regiments" of the 9th IA Division, with each receiving thirty-five M1A1s and two M88A2 heavy-tracked recovery vehicles. Iraqi Abrams units were smaller than their American counterparts, having three rather than four companies, each with eleven instead of fourteen tanks apiece. The remaining pair of M1A1s, along with the M88A2 recovery vehicles, outfitted the headquarters. Although the tanks began arriving in 2010, the final group did not reach Iraq until mid-August 2011. Before turning over the vehicles to Iraqi officials, Americans unpacked and cleaned them and repaired deficiencies identified by quality assurance inspectors. The last consignment of five M1A1 Abrams tanks delivered to the Besmaya Combat Training Center joined a queue of forty others waiting

102. Maj. Gen. Heaney Khoshnaw led the 3d IA Division, while Maj. Gen. Ismail Shahib Mohammed al-Dulaimi and Maj. Gen. Nassar Ahmad Ghanim al-Hiti respectively led the 7th and 17th IA Divisions. Although the 11th IA Division moved to Wasit Province, the 6th and 9th IA Divisions remained in the vicinity of the capital. Sullivan, *Middle East Security Report No. 10*, 16–18.

103. "General Dynamics Wins $33 Million to Enhance Iraqi Abrams Tanks," *Military + Aerospace Electronics*, 12 Mar 2009, http://www.militaryaerospace.com/articles/2009/03/general-dynamics-wins-33-million-to-enhance-iraqi-abrams-tank.html, Hist Files, CMH.



An M1A1 Abrams tank belonging to the 1st Company, 2d Regiment, 34th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army, fires a shot downrange at the Besmaya Range Complex. (*Spc. Timothy Koster, U.S. Army*)

for refueling, rearming, and the restoration of key components that had been removed for safety reasons during shipment from the United States.

With the Foreign Military Sales package, the Iraqi army also received training for their M1A1 operators and maintenance personnel, with the latter divided into multiple sessions consisting of "basic-unit maintainer training and advanced-maintenance training for the turret and hull, and fire-[control] systems training."[104] Both the operator and maintenance instruction courses included a "train the trainer" component in which designated Iraqi personnel received additional classes to prepare them to teach their fellow soldiers. The Iraqi military's interest level, however, did not match the painstaking American investment. Rather than proactively trying to retain Abrams crewmembers by granting pay bonuses or other incentives, the Iraqi Army soon experienced a high personnel turnover rate within M1A1 units that drained them of fully trained soldiers. The reasons for the turnover were not clear, but they may have stemmed from the Iraqis treating the costly and maintenance-intensive M1A1s as showpieces rather than combat vehicles, resulting in Abrams crewmembers doing everything

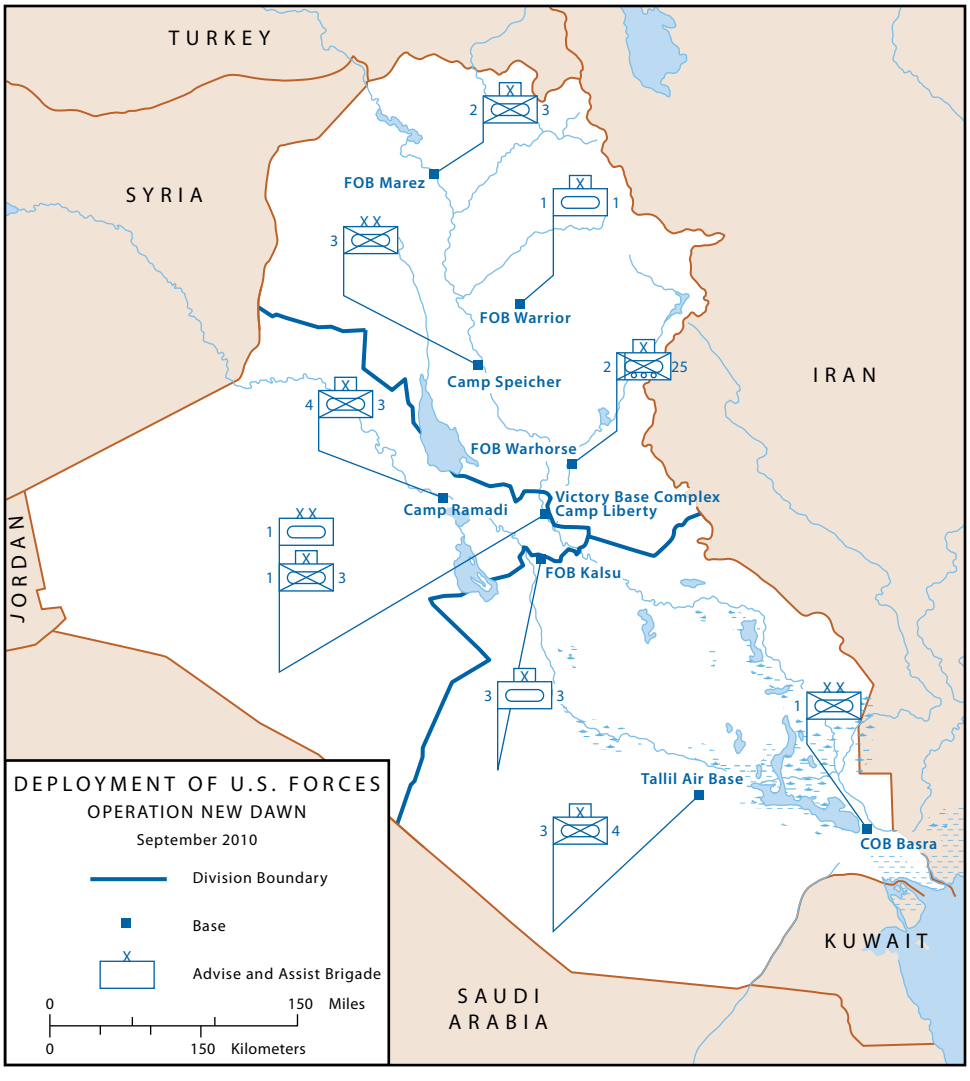
104. S. Sgt. Edward Daileg, "Iraqi Army Receives Last Shipment of M1 Abrams Tanks," 305th Mobile Public Affairs Det, 6 Sep 2011, https://www.army.mil/article/64944/iraqi_army_receives_last_shipment_of_abrams_tanks, Hist Files, CMH.

but operating the tanks, or from the fact that American tanks required far more hands-on care than Russian-made T72s.

The rush to provide the Iraqis with the equipment they would need to conduct conventional operations exacerbated rather than aided Iraqi efforts to improve their logistical efficiency. The flood of spare parts and diagnostic equipment that had accompanied the acquisition of the M1A1s overwhelmed the staff of the Taji National Depot, which already was struggling to deal with supporting the transfer of thousands of Humvees and the impending arrival of 1,026 refurbished M113A2 armored personnel carriers.[105] A RAND Corporation study noted that multiple equipment fielding efforts "overwhelmed the [Iraqi security forces'] Taji National Depot, the [Ministry of Defense's] main repair parts and maintenance center, with stocks to support the equipment, and its many variants. Although these issues were recognized in early 2011, and the flow was tailored, metered, and better coordinated with ISF [Iraqi security forces] logistics personnel, it still left a logistics system that would need years to mature to support the ISF mission."[106]

The Iraqis preferred paper records over the electronic requisition and inventory systems recommended by the Americans, which meant that the acquisition of supplies and services remained overly centralized and encumbered by multiple layers of bureaucracy. The provision of fuel illustrated the Iraqi Army's archaic process. Representatives from each battalion, brigade, and division traveled to Baghdād each month to present paperwork to the Ministry of Defense's comptroller, which allowed them to clear the previous month's accounts. They then visited the chief logistician's office to obtain authorization to draw fuel for the current month. Next, they returned to the comptroller to get a purchase order (for the current month's authorized fuel draw), which they took to the refinery. After that, they returned to the logistician's office to obtain another memorandum authorizing the draw of fuel. A second trip to the refinery followed, this time to obtain a memorandum authorizing them to send trucks to specific distribution points to pick up the fuel. Finally, unit fuel trucks were dispatched to the refinery to draw the fuel from the authorized locations. The process was so complicated and so alien to U.S. advisers that they had to attend classes to understand the system.[107]

105. Kim C. Gillespie, "Excess Armored Personnel Carriers Benefit U.S., Foreign Partners," U.S. Army Security Assistance Cmd, 11 Jul 2013, https://www.army.mil/article/106646/excess_armored_personnel_carriers_benefit_u_s_foreign_partners, Hist Files, CMH.
106. Brennan et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 181–82.
107. Bfg, Nov 2010, sub: MOD IA Logistics Overview 2-1 ID SCL 11 – 10, slide 30, Bill's MOD Presentations Folder, 51st MHD Collection, CMH.



Map 12.1

DRAWDOWN

When Operation Iraqi Freedom ended and Operation New Dawn began on 1 September 2010, the presence of only 50,000 U.S. troops residing on 100 bases was a major achievement compared to the almost 170,000 personnel who had been deployed at 600 bases during the surge (*Map 12.1*). In addition to coordinating the departure of U.S. troops and equipment, USF-I oversaw the transition of defense-related responsibilities in Iraq to the Department of State. The deputy commanding general for advising and training received

the mission of establishing OSC-I, which would be a subordinate element of the U.S. Embassy. The initial operating capability milestone for OSC-I was 1 June 2011, with full operating capability set for 1 October. The 157 OSC-I personnel concentrated on managing equipment transfers, overseeing U.S.-supervised logistical sites, promoting partnership opportunities, improving the collection and dissemination of intelligence information, furthering the professional development of Iraqi senior leaders, and building ministerial capacity (*Map 12.2*).[108]

In July 2011, the Department of Defense also returned responsibilities for training and equipping Iraqi police to the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. The transition took place with minimal difficulties as 600 Department of Defense advisers stepped aside while 350 State Department advisers (52 government employees and 298 contractors) took their place. Within six months, however, that total dropped to 190 personnel overseeing the $1 billion contract. A year later, only 90 State Department personnel remained involved with police training, reflecting the evolving fiscal and strategic priorities of both the Iraqi government and the United States.[109]

The Obama administration had agreed to retain a residual force of U.S. trainers in Iraq after pulling out U.S. combat troops, but the ultimate disposition and legal status of these trainers raised questions for both the United States and Iraq. The two nations were willing to discuss renewing a 2008 security agreement detailing the authorities, missions, and scope of the residual force, but they held different views on a key point: how local laws applied to U.S. military personnel in Iraq, particularly those accused of committing a crime.[110] Senior U.S. military leaders not only opposed exposing their personnel to the vagaries of the Iraqi justice system, they also were loath to set a precedent that would allow other nations to make similar demands. The Iraqis countered that improvements in security had created an environment that no longer warranted giving U.S. soldiers immunity from prosecution if they broke Iraqi laws.

The prospects for compromise did not look good. Shi'i groups courted by Maliki in the wake of the 2010 election harbored significant animosity toward Americans after having suffered stinging defeats at the hands of U.S.

108. DoD Inspector Gen Rpt, DODIG–2013–136, "Assessment of the Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq Mission Capabilities," 18 Sep 2013, 6–15, https://media.defense.gov/2013/Sep/18/2001713308/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2013-136.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.
109. Brennan et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 191–93.
110. R. Chuck Mason, "U.S.-Iraq Withdrawal/Status of Forces Agreement: Issues for Congressional Oversight," Congressional Research Service, Rpt No. R40011, 13 Jul 2009, 5, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R40011.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.



Map 12.2

troops in 2004 and during the surge. In addition, Maliki's longtime political nemesis, Shi'i cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, returned from self-exile in Iran in early January 2011. The fact that the United States and Iraq both faced economic woes also influenced the negotiations. The White House planned to make significant defense budget reductions based on the projected withdrawal of U.S. combat troops by the end of December 2011, but maintaining even a few thousand American troops in Iraq would necessitate substantial expenditures by the Pentagon.[111]

111. Gates, *DUTY*, 460–65.



Kuwaiti soldiers look on as the last U.S. convoy crosses the Iraqi border on 18 December 2011, marking the end of the transition of troops and equipment as Operation New Dawn came to a close. (*Capt. Jordan A. Johnson, U.S. Army*)

Removing the uncertainty of whether Maliki would remain in office did not improve the situation. In an effort both to maintain good relations with the United States and to gain concessions from Baghdād, the Kurds decided to back the incumbent prime minister in order to end the political stalemate. Maliki traveled to Erbil, where he discussed oil revenues and territorial disputes with Kurdistan Regional Government President Massoud Barzani.[112] On 25 November 2010, the postelection deadlock formally ended when Prime Minister Designate Maliki accepted a request from newly reelected President Jalal Talabani to form a new government. That signaled the start of a thirty-day window to put together a cabinet subject to parliamentary approval.[113] However, Maliki still refused to extend legal protections to U.S. military personnel in the pending status of forces agreement.

Prospects for a last-minute resolution dimmed as Prime Minister Maliki delayed fulfilling a promise to appoint security ministers from opposition parties. As an interim measure, in December 2010 he named himself as acting national security minister and the temporary head of both the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior. Despite continuous pressure from

112. Hill, *Outpost*, 386–88.

113. Bashra Juhi, "Al-Maliki Asked to Form New Government in Iraq," *Washington Times*, 25 Nov 2010, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/nov/25/al-maliki-asked-form-new-government-iraq/, Hist Files, CMH.

other political parties and the Americans, Maliki refused to relinquish the defense portfolio for almost a year. In the wake of more bombings in August 2011, popular and parliamentary backlash forced him to reappoint Cultural Minister Saadoun al-Dulaimi to a second term as minister of defense.[114] The newly reinstalled defense minister showed no signs of willingness to confront the Maliki about his uncompromising stance on the status of forces agreement. Although the Iraqi parliament recognized the urgency of the issue, it adjourned for the month-long Ramadan holiday rather than pursue an immediate solution.

President Obama had given the Iraqis notice that he wanted Baghdād to settle the question of whether American troops would remain in Iraq no later than 1 August. Ambassador Hill's successor, James F. Jeffrey, reported that Maliki personally supported all U.S. conditions except granting U.S. soldiers immunity from prosecution in local courts of law. However, the prime minister also stated that he could not guarantee parliament's approval of the agreement. Both issues rendered further negotiation moot.[115] Bringing the issue to closure also was difficult in Washington. President Obama informed the National Security Council on 13 August 2011 that he wanted to reduce the number of stay-behind forces. General Austin, who had assumed command of USF-I in fall 2010, reminded all parties that if there was no agreement on the status of forces, a full American departure had to begin no later than 15 October to meet the end-of-year deadline.

Despite proffering that sober warning, General Austin continued to seek a positive resolution to the diplomatic impasse. During the first week of October, he proposed unilaterally halting the drawdown by "freezing" 5,000 U.S. troops in place in order to force a parliamentary vote on the agreement. When that option garnered scant support in Washington, Austin then suggested accelerating the pending deployment of the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) and reflagging it as United States Training Mission–Iraq upon its arrival in early December.[116] That course of action also failed to gain traction in Washington because of the unwillingness of the Iraqis to accept key preconditions of a status of forces agreement acceptable to the United States.

The final word on the ultimate disposition of U.S. troops came when President Obama notified Maliki on 21 October 2011 that the United States would reduce its force levels to zero by the end of the year.[117] For the next

114. Saadoun al-Dulaimi had served as the minister of defense from June 2005 to March 2006.
115. Gordon, "In the U.S. Exit from Iraq, Failed Efforts and Challenges."
116. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 549–50.
117. Rayburn and Sobchak, *U.S. Army in the Iraq War*, vol. 2, 550.

two months, American forces concentrated mainly on redeploying the 40,000 soldiers and 36,000 contractors still in Iraq. The final ground convoy, consisting of 500 soldiers from Col. Douglas C. Crissman's 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, departed Contingency Operating Base Adder in the predawn hours of 18 December 2011. With local television banned from covering the event, Iraqis did not learn that American troops were leaving until after the U.S. convoy entered Kuwait. The crossing of the final vehicle over the Iraq-Kuwait border marked the last of a spate of transition ceremonies, including a flag-folding held several days previously in Baghdād as well as formal visits to Iraq by Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and a reciprocal trip to Washington, D.C., by Prime Minister Maliki.[118]

CONCLUSION

The three years leading up to the U.S. departure from Iraq provided a sobering example of Americans still grappling to understand how factors beyond their control influenced train-and-equip programs. Despite impressive organizational improvisation and genuine investment by senior leaders such as General Jacoby, all of which was geared toward reshaping the Iraqi Army from an organization optimized for counterinsurgency into an efficient conventional force, a combination of factors prevented that goal from being realized. The success of the surge topped the list, with the insurgency's defeat providing incentive for the Iraqi government to consolidate its hold on power while the United States viewed victory as a pathway for withdrawal.

The political maneuvering following the 2010 elections placed Maliki's ambitions on clear display as he sought to entrench himself in office rather than serve all Iraqis. The U.S. push to transform the Iraqi Army into a smaller conventional force was totally at odds with Maliki's agenda, especially given the many factors, such as the tensions with Kurds, the incremental reemergence of extremism, and the growing dissatisfaction within the Sunni community, all of which fueled the prime minister's reluctance to dismantle a force that he had expended significant influence and energy to create. With little possibility of reaching an arrangement that satisfied the agenda of either national leader, negotiators represented the interests of both Washington and Baghdād unexpectedly found themselves in rare alignment. The United

118. Tim Arango and Michael Schmidt, "Last Convoy of American Troops Leaves Iraq," *New York Times*, 18 Dec 2011, https://archive.nytimes.com/atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/18/last-convoy-of-american-troops-leaves-iraq-marking-an-end-to-the-war/, CMH.

States sought to extract military resources from Iraq in order to address evolving strategic priorities, while the Iraqi leader wanted U.S. troops to leave in order to drastically reduce American influence within his country.

Although the status of forces impasse allowed both governments to accomplish their desired goals, Prime Minister Maliki realized that achieving his political agenda required far more effort than merely preventing the Americans from maintaining a significant military presence in Iraq. Turning his energies toward undermining U.S. leverage within his nation, he shunted aside government officials who demonstrated an affinity for American practices, and he gave greater responsibility to individuals who supported his rise to power. As a result, the ability of Americans to influence their Iraqi counterparts waned during New Dawn. The U.S. defense and diplomatic establishments were slow to acknowledge the change, and they believed that ramping up the scope and tempo of some existing programs could reverse shifting Iraqi attitudes.

For example, the Department of Defense's inspector general for Iraq sought to put the best face on events by promoting the USF-I key leader engagement program, claiming that mentoring senior Iraqi officials represented a "visionary" approach that offered a viable means of "solving" problems.[119] The Pentagon also championed continued reliance on Foreign Military Sales, despite Iraq's dissatisfaction with that program's bureaucratic rigidity, simply because no palatable alternative existed.[120] USF-I touted the handover of installations, security responsibilities, and successful completion of large-scale operations as evidence of success while placing less emphasis on sensitive topics such as systemic corruption, nepotism, and soldier morale. Those latter issues might have been addressed by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) programs designed to increase the professionalism and institutional development of Iraqi security forces, but the treaty organization shut down NATO Training Mission–Iraq in 2011 after Baghdād declined to guarantee legal immunities for its trainers.[121]

Dedicated advisory brigades did less to influence events during this period than the Pentagon or U.S. Central Command had hoped, in large part because they had been created to address tactical-level issues. AABs lacked the equipment, personnel, and expertise to mentor operational-level

119. DoD Inspector Gen Rpt, SPO–2011–001, "Assessment of U.S. Government Efforts to Develop the Logistics Sustainment Capability of the Iraq Security Forces," 17 Nov 2010, 4, https://media.defense.gov/2010/Nov/17/2001712565/-1/-1/1/ISF10Nov10.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

120. DoD Inspector Gen Rpt, SPO–2011–001, "Assessment of U.S. Government Efforts to Develop the Logistics Sustainment Capability of the Iraq Security Forces," 4.

121. Brennan et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 177.

headquarters, oversee large-scale combined-arms training, integrate enablers with maneuver forces, upgrade sustainment infrastructure, improve professional education, or assist in ministerial development. Simply put, the security environment in Iraq had evolved faster than the U.S. Army's ability to modify AAB capabilities. It did not help matters that the central government in Baghdād preferred a subservient army focused on internal threats and maintaining political connections rather than a combined-arms force sustained by meritocracy.

During New Dawn, the changing dynamics between the U.S. and Iraqi militaries became more apparent. Notably, the Americans mistakenly assumed that their ability to influence Iraqis would grow rather than diminish. This miscalculation proved fatal, given that few American politicians and senior U.S. military leaders fully understood the magnitude of the task facing U.S. advisers following the surge.[122] That disconnect reflected a combination of evolving American strategic priorities, inadequate program assessment criteria, the uniqueness of the overall mission, and a lack of insight into the Iraqi government's true motives. The resultant mismatch between incompatible political agendas and available resources—including time—remained unaddressed even as the last convoy of U.S. combat troops departed Iraq.

122. Many of the shortfalls present in 2010 and 2011 reflected "the fact that it takes a long time to build a military from scratch and constructing a fully self-sustaining multiservice force that can develop the capacity to execute combined arms operations while battling an insurgency is a tall task for any military organization." Brennan et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 177.

13
Conclusion

Less than twenty-four hours after the last U.S. convoy departed Iraq, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ordered Iraqi special operations forces to arrest members of Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi's security detail on suspicion of assassinating Shi'i politicians.[1] In addition to targeting Sunni politicians in the central government, the prime minister used loopholes in de-Ba'thification legislation to oust Sunni provincial officials.[2] If anyone still harbored doubts about his drive to expand and consolidate his authority, Maliki's efforts to gain control over the Independent High Electoral Commission, the central bank, the Integrity Commission, and the High Commission for Human Rights provided convincing evidence otherwise.[3] One member of the Iraqi parliament complained, "How can you have a working democracy if the institutions monitoring the government are under government control?"[4] Unrest grew, particularly among the Sunni tribes in western and northern Iraq. The April 2014 parliamentary elections served notice of reawakened political tensions when Sunni and Kurdish representatives boycotted the assembly's initial session, delaying formation of a new government.

1. Roy Gutman, "As U.S. Troops Exit Iraq, Maliki Moves Against Sunni Rivals," *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 Dec 2011, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/1219/As-US-troops-exit-Iraq-Maliki-moves-against-Sunni-rivals, Historians (Hist) Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC (hereinafter CMH).
2. Christine Hauser, "Iraq: Maliki Demands That Protesters Stand Down," *New York Times*, 2 Jan 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/03/world/middleeast/iraq-maliki-demands-that-protesters-stand-down.html?_r=0, Hist Files, CMH.
3. Phil Sands, "Critics Attack al Maliki's Power Grab Over Iraq State Institutions," *National News*, 25 Jan 2011, https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/mena/critics-attack-al-maliki-s-power-grab-over-iraq-state-institutions-1.402657, Hist Files, CMH.
4. Sands, "Critics Attack al Maliki's Power Grab Over Iraq State Institutions."

With Prime Minister Maliki's attention split between postelection maneuvering and unrest in Al Anbār, an old threat reared its head in early summer 2014. The Al-Qaeda in Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq organization had been forced to relocate to Syria in May 2010. Its new leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, then rebranded the organization as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) after forcibly absorbing an al-Qaeda offshoot that proclaimed itself the Al Nusra Front. Seeing weakness in Iraq, ISIS readied an assault on Mosul. Security forces in Nīnawā Province were aware of the gathering menace, but when hundreds of ISIS fighters drove into Mosul's westernmost districts before dawn on 6 June, they encountered tepid resistance from the understrength 6th Brigade, 3d Federal Police Division.[5] The 3d Federal Police Division's equally shorthanded 5th, 7th, and 8th Brigades remained in place, preparing to defend eastern Mosul. Instead of 25,000 police and Iraqi Army personnel protecting Iraq's second-largest city, there were only 10,000, scattered across a wide urban area bisected by the Tigris River. Reinforcements were not immediately available because several of the division's other units—including most of its mechanized elements—had been sent to restive Al Anbār.[6]

The extremists were aided by sympathetic locals who attacked police stations and military command posts. Fighting raged throughout 8 June with neither side gaining an advantage. During the late afternoon of the following day, ISIS hurled a truck bomb at one of the last bastions of organized resistance in western Mosul. The blast killed the commander of the 4th Federal Police Battalion, resulting in the entire unit abandoning the position. Later that day, two Iraqi generals and their security detachments rolled east across a bridge spanning the Tigris.[7] The convoy's unexpected appearance convinced 2d Iraqi Army (IA) Division soldiers that all was lost and a general rout had begun. Soon afterward, demoralized defenders of eastern Mosul began drifting away from their posts, one by one, into the night. By the morning of 10 June, thousands of Iraqi soldiers had left Mosul, heading for real or imagined safety, having abandoned their weapons and vehicles.[8]

5. The National Police was redesignated as the Federal Police on 1 August 2009. "Inside Iraqi Politics: The Fall of Mosul Special Edition," Uticensis Risk Services, 24 Aug 2015, 13, https://web.archive.org/web/20190213183721/http://www.insideiraqipolitics.com/Files/IIPNinawaExcerpts.pdf; Ned Parker, Isabel Coles, and Raheem Salman, "Special Report: How Mosul Fell—An Iraqi General Disputes Baghdad's Story," Reuters, 14 Oct 2014, https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN0I30Z7/, Hist Files, CMH.

6. Parker, Coles, and Salman, "Special Report: How Mosul Fell."

7. Parker, Coles, and Salman, "Special Report: How Mosul Fell."

8. Ysir Abbas and Dan Trombly, "Inside the Collapse of the Iraqi Army's 2nd Division," War on the Rocks, 1 Jul 2014, 1, https://warontherocks.com/2014/07/inside-the-collapse-of-the-

That afternoon, videos posted on social media by ISIS revealed that extremist fighters were firmly in control of Mosul. Al-Baghdadi's followers had scored an unexpected victory that swelled their ranks with deserting soldiers and police and expanded their arsenal with 2,300 armored Humvees, 52 artillery pieces, and several dozen armored fighting vehicles.[9] Rumors of atrocities taking place in Mosul shattered the morale of soldiers from the 5th and 12th IA Divisions, many of whom joined the half-million civilian refugees streaming out of the city rather than confront the invading extremists.[10] Sunni tribes in Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn and Diyālá Provinces joined forces with the invaders, prompting U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to proclaim that he "did not 'support in any way' getting American troops involved in the Iraqi 'Civil War.'"[11]

Soldiers of the 4th IA Division abandoned the Bayjī refinery, 249.4 kilometers north of Baghdād, without resistance. The combined oil field and refinery complex, which daily produced 170,000 barrels of gasoline and other petroleum products, shut down as workers evacuated. Baghdād authorities dispatched a hundred Iraqi special operations forces soldiers via helicopter to join the handful of security guards and staff remaining at the refinery.[12] The composite force managed to fend off subsequent ISIS assaults by threatening to blow up the refinery's main switches and controls.[13] While some ISIS units besieged the holdouts in Bayjī, the bulk of the extremist force continued advancing until it seized Tikrīt, only 152.8 kilometers

iraqi-armys-2nd-division/, Hist Files, CMH.

9. Agence France-Presse, "ISIS Captured 2,300 Humvee Armored Vehicles from Iraqi Forces in Mosul," *Guardian*, 1 Jun 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/01/isis-captured-2300-humvee-armoured-vehicles-from-iraqi-forces-in-mosul; Jeremy Bender, "ISIS Militants Captured 52 American-made Artillery Weapons That Cost $500,000 Each," *Business Insider*, 15 Jul 2014, https://www.businessinsider.com/isis-has-52-american-weapons-that-can-hit-baghdad-2014-7, Hist Files, CMH.

10. Martin Chulov, Fazel Hawramy, and Spencer Ackerman, "Iraqi Army Capitulates to Isis Militants in Four Cities," *Guardian*, 11 Jun 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/11/mosul-isis-gunmen-middle-east-states; Nabih Bulos, Patrick J. McDonnell, and Raja Abdulrahim, "ISIS Weapons Windfall May Alter Balance in Iraq, Syrian Conflicts," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Jun 2104, https://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-iraq-isis-arms-20140629-story.html, Hist Files, CMH.

11. "Iraq Crisis: Battle Grips Vital Baiji Oil Refinery," BBC News, 18 Jun 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27897648, Hist Files, CMH.

12. "Hundreds of Troops Remain Surrounded in Iraq's Key Refinery, Say US Official," ABC News, 21 Jun 2014, https://abcnews.go.com/International/hundreds-troops-remain-surrounded-iraqs-key-refinery-us/story?id=24243767, Hist Files, CMH.

13. Hannah Allam and Mitchell Prothero, "Islamists Have Cornered Commandos Defending Iraq's Largest Refinery," *Miami Herald*, 9 Jul 2014, https://www.miamiherald.com/latest-news/article_1974777.html, Hist Files, CMH.

north of Baghdād, on 11 June.[14] Overall, ISIS forces had succeeded, within a remarkably short period, in gaining control of almost 12 million people living within a 103,000-square-kilometer area that encompassed northern, western, and central Iraq as well as portions of Syria.[15]

Maliki resisted calls to step down for several months until pressure from the United States and Iran forced him out of office.[16] Iraqi President Fuad Masum designated Haider al-Abadi, a relatively unknown member of the Islamic Da′wa Party who had lived in England before returning to Iraq in 2003, as the new prime minister on 8 September 2014. Al-Abadi had limited experience in government, only having served one year as the minister of communications from 2003 to 2004 and eleven months as an adviser to Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaʿfari in 2005. Al-Abadi assumed the mantle of leadership at a time when the Iraqi Army was reeling from the loss of several whole divisions, leaving just nine marginally combat capable formations. The army also had lost control of the motor pools and armories of the 2d IA Division in Mosul, the 3d Federal Police Division in Nīnawā, the 4th IA Division in Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn, the 12th IA Division near Kirkūk, and the 5th IA Division in Diyālá Province.[17] In their haste to reach safety, elements of the 4th IA Division abandoned several thousand air force trainees and army support personnel in Tikrīt.[18] These individuals, many of whom lacked weapons, were massacred by ISIS fighters and local Sunnis.[19] The situation in western Iraq appeared only marginally less serious. The 1st IA Division had only two weak brigades, while desertion and the loss of senior commanders rendered the 7th IA Division combat ineffective. Elements of the 8th IA

14. Mirren Gidda, "Islamist Militants in Iraq Seize Control of Tikrīt," *Time*, 11 Jun 2014, https://time.com/2857751/iraq-Tikrīt-baghdad-isis-mosul/, Hist Files, CMH.
15. Courtney Kube, "'Defeated' ISIS Has Found Safe Haven in Ungoverned Part of Iraq," NBC News, 4 Nov 2019, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mideast/defeated-isis-has-found-safe-haven-ungoverned-part-iraq-n1076081, Hist Files, CMH.
16. Yochi Dreazan, "Maliki Used to Have the Support of Both Iran and the U.S. Now He's Lost Them Both," *Foreign Policy*, 13 Aug 2014, https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/08/13/maliki-used-to-have-the-support-of-both-iran-and-the-u-s-now-hes-lost-them-both/, Hist Files, CMH.
17. "Inside Iraqi Politics: The Fall of Mosul Special Edition," 24 Aug 2015, 15–16. The surviving brigades (6th, 9th, 10th, and 11th) of the 2d and 3d Iraqi Army (IA) Divisions apparently were combined under the 3d IA Division headquarters after Mosul's capture. Mitchell Prothero, "Baghdad Breakdown," *Jane's Defence Weekly* 51, no. 31 (30 July 2014): 22; Bulos, McDonnell, and Abdulrahim, "ISIS Weapons Windfall May Alter Balance in Iraq, Syria Conflicts."
18. Mitchell Prothero, "Iraqi Army Remains on Defensive as Extent of June Debacle Becomes Clearer," McClatchy DC Bureau, 14 Jul 2014, https://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24770476.html, Hist Files, CMH.
19. "Iraq: Islamic State Executions in Tikrīt," Human Rights Watch, 2 Sep 2014, https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/02/iraq-islamic-state-executions-Tikrīt, Hist Files, CMH.

Division that had been sent to Al Anbār also were understrength in both personnel and equipment, and the bulk of Iraq's counterterrorism units remained tied down in the fight for Ar Ramādī.[20]

The ISIS offensive exposed the Iraqi Army as a hollow organization, and stirred up a storm of discussion about how the U.S. Army had trained and equipped that force. Individuals associated with the effort defended their actions, but outside observers questioned the methods used by American trainers and advisers in the past. Both viewpoints raised valid points while overlooking one unescapable fact: American training methods reflected what worked for the U.S. Army, not what the Iraqi Army might embrace without resistance. Critics and supporters alike therefore focused on what the United States had done and shied away from looking at the Iraqi Army's own professional culture, which never had fully accepted the principles of meritocracy that characterized the U.S. military. Moreover, observers attempting to explain the dramatic events in Iraq rarely factored in ISIS's decision to employ conventional tactics against a military and police force that the United States had trained to focus on counterinsurgency.[21] The controversy gradually petered out, though not before interested parties produced a series of articles offering their thoughts on how the U.S. military could modify its training methods to avoid similar situations in the future.[22]

AN UNCERTAIN FOUNDATION

The challenges that the U.S. Army experienced in training and equipping Iraqi security forces began taking shape even before the first American soldier stepped foot in that country. During the months leading up to the 2003 invasion, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) planners viewed preservation of

20. Haider al-Abadi, *Impossible Victory: How Iraq Defeated ISIS* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2022), 86.

21. Five years passed before a study emerged that suggested political, educational, economic, societal, and professional influences exerted a far more pervasive influence on Arab armies than Western training and equipping. Kenneth Pollack, *Armies of Sand: The Past, Present, and Future of Arab Military Effectiveness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 58–59, 74–75, 165–69, 171–72, 429–34, 488–89, 494–96, 501, 503–4, 517–18.

22. For examples, see Douglas London, "The CIA Is Better Than the U.S. Military at Creating Foreign Armies," *Foreign Policy*, 31 Aug 2024, https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/31/cia-us-military-training-foreign-army-afghanistan-defense-department/; Mara Kalin, "Why Military Assistance Programs Disappoint: Minor Tools Can't Solve Major Problems," *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 6 (2017): 111–20, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44823826; both in Hist Files, CMH.

a portion of the Iraqi Army as a means to avoid using a large number of American troops for internal security. Neither headquarters visualized the need to refashion that remnant into an organization compatible with creating a democratic government in post-Saddam Iraq. As a result, both focused on recalling troop units while downplaying the need to preserve the Defense Ministry, the military-industrial complex, and sustainment infrastructure.

Three policy decisions by President George W. Bush's administration prevented even those minimal U.S. military plans for the post-Saddam Iraqi Army from materializing. The first was the National Security Council's (NSC's) March 2003 guidance dissolving the Ba'th Party and defining the post-Saddam military's size and composition without fully examining the potential ramifications of such an action. The second was the eleventh-hour decision to replace the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which inserted an untested entity with vast decision-making powers into the vacuum created by Saddam's forcible removal.

As head of the CPA from 11 May 2003, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III carried out these first two policy decisions in ways that would have far-reaching effects on the post-Saddam Iraqi military. Bremer's CPA Order No. 1, which implemented the NSC policy to eliminate the Ba'th Party and purge its members from positions of authority, terminated the careers of defense bureaucrats, industry executives, facilities managers, supply experts, and military officers. As Ba'th Party membership often had been a requirement for employment or advancement in Saddam-era Iraq, the sudden loss of resident expertise deprived the new Iraqi nation of a significant amount of potential administrative capacity. Although a de-Ba'thification committee ultimately would determine if former party members could return to government service, the halting pace of that process deprived successive post-Saddam administrations of sorely needed experience. De-Ba'thification therefore was the first of several developments that undermined CENTCOM and CFLCC plans for a speedy recall of portions of the post-Saddam Iraqi Army.

The third policy decision occurred when Bremer issued a decree expunging the Saddam-era Iraqi Army from existence. In addition to sealing the fate of all ground forces, CPA Order No. 2 dissolved the air force, navy, and air defense command, despite Joint Staff warnings that reconstituting them would be prohibitively expensive.[23] Bremer chose to sweep everything

23. To be fair, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Order No. 2 was not an unprecedented act. American occupation authorities had taken a similar view of the defeated Japanese military following World War II. However, that policy differed in two respects. First, it was part of a larger plan rather than serving as an example of the power of U.S. authorities.

aside rather than take advantage of NSC authorization to retain three to five Regular Army divisions. His actions were not wholly surprising, as they were in line with a statement made in a May 2002 report published by one of the State Department's Future of Iraq Project's working groups: "The Iraqi army of the future cannot be an extension of the present army."[24] Although the group did not advocate outright disbandment of all Iraqi military formations, the caveats it placed on retraining a portion of the Saddam-era military were convincing enough to justify starting afresh.[25]

As a result, the Department of Defense found itself unexpectedly responsible for training and equipping three divisions of the New Iraqi Army (NIA). Although the Pentagon reacted quickly, it assigned the mission to civilian contractors rather than U.S. military personnel. The train-and-equip program also reflected the letter, rather than the spirit, of the March 2003 NSC guidance in that it funded only twenty-seven light infantry battalions. In reality, the three regular army divisions discussed in the NSC memo each possessed far more resources than their NIA substitutes.[26] The CPA accepted the Pentagon's solution without question, without having any group in place capable of overseeing that entire process, and with little thought of a potential role for U.S. military advisers.

The policies promulgated by the CPA, when combined with the limited scope of the NIA contract, initially made it much harder to create a balanced and effective force. The preponderance of foot soldiers in the NIA meant that tens of thousands of former soldiers with backgrounds in armor, artillery, air defense, supply, engineering, rotary-wing aviation, and other specialties—all of whom were unfamiliar with infantry skills—were unlikely to join the much smaller NIA. Moreover, the NIA bore the stigma of being a

Second, the Japanese populace agreed with the antimilitary approach taken by the Americans. L. A. Humphreys, "The Japanese Military Tradition," in *The Modern Japanese Military System*, ed. James H. Buck (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1975), 33–34.

24. The working group's recommendations for immediate action included disbanding the Special Republican Guard and the Republican Guard and sending home all *reservists*. The de facto dissolution of the remaining elements would occur when conscripts were replaced with volunteers. Addendum to Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, Def Policy and Institutions Working Gp, 27 Feb 2003, The Future of Iraq Project, 1–5, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB198/FOI%20Defense%20Policy%20and%20Institutions.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

25. CPA officials described the Future of Iraq Project documents as "our bible coming out here." Eric Schmitt and Joel Brinkley, "The Struggle for Iraq: Planning; State Department Study Foresaw Trouble Now Plaguing Iraq," *New York Times*, 19 Oct 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/19/world/struggle-for-iraq-planning-state-dept-study-foresaw-trouble-now-plaguing-iraq.html, Hist Files, CMH.

26. The "Force, Mission and Structure" section of the working group report highlighted the need for military engineers and aviation units early in the process of rebuilding the Iraqi Army. Addendum to Rpt, U.S. Dept. State, Def Policy and Institutions Working Gp, 27 Feb 2003, The Future of Iraq Project.

creature of the occupation. As a result, the ranks of the NIA were filled with young men who were disillusioned with their immediate prospects rather than fully qualified veterans.

The seven-step process to restore full Iraqi sovereignty unveiled by Bremer in early September, which the United Nations (UN) adopted, was the third decision that impacted the reconstitution of the Iraqi military. The successive cabinet changeovers enshrined in Bremer's plan subjected newly formed Iraqi security institutions to multiple upheavals. The repeated disruption and lack of continuity impacted not only the Iraqi security forces and the American advisers working with them but also the senior coalition military headquarters, as it sought to accelerate the Iraqi Army's reconstitution in order to meet evolving U.S. strategic goals.

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Although the opening months of the train-and-equip effort seemed counterproductive to many observers, the uproar that resulted from CPA Orders No. 1 and 2 paled in comparison to a series of follow-on developments that now included the Iraqis themselves. The NIA program suffered a major setback when recruits categorically rejected the notion that civilian contractors could teach them how to soldier. The Coalition Military Assistance Training Team's (CMATT's) attempts to employ Jordanians as instructors for officers and noncommissioned officers met with slightly less scorn. These Iraqi reactions echoed similar American experiences working with German soldiers in the 1950s, as the Germans preferred to interact with U.S. advisers who spoke their language and had fought in World War II.[27] Rather than direct Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) to assume NIA training responsibilities, CENTCOM requested assistance from the Pentagon, which did not have a pool of personnel readily available to take on the task. That decision added months to the projected timeline for standing

27. West Germany joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1955, but the first German ground combat units were not expected to enter NATO's order of battle for another two years. During the two years, the American and German militaries concentrated on establishing a training base for the Bundesheer. Because Germany did not have an armaments industry, it relied on the United States for its initial stocks of equipment. In December 1955, as aid and training accelerated, a military assistance advisory group for Germany supplanted the advanced planning group. Headquartered in Bonn, the new advisory group provided a direct link between both governments on military aid. The Germans made few demands on the staffing of the advisory group other than expressing a preference for U.S. officers who spoke their language and had fought against the Wehrmacht. Info Paper, "The West German Army," John Maass, 30 Dec 2010, Hist Files, CMH.

up the initial group of nine battalions and placed the defense secretary's accelerated goals out of reach.

CJTF-7 implemented its own train-and-equip program for the Iraqi Civil Defense Force/Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDF/ICDC) in the face of opposition from Ambassador Bremer while also aiding CMATT. A combination of insufficient resources and immediate need resulted in CJTF-7 fielding a collection of lightly equipped ICDF/ICDC battalions rather than mirror-images of Saddam-era units. Although the ICDF/ICDC soon outnumbered the NIA, the former proved far more susceptible to insurgent coercion because its soldiers were billeted at home rather than on a secure military installation. As a result, the ICDF/ICDC served its purpose only until confronted by a ruthless foe possessing the ability to threaten the families of its personnel.

In addition to the friction created by Bremer's opposition to the ICDF/ICDC, other CPA policies diverted attention and resources from the NIA train-and-equip effort. The CPA's decision to move the Department of Border Enforcement from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Interior exerted both a direct and indirect impact on rebuilding other Iraqi security organizations. If the border force had remained with the Defense Ministry, it would have fallen under CMATT's purview from the onset. Instead, the Department of State's effort to train and equip Iraqi law enforcement agencies collapsed, which necessitated intervention from CMATT's commander, Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton. CMATT initially focused on rejuvenating the moribund police program rather than give equal attention to both the police and the Department of Border Enforcement. Extremists took full advantage of overstretched American military resources to ferry increasing amounts of supplies and fighters across Iraq's unattended borders.

The redesignation of CMATT as the Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq on 9 March 2004 had no impact on the situation. In an attempt to allocate available means where they would do the most good, the office kept the NIA as its top priority, followed by National Police units—with an emphasis on commando battalions—and then border enforcement. The development of the Iraqi Police Service and the Facilities Protection Service remained in the respective hands of Jordanian trainers and the Iraqi government.[28] Although reprioritizing the workload sufficed for the near term, the undemanding recruitment and instructional methods favored by host-nation organizations

28. U.S. Dept. State Document 06–284, Ltr of Agreement, Government of the United States and Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 24 Sep 2004, sub: The Training of Iraqi Police in Jordan, https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/84481.pdf (accessed 13 Dec 2024), Hist Files, CMH.

opened a path for bad actors to infiltrate government security forces and perpetuated wide variances in unit proficiency.

The operational situation presented further challenges. The spring 2004 turnover of all coalition forces in Iraq meant that NIA advisory teams drawn from the original complement of U.S. troops were replaced by incoming personnel from the new units. During the handover, the CPA confronted radical Shi'i cleric Muqtada al-Sadr just as the televised grisly death of four U.S. contractors in Al Fallūjah triggered a White House directive to restore order in that city. Shi'i fighters loyal to Sadr targeted both coalition forces and the ICDF/ICDC, with the latter crumbling under a combination of coercion and direct attack. NIA battalions ordered to Al Fallūjah either refused to comply or unraveled en route. Police units in dozens of cities and towns voluntarily disbanded rather than face the lethal combination of extremist fighters and Shi'i militias. Coalition soldiers recently arrived in Iraq unexpectedly found themselves tasked with reconstituting, retraining, and expanding the NIA, ICDF/ICDC, National Police, and Iraqi Police Service while also suppressing uncharacteristically assertive opponents.

The handover of coalition military responsibilities in Iraq to new commands, coupled with the Iraqi Interim Government taking over most of Bremer's responsibilities in June 2004, inaugurated a ripple effect that witnessed General Eaton's embryonic Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq morphing into the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I). Meanwhile, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) absorbed CJTF-7, and Multi-National Corps–Iraq came into existence to manage the tactical arena. All of these organizations overseeing various operations in Iraq, including the train-and-equip effort, had to embrace an evolving set of responsibilities.

Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus's MNSTC-I faced far weightier challenges than its predecessor. Although MNSTC-I received a healthy boost in numbers, additional personnel did not equate to increased effectiveness. Staff positions within Petraeus's organization were split between army, air force, navy, marine, and international personnel rather than individuals who were familiar with training and equipping infantry formations. At the same time, coalition representatives lacked insight into American methods. Soldiers who were familiar with infantry skills received little useful information on how to perform advisory duties before deploying, which ensured that reservists from the 98th Division (Institutional Training) and other units headed to Iraq in summer 2004 were forced to learn on the job. In light of the immensity of the task facing MNSTC-I, it is a testament to its senior leadership and the skills of those who did have the necessary professional

qualifications that it accomplished so much in the relatively short period before the January 2005 elections milestone.

The sheer number of challenges facing MNSTC-I during the first weeks of its existence could have overwhelmed the organization, but some problems turned out to be less serious than its leadership originally had surmised. The delays that prevented accelerated NIA fielding in early 2004 allowed that organization to weather the uprising somewhat unaffected simply because only a few battalions were available for commitment. Likewise, the unexpected scope and speed of the ICDF/ICDC's dissolution steamrolled arguments against providing that force with dedicated advisory teams.[29] Although the number of dedicated advisers had increased and some problems were less pressing than first imagined, MNSTC-I still lacked the resources to reabsorb full responsibility for the Iraqi Police Service and the Facilities Protection Service.

NEW GROUND RULES

The White House and the Iraqi Interim Government looked to General George W. Casey, the MNF-I commander, for successful implementation of the Bremer/UN seven-step process, starting with the first nationwide election in January 2005.[30] Casey's first order of business involved tasking virtually all coalition maneuver units—as well as a significant portion of the Iraqi security forces—with setting the stage for safe elections by eliminating insurgent enclaves in northern and western Iraq. Although MNF-I might have drawn other lessons from the April 2004 uprising, the growing support of both the White House and the Pentagon for a strategic withdrawal bound Casey's hands in terms of acceptable options.

Casey sought to fulfill that mandate using both direct and indirect means. The MNF-I decision to rely heavily on Iraqi units in fall 2004 reflected an effort to lend legitimacy to the Iraqi government regardless of the issues created by merging armies with vastly dissimilar capabilities. MNF-I sought to bypass some of those issues by creating the Iraqi Intervention Force. Touted as a highly effective component with enhanced deployment and counterinsurgency capabilities, the intervention force depended on financial incentives, rather than promises of better training, leadership, and

29. Austin Long, *The Soul of Armies: Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Military Culture in the US and UK* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2106), 182–83.

30. Adam Roberts, "The End of Occupation: Iraq," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (Oct 2005): 32, http://ccw.modhist.ox.ac.uk/publications/roberts_ICLQ article_Iraq_2004.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

equipment, to bring its units up to strength. The concept proved relatively successful for a brief period before MNF-I deployed the intervention force to Al Anbār on a permanent basis. Although the intervention force materially assisted American efforts to subdue Sunni insurgents in that western province, it became so enmeshed in the ongoing tactical fight that MNF-I could not afford to send it elsewhere.

Casey succeeded in safeguarding the democratization process, but at a price that generated friction between Iraqi and American military personnel. Despite problems maintaining cohesion among deploying units, Iraqi soldiers not only fought the Sadrists at An Najaf but also engaged foreign extremists and Sunni dissidents in Sāmarrāʾ, Al Fallūjah, and Mosul. A few U.S. units made little effort to hide their professional disdain for their counterparts, which convinced some Iraqis that they were not partners in the truest sense, but rather pawns being manipulated by disrespectful foreigners.[31] The Americans also sometimes failed to provide promised support, as evidenced by Iraqi troops arriving in Al Fallūjah to find that their assembly areas lacked toilets, medical facilities, running water, and tents.[32] Throughout each of the offensive operations undertaken in fall 2004, American troops controlled access to available tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, and close air support. Although the Americans felt that it made sense to allocate the most effective weapons to the most experienced soldiers, the uneven division of capabilities reduced Iraqi willingness to mount attacks when American assistance was not available.

Protecting the democratization process produced unforeseen training and equipping challenges. As the interim government grew more confident with exercising political power, it became less willing to accept American input on senior army and police appointments. The first indications of this shift occurred after the fighting in Al Fallūjah, when successful battalion commanders were replaced while officers who turned in substandard performances remained in command. The reasons behind the dismissals ranged from senior officers who were suspicious of subordinates that

31. Friction sometimes arose because of inadvertent missteps, such as U.S. graves registration units refusing to process the remains of Iraqi soldiers. The confusion illustrated that Multi-National Force–Iraq did not take the same care with meeting Iraqi needs as it did American requirements during this period. Michael Zacchea and Ted Kemp, *The Ragged Edge: A US Marine's Account of Leading the Iraqi Army Fifth Battalion* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2017), 214, 248.

32. The life support arrangements fell through because Multi-National Force–West relied on an American firm, rather than an Iraqi company, to provide those amenities. The U.S. firm pulled out at the last minute after being told that it would have to bill the Ministry of Defense rather than an American headquarters for the contract. Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, 213.

they felt were beholden to Americans, to attempts by Shi'i factions to seed government security forces with their followers, and to a shift from the balanced representation quotas imposed by the CPA to murkier selection criteria determined by Iraqis.[33]

Politicians sought to preserve their newfound influence by championing brigade and division commanders willing to support their patrons. Democratization reduced the Americans' ability to interfere with this practice because the influence of successive Iraqi governments had grown to the point at which Americans were progressively less able to veto questionable duty appointments. If CPA Order No. 2 had been intended to erase Saddam-era practices from the NIA, the events leading up to the 2005 elections indicate that cronyism and political loyalty continued to flourish.[34] That situation reflected the instability of the post-Saddam political environment and the still-nascent power of the judiciary system, rather than cultural and personal shortcomings on the part of the Iraqis. Nevertheless, the ongoing volatility meant that high-ranking Iraqi commanders promoted the agenda of their patrons rather than focusing on the needs of their troops or the training status of subordinate units. Senior commanders compounded those problems by selecting subordinate leaders whose views mirrored their own.

The emergence of an insurgency in response to the dissolution of Saddam-era institutions exerted both direct and indirect impacts on the U.S-led train-and-equip effort. American advisers in Iraq understandably focused on teaching Iraqis how to defeat their enemies on the battlefield. However, those same Americans were less capable of helping Iraqi soldiers protect their families from harm. Most young men joined the Iraqi Army with the expectation that they would not be stationed far from their homes and families. The Iraqi government strove to accommodate that belief by refusing to prosecute individuals who deserted the ranks due to homesickness or concern over distant family. The Americans did not approve of that arrangement, arguing vainly that desertion could be curbed only by punishing offenders. Ironically, the growth of the Iraqi Army magnified rather than solved the problem. Unable to guarantee the safety of dependents, the Iraqi Army found that its only effective course of action lay in temporarily assigning excess soldiers to selected battalions in numbers that allowed units to remain combat effective even after losing hundreds

33. The same factors sparked a gradual redistribution of enlisted soldiers assigned to the early New Iraqi Army (NIA) battalions. Zacchea and Kemp, *Ragged Edge*, 374.

34. Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III details his concerns about the negative influence of the Saddam-era force on the NIA in his memoir. L. Paul Bremer with Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2006), 54–58.

to desertion. However, American hesitation to delve deeper into unfamiliar problems affecting partnered forces delayed the adoption of that policy for several years.

The above examples show that gains in the political arena did not equate to commensurate progress within the military realm and vice versa. In fact, gains in the democratization process made it more difficult for Americans to influence the Iraqi military. Also evident is the fact that cultural and experiential differences had a tremendous impact on interactions between armies, even among soldiers who worked together on a daily basis. Fixed tours of duty were necessary for maintaining the morale of advisers, but that policy resulted in prolonged misperceptions within both armies as continuity repeatedly was lost then reestablished. Finally, no amount of persuasion could make up for the absence of mutually accepted authority. Relying on persuasion alone reduced training and equipping to an exercise in negotiating, rather than advising.

SHIFTING FROM TACTICAL TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

With the seven-step process remaining on track, the goal of the train-and-equip program shifted from aiding Iraq's transition to democracy to providing a means for U.S. military disengagement from that country. The Pentagon knew full well that the American public had limited patience for lengthy nation-building efforts that required long-term U.S. troop commitments, and public opinion would not wait years for an effective and efficient Iraqi Army capable of opposing the insurgency. Timing the pullout was crucial given key elections taking place in Iraq in December 2005 and in the United States in November 2006. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld pointed out to General Casey the specific milestones required to align MNF-I operations with domestic political events.

Equally critical to this plan was the Iraqi Army's ability to fill the vacuum after the departure of coalition troops. Military leaders thus sought to accelerate the process by assigning exponentially more resources to the advisory mission and degrading the insurgency to create conditions favorable for turnover of security responsibilities from U.S. troops to an admittedly less-capable force. Once again, however, the peacetime personnel practices of the institutional army lagged behind the campaign planning process. The defense secretary's aggressive milestones presented General Casey with limited alternatives as he waited for personnel to sustain the advisory effort.

As a result of the shift in strategic emphasis, MNF-I halted the large-scale combined offensive operations that had characterized military activities in Iraq in the months leading up to the January 2005 elections. That decision allowed the Iraqis to concentrate on accepting security responsibilities from the Americans while building more units, installations, and sustainment capability, but it also reduced the pressure placed on insurgents and extremists. The new American strategy did not fully account for the possibility that insurgents would regain the initiative in the midst of the attempt to withdraw. Nor did it consider that the Sunni minority would perceive the act of turning over security to Iraqi units as placing its fate in the hands of armed agents of the Shi'i-majority government, which gave the Sunnis an incentive to disrupt the handover process.[35]

Acutely aware that the existing advisory contingent lacked the numbers to meet the timelines desired by Rumsfeld, MNF-I resurrected the Vietnam-era concept of pairing up U.S. and Iraqi battalions, brigades, and divisions. That approach had achieved some positive results in the earlier conflict, primarily because the South Vietnamese had their own close air support, helicopters, tanks, artillery, and logistics. American units had been able to concentrate on enhancing South Vietnamese planning and execution skills rather than providing them with capabilities they lacked. Partnership in Iraq leaned more heavily toward the latter and therefore carried the risk of promoting, rather than erasing, Iraqi dependency on U.S. help.

Partnering Iraqi and U.S. units seemingly offered a viable near-term solution to the challenge of transforming the Iraqi military from a defensively oriented auxiliary body to an offensively minded counterinsurgency force without radically reshaping the current MNSTC-I training regimen. While MNF-I actively sought opportunities to grant full-fledged partnership status to the Iraqis, setting the proper conditions in the available time proved to be impossible. The multinational force's concept of operations continued to feature the Iraqis in an auxiliary role rather than pursuing ambitious retraining and reequipping programs that risked upsetting the transfer of security responsibilities. In addition, some U.S. maneuver units complied with the letter rather than the spirit of the program, resulting in a phenomenon that some advisers referred to as the "Jim Crow Laws of COIN [counterinsurgency]."[36] The Iraqis, who were no doubt aware of the disparity of combat multipliers allocated to U.S. and Iraqi forces, hardly could have

35. Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2006): 8.

36. Maj. David Voorhies, "MITT Happens: Insight into Advising the Iraqi Army" (personal experience paper, Combined Arms Tactics Directorate, U.S. Army Infantry Center, 20 Apr 2007), 12, Hist Files, CMH.

remained ignorant of their peripheral role, given that the American train-and-equip effort did not provide them with the full range of weapons typical of a modern army or make them logistically self-sufficient.[37]

Partnership also required a different mechanism for evaluating mission success. Although MNF-I replaced Rumsfeld's quantitative assessment with a performance-oriented methodology, the new system was deficient. The multinational force adapted metrics derived from the United States' peacetime mission-essential task list and grafted them onto the Iraqi troops to meet the immediate need. Making matters even more frustrating, each of the American headquarters involved with transitioning security to the Iraqis had different ideas about which metrics they should assess.[38] Although the new system represented an improvement over amorphous train-and-equip criteria, it still fit American rather than Iraqi needs.

Despite the fact that eventual success in Iraq—redefined by U.S. leadership as setting the conditions for disengagement—depended as much on Iraqi military skills as it did on American battlefield proficiency, the U.S. Army allowed an opportunity to pass, unrecognized, during this period. General Petraeus departed Iraq for the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for the express purpose of rewriting counterinsurgency doctrine. That effort concentrated exclusively on teaching American troops to perform counterinsurgency missions more effectively, even as it acknowledged that host-nation forces played a major, but less well-defined, role. MNF-I could have benefited equally from a complementary study of train-and-equip methods that focused on building an effective and efficient allied army and simultaneously employing it to help attain U.S. strategic objectives.

THE SURGE

Rising levels of violence following the bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque in Sāmarrāʾ rendered the coalition's train-and-equip initiatives ineffective by early summer 2006. The pace of security handovers slowed as Iraqi

37. One of the initial Global War on Terrorism–era publications devoted to this topic confirmed that mindset while also noting that the guidance it contained distilled "proven and enduring concepts inherent to [security force assistance] operations that have stood the test of time through American military history." Joint Center for Security Force Assistance Handbook, *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 14 Jul 2008), i, https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16040coll2/id/2/rec/1, Hist Files, CMH.

38. Voorhies, "MITT Happens: Insight into Advising the Iraqi Army," 18.

and American soldiers sought to prevent sectarian killings in Baghdād and forestall the appearance of death squads in other parts of the country. MNTSC-I had no option but to overhaul the National Police, the Iraqi Police Service, and the Facilities Protection Service after discovering they were perpetrating many of those acts. With the entire Iraqi law enforcement apparatus in disarray, MNF-I sought to restore order by transferring Iraqi Army units to Baghdād from other parts of the country, despite their proclivity for underperforming when operating far from their home stations.

That approach produced less than the desired results, in large part because the transition campaign plan and election security requirements had prioritized the generation of more combat units over correcting deficiencies within existing units. Standing guidance from the secretary of defense, which emphasized the importance of publicly drawing down U.S. forces, denied MNF-I the option of asking for more American troops. Recognizing that reinforcement from the United States would not be forthcoming, General Casey sought aid from newly installed Prime Minister Maliki.

Although MNF-I welcomed Maliki's willingness to help, he and General Casey did not see the upheaval in Baghdād in the same light. The two nations had collaborated before on security issues, but the subsequent adoption of the 30K Replenishment Initiative represented a united effort on an unprecedented scale.[39] Cooperation came at a cost, however, resulting in the prime minister gaining greater leverage over the conduct of operations, which he used to shield Shi'i death squads from coalition forces. Gaining the Iraqi Army's support, as well as taking control of the counterterrorism force, figured prominently in his plans, in part because the Americans were monitoring the step-by-step reconstitution of the police closely, but also because the army traditionally had been an arbiter of power in Iraq if allowed to operate unchecked. A combination of political and ethnic motivations therefore lay behind Maliki's creation of the Office of the Commander in Chief and his placing a reliable ally in charge of the Baghdād Operations Command.

Harsh tactical realities led to MNF-I jettisoning notions of the Iraqis taking the lead. Overdependence on the Iraqi Army's participation, coupled with the restrictions Maliki placed on entering Sadr City, meant that Operations

39. Five overstrength battalions (10,000 personnel) for the 6th and 9th IA Divisions were created between August and late November 2006. Two additional battalions (1,500 soldiers) were generated between September 2006 and January 2007 while 10,500 individual recruits were added between October 2006 and August 2007. Reinforcements destined for existing and new brigades between October 2006 and July 2007 formed the remainder of the 30K Replenishment Initiative package. Bfg, Coalition Mil Assistance Training Team, 7 Mar 2007, sub: Timeline for Army Growth, slide 1, MNSTC-I SJS Collection, CMH.

Together Forward I and II failed to deliver the outcome sought by the MNF-I commander. Convinced that a major course change needed to be made, President Bush removed Casey from command, sent much needed coalition reinforcements to Iraq, and appointed a general familiar with the new counterinsurgency doctrine as the MNF-I commander. The fact that the surge's success depended on the addition of more American troops, rather than a greater role for the Iraqi Army, provides a clear example of how focusing on achieving U.S. strategic goals did not automatically equate to producing an adaptable, effective, and proficient partnered force.

Although the Iraqis were not spearheading offensive operations against insurgent enclaves, ensuring the Iraqi Army would be positioned to resume the security transition process following the surge spurred the adoption of new methods to generate infantry brigades configured for counterinsurgency operations. The logic behind adopting unit-set-fielding methods mirrored the MNF-I decision to focus on the security transition approach in that the new system produced a steady flow of brigades at a rate capable of meeting U.S. strategic needs. That did not equate to producing effective and efficient outfits, especially because many American advisers felt that it required one year of concentrated emphasis on each of the three fundamental skills—moving, shooting, and communicating—before Iraqi officers and soldiers could perform all tasks proficiently at the brigade level.[40]

The eight-week unit-set-fielding process produced pure infantry units that required augmentation in the form of fire support and logistical sustainment as well as psychological stiffening to offset low levels of unit cohesion. There was no ready solution to the latter problem given the armywide shortage of commissioned and noncommissioned officers. Committing unit-set-fielding brigades to combat therefore posed a degree of risk to operations involving more than a token number of those units.[41] Their shortcomings were acceptable to the Americans, primarily because U.S. forces were willing to intercede when necessary. Using these brigades satisfied immediate concerns but did not address potential long-term ramifications. The unremitting tempo of U.S.-led operations during the surge, coupled with

40. Interv, Christopher K. Ives, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS (hereinafter CSI), with Lt. Col. Paul Ciesinski, former 3d Bde, 3d Iraqi Army Div Mil Transition Team Leader, 13 Oct 2006, 9–12, Operational Leadership Experiences Files, CSI (hereinafter OLE).

41. The head of the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq's Coalition Army Advisory Training Team accepted unit-set-fielding shortcomings, noting that "you organize for the fight you have today." Interv, Multi-National Force–Iraq Historian with Brig. Gen. Robin P. Swann, Multi-National Security Transition Cmd–Iraq, Coalition Army Advisory Training Team, 24 Jan 2008, https://ahec.armywarcollege.edu/CENTCOM-IRAQ-papers/0034.%20MNSTCI%20CAATT%20Swann%20080124.pdf, Hist Files, CMH.

Iraqi willingness to accept brigades with limited skills into the force, resulted in joint discussions about improving the process being tabled.

The Iraqis assumed a more active role by early 2008, not because of the increasing number of unit-set-fielding brigades, but in large part because the prime minister sought to curtail the growing influence of paramilitaries aligned with Muqtada al-Sadr. The Maliki administration's political agenda, rather than MNF-I operational plans, triggered Operation Saulut al-Fursan (Charge of the Knights). Al Başrah stands out from other operations that targeted Sadr's fighters during this timeframe for two reasons. First and most obvious was the immediate operational result: government forces triumphed over the Mahdi Army. Second, and less overtly apparent but no less vital, were the Iraqis' strategic and logistical achievements: the central government successfully employed intratheater airlift, removed ineffective commanders during battle, transferred brigades to Al Başrah without experiencing debilitating desertions, and ensured adequate supplies were available. These successes set the stage for a confrontation around Baghdād's Sadr City, albeit one in which the 11th IA Division reverted to the customary role of supporting the American troops, who had been tasked with bringing the Mahdi Army to heel.

The challenges facing the American train-and-equip effort in Iraq did not end with the departure of the surge brigades. MNSTC-I had to confront two new issues: how to address the shortcomings inherent in unit-set-fielding brigades and whether to retain these hastily created units. The infantry-pure unit-set-fielding formations would require additional fire support and sustainment elements to transform into organizations capable of conducting a full range of combat operations. The United States faced several obstacles in achieving its goal of defeating the insurgency and thus curtailing the possibility of civil war in Iraq. The scale of a retraining effort was now much larger, given the rapid growth in the Iraqi Army. At the same time, with U.S. attention turning from Iraq to Afghanistan, resources to accomplish the task were increasingly limited. Finally, the predeployment training of American troops in Iraq—including the advise and assist brigades—had focused on a counterinsurgency environment, which necessitated a major shift in mindset and task organization before they could embark on training the Iraqis in conventional operations.

Although train-and-equip initiatives implemented during the surge allowed the Iraqi Army to contribute to the defeat of Sunni extremists and Shi'i dissidents, those programs did not automatically position the force for future success. The motivation for transforming the Iraqi Army into a combined-arms force reflected a shift in U.S. strategic goals from eliminating

the post-Saddam insurgency to deterring Iranian adventurism. The timing of that change proved ill-fated. Falling oil prices and rising discontent within the Sunni community dissuaded Maliki from allocating personnel and funding for additional military intelligence, engineer, signal, and fire support units. Multi-National Corps–Iraq's handover of dozens of U.S. installations exacerbated funding concerns as Iraqi sustainment needs grew rather than diminished. These developments undermined MNF-I's attempt to shift the Iraqi Army's focus to conventional warfighting, an endeavor that required more funding than readily available.

In addition, Americans were slow to recognize that the Iraqi government's vision of the future did not necessarily match their own, and this discrepancy sometimes resulted in major missteps. For example, it was unrealistic for the United States to assume that it could place a large body of untrained irregular Sons of Iraq volunteers in the Iraqi security forces with little prior coordination with Iraq's leadership. That U.S. policymakers were surprised when Maliki did not embrace a program over which he had not had any control speaks to the disregard for Iraqi sensibilities that sometimes afflicted American leaders. A tendency of American politicians, diplomats, and soldiers to misread developments during this period fed the Iraqi prime minister's concerns, with the result that U.S. and Iraqi agendas steadily diverged during the post-surge timeframe.

A ready answer to the challenge of remaking the Iraqi security forces remained elusive for numerous reasons. The American military consistently lobbied for a stay-behind force of dedicated trainers, only to be rebuffed by Barack H. Obama's White House, which was bound by campaign promises to withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq as soon as possible.[42] Contingency plans designed to ameliorate the negative impact of unforeseen shifts in defense policy, security conditions, or funding authorizations were stifled at inception by the self-serving attitudes that pervaded the officer ranks of the Iraqi security forces.[43] The fact that Foreign Military Sales deals still took months to complete also created challenges as most American-manufactured artillery pieces and armored personnel carriers ordered in 2010 did not arrive in Iraq before U.S. combat troops departed.[44]

The final stage of the train-and-equip effort in Iraq ended prematurely, at least from CENTCOM's perspective, when American combat troops

42. "'We Were Wrong': Commander in Charge of Training Iraqis Regrets U.S. Pullout."
43. Lt. Col. Seth W. B. Folsom, *In the Gray Area: A Marine Advisor Team at War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 126.
44. The U.S. 1st Cavalry and 25th Infantry Divisions provided artillery training to the 2d and 5th IA Divisions, respectively, in 2011, but that effort ended with the departure of



General Lloyd J. Austin III, commander of United States Forces–Iraq, and Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen (*left*) greet General James N. Mattis, commander of U.S. Central Command (*right*), as he arrives in Baghdād on 15 December 2011 for the end-of-mission ceremony. (*S. Sgt. Caleb Barrieau, U.S. Army*)

departed Iraq in December 2011. Televised images of U.S. vehicles crossing into Kuwait captured the world's attention, relegating to obscurity an equally dramatic yet little-reported car bombing that killed thirty-two members of the government's anticorruption agency.[45] The incident offered compelling evidence that Iraqi attitudes were little changed by eight years of close association with Americans. Over the next three years, the U.S. Embassy's Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq watched from the sidelines as Prime Minister Maliki's program to transform the Iraqi Army into a willing supporter of his political aspirations shifted into higher gear.

American combat troops. Tim Craig, "With 'Big Gun,' Iraqi Soldiers See Hope," *Washington Post*, 19 Jun 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/with-big-gun-iraqi-soldiers-see-hope/2011/06/16/AGfniObH_story.html, Hist Files, CMH.

45. Richard R. Brennan Jr. et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and Disestablishment of United States Forces–Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), 198.

EXPECTATIONS AND INFLUENCES

The story of the American train-and-equip effort in Iraq contains numerous examples of adaptability, dedication, and innovation tempered by professional and cultural friction, reactive policymaking, inadequate assessment tools, and conflicting perceptions about the desired end-state. It also serves as a cautionary tale in which abundant equipment and training provided by qualified instructors will not automatically produce the desired level of effectiveness in a foreign military organization. Change within military organizations is difficult to achieve because high-level officers are called upon to discard knowledge and methods that led to their attaining senior rank. In addition, adopting new methods carries a daunting degree of risk simply because something that works for one army might not flourish within another. In the case of Iraq, however, external factors exerted a tremendous negative impact on the American train-and-equip effort after the prime minister changed the military's raison d'être from national defender to praetorian guard.

From the day he entered office, Prime Minister Maliki supported American train-and-equip goals as long as they did not impinge on his personal authority or threaten the status of Iraq's Shi'i majority. Rather than heal deep sectarian divides following the insurgency's defeat in 2008, he sought to prolong his time in office through democratic means by promoting Shi'i ascendancy. In order to achieve his aims, Maliki employed Iraqi security forces against dissident Sunnis and separatist Kurds. Iraqi special operations forces targeted political enemies; politically reliable general officers gained command of divisions where their loyalties were maintained by turning a blind eye to corruption; and ordinary soldiers were used to suppress demonstrators rather than maintain proficiency through constant training.[46] After focusing on supporting Maliki's political aspirations for three years, the Iraqi Army, unsurprisingly, buckled when confronted by the formidable combination of rebellious Sunnis and ruthless ISIS fighters in 2014.

Iraq is not an isolated example of how events and strong personalities can impact U.S. train-and-equip programs in a variety of ways. History shows that working with cooperative allies is somewhat less problematic but nonetheless remains a complex proposition. South Korean President Syngman Rhee's decision to turn over full control of his armed forces to General Douglas MacArthur, who was head of the UN Command, following the North Korean invasion in June 1950 provides an example of U.S. and

46. "Maliki's Private Army," *The National Interest*, 31 Dec 2012, https://nationalinterest.org/commentary/malikis-private-army-7915, Hist Files, CMH.

allied interests aligning and working out well in practice. With his country on the verge of extinction, President Rhee agreed to accept U.S. leadership in the military realm without conditions. Equally importantly, South Korean soldiers eagerly adopted American methods, procedures, equipment, and tactics, despite cultural and professional differences between both armies. Such circumstances are rare. In this instance, invading communist forces had overrun most of South Korea and had destroyed a large portion of the defending army. From the Korean perspective, their immediate national survival relied on a wholehearted cooperation with the U.S. military's way of waging war.[47]

Studies of past train-and-equip efforts suggest that proactively addressing external influences can produce a positive impact.[48] But South Vietnam during the early 1960s provides a cautionary tale in that regard. A succession of U.S. ambassadors used train-and-equip funding as leverage against President Ngô Đình Diệm's tendency to employ authoritarian tactics against political dissidents. Diệm's frustration with the United States increased whenever the White House or State Department reduced military assistance for the express purpose of gaining the uncooperative South Vietnamese leader's compliance. In the wake of an uprising by Buddhist monks against Diệm in 1962, the State Department and White House approach transitioned from denying funds to fomenting regime change. With encouragement from the American ambassador in Saigon, a faction of rebellious South Vietnamese generals overthrew Diệm on 1 November 1963 and executed him.[49]

The resulting political instability led to a series of further military coups before January 1965. Each incoming regime in South Vietnam successively assigned loyal cronies to battalion-level and above commands.[50] The

47. Maj. Daniel R. Shea, "An Analysis of the United States Leadership's Effective Employment of the Republic of Korea Armed Forces, July 1950–June 1951" (master's thesis, U.S. Army Cmd and Gen Staff College, 2000–2001), 45, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA394892.pdf.

48. Statement, John F. Sopko, Special Inspector Gen Afghanistan Reconstruction, "Actions Needed to Improve U.S. Security-Sector Assistance Efforts in Afghanistan," *Testimony Before the Subcommittee on National Security Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives*, 115th Cong. (1 Nov 2017), https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/testimony/SIGAR-18-11-TY.pdf; Kalin, "Why Military Assistance Programs Disappoint: Minor Tools Can't Solve Major Problems," 111–20.

49. Edward C. Keefer and Louis J. Smith, eds., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963*, vol. 3, *Vietnam January–August 1963* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 531; Airgram A–23, American Embassy Saigon to U.S. Dept. State, 6 Feb 1973, sub: Command Histories and Historical Sketches of RVNAF Divisions, 26, Vietnam Center & Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

50. Calculated using higher-level headquarters change of command dates in Airgram A–23, American Embassy Saigon to U.S. Dept. State, 6 Feb 1973, sub: Command Histories and Historical Sketches of RVNAF Divisions; see also Lam Quang Thi, *The Twenty-Five Year*

wholesale turnover disrupted unit cohesion, fostered a culture of political activism, stimulated corruption, degraded tactical proficiency, and devastated morale. Advisers were powerless to arrest the downward slide in proficiency and professionalism. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara observed, "The situation is very disturbing. Current trends, unless reversed in the next two to three months, will lead to neutralization at best and more likely to a communist state."[51] Communist guerrillas took advantage of the confusion by targeting U.S. bases, destroying dozens of aircraft and inflicting hundreds of American casualties.[52]

The coup that deposed Diệm not only erased a decade's worth of train-and-equip progress but also emboldened the communist government in Hanoi. After concluding that the South Vietnamese military had rendered itself combat ineffective, North Vietnam bolstered southern communist guerrillas with one of its regular army divisions in late 1964. Concerned about the South Vietnamese military's inability to protect the American air base at Da Nang and nearby air defense missile batteries, President Lyndon B. Johnson dispatched American marines to Vietnam in early 1965, despite the objections of the U.S. ambassador, General (Ret.) Maxwell D. Taylor.[53] The initial commitment of U.S. combat troops was insufficient to tip the balance, and Americans had to take the conduct of the ground war from their counterparts before the end of 1965.

The South Vietnamese example provides stark evidence that pushing for regime change—however benign that prospect seems from an American perspective—can stir up unwanted changes that undermine U.S. security assistance efforts and degrade the effectiveness of partnered forces. Realigning the political or cultural trajectory of a partnered government, even when using far less disruptive tactics, still carries the risk of exacerbating the friction that inevitably emerges whenever two professionally dissimilar armies embark on a sustained tutor-student relationship.

Century: A South Vietnamese General Remembers the Indochina War to the Fall of Saigon (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2001), 99–120, 125–30.

51. Mark Moyar, *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 283.

52. Moyar, *Triumph Forsaken*, 328.

53. Maxwell D. Taylor objected because he believed that South Vietnamese generals would begin transferring responsibility for other missions to U.S. troops. Edward F. Murphy, *Semper Fi: From Da Nang to the DMZ, Marine Corps Campaigns 1965–1975* (New York: Random House, 1997), 6.

THE IMPACT OF SCOPE ON OUTCOME

The sheer breadth of the training and equipping responsibilities that emerged in the wake of the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq required modifications to how Americans worked with partnered forces. During the previous thirty years, outside of combined exercises, U.S. conventional forces played little part in training another nation's troops, and they certainly never did so from scratch, having relinquished much of the training mission to the special operations community. The Foreign Military Sales Act of 1971 likewise had turned over the equipping mission to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. Those arrangements met U.S. strategic needs until 11 September 2001, after which American efforts to bring about regime change in Afghanistan and Iraq necessitated building entirely new armies in both nations. This massive task required personnel, capabilities, new legislative authorizations, and a degree of sustained interaction on a scale incompatible with both the evolving mission of the special operations community and the strict mandates that governed the transfer of military equipment.[54]

Iraq provides a clear example of the impact of the disconnect between the United States' security assistance capabilities before 11 September 2001 and the situation that emerged in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The initial goal of building up partnered forces to better assist coalition forces with maintaining security did not foresee Iraq spiraling down into a sectarian struggle for power. The train-and-equip effort remained laser-focused on providing coalition troops with combat auxiliaries through summer 2004, despite the fact that some Iraqi units were contributing to instability rather than performing the mission Americans envisioned for them. Throughout this period, U.S. soldiers and marines faced overlapping challenges that included learning how to perform advisory duties, puzzling out which pieces of pre-9/11 security assistance doctrine remained useful, confronting their own prejudices against Iraqis as battlefield partners, and struggling to gain a deeper understanding of unfamiliar societal and professional factors.

The CPA's unilateral decision to disband the Ba'th Party and Saddam-era military institutions delivered a serious blow to nascent train-and-equip efforts. It dramatically increased the complexity of the task before resources were in place to accommodate such a significant change. On the other hand,

54. A similar situation faced the State Department and the Justice Department when they were tasked to remake the Afghan and Iraqi police, but early failure in those endeavors simply triggered a transfer of law enforcement training responsibilities to the Department of Defense.

one senior coalition military officer pointed out, "What was left of [the Iraqi Army's] infrastructure had been largely torn apart by the population which had lost all respect for its own army, a very bad situation to be in."[55] Other critics have decried the CPA directive not only as too dismissive of U.S. military postwar plans but also as inconsistent with the desires of the Iraqi people.

It is impossible to determine how an alternative to CPA Order No. 2 might have fared, but temporarily reassembling some Saddam-era military organizations might have provided sufficient time for the coalition to develop a deliberate plan and amass the resources it needed to transform the old army into a force compatible with the democracy the United States hoped to establish. The fact remains that long-term development of the Iraqi security forces remained subject to the whims of those who followed Bremer. Successive Iraqi leaders, civilian and uniformed, saw the military and police as organizations to be co-opted or exploited for monetary and sectarian gain. In fact, Iraqi officials actively took advantage of the institutional clean slate created by CPA Orders No. 1 and No. 2 to gain influence over a resurrected military force into which the Americans poured millions upon millions of dollars. By turning over full responsibility for the development of the post-CPA Iraqi military to the nascent central government, the UN-mandated political roadmap inhibited American efforts to block attempts to gain such influence. In addition to limiting U.S. oversight of Iraqi security forces, the rapid succession of UN-mandated elections forced MNF-I to devote significant effort into convincing each incoming administration to support ongoing train-and-equip efforts while simultaneously identifying the agenda of the newcomers.

Policies of both the Bush and Obama administrations had a major impact on the train-and-equip mission. American advisers constantly struggled with too little time and too few resources. Although quantity may indeed have a quality of its own, that dictum appeared less applicable to counterinsurgency than conventional warfare. At no point during Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn did American civilian leaders seriously question whether the train-and-equip strategy pursued by MNF-I would ultimately produce an effective and efficient partnered force. In fact, the Bush administration tacitly discouraged any such evaluation by linking train-and-equip efforts with strategic disengagement, whereas the Obama White House pursued the rapid withdrawal of U.S. combat troops despite historical evidence

55. "US Would Not 'Admit' the Insurgency in Post-War Iraq," BBC News, 15 Dec 2009, https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/ hi/uk_news/politics/8412317.stm, Hist Files, CMH.

suggesting that massive equipment transfers do not guarantee improved tactical performance.

In both instances, White House policies reflected the beliefs and counsel of senior defense officials. As early as fall 2003, the Pentagon embraced the notion that U.S. strategic objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan were attainable through a relatively inexpensive investment in training and equipping tactical-level organizations. The 2004 Foreign Army–Training Assistance Command initiative provides a tangible example of that perception. This initiative reflected the American military's belief that methods successfully used by U.S. personnel would achieve similar results when applied to partnered forces. In this particular case, that mindset did not survive the acid test of combat. Reserve officers and drill instructors from the 98th Division were thrust into combat advisory positions immediately upon their arrival in Iraq. The predeployment training they received before assuming those duties was totally inadequate. Consequently, MNSTC-I classified almost two-thirds of the early advisory teams as ineffective.[56]

The leadership of the Iraqi military did not make the job of inadequately prepared advisers any easier.[57] Few senior officers, if any, showed consistent interest in bettering the lot of enlisted soldiers, awarding medals, or embracing the notion of rotating units from combat for refresher training.[58] Defense ministry officials exhibited similar attitudes, compounding the lack of attention paid by Iraqi officers toward building esprit de corps and motivating soldiers. MNF-I had little leverage to modify those behaviors, in part because it concentrated on tactical-level advising and in part because the handover of sovereignty did not include arrangements for a robust mentoring capability being inserted into key ministries. As a result, the Ministry of Defense sought to overcome the difficulties imposed by systemic inexperience over the next several years while simultaneously dealing with significant turbulence and loss of continuity as successive administrations replaced incumbents with officials of their choosing.

The absence of compliance tools allowed other factors, such as cultural influences, class divisions, different concepts of wealth distribution, and sectarian tensions, to flourish despite attempts to expunge such influences. It is unrealistic to expect military personnel in societies where such behaviors

56. Interv, Steven E. Clay, CSI, with Col. Sean Ryan, former Asst for Reserve Affairs, Chairman Joint Chs Staff, 21 Dec 2006, 7, OLE.

57. Interv, Mark J. Reardon with Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. Dubik, former MNSTC-I Cmdg Gen, 31 May 2023; Interv, Maj. Thomas Urquhart, United States Forces–Iraq, with Maj. Michael Egan, former Director of Training, Iraq Training and Assist Mission–Army, 16 Nov 2009, 8–12; both in Hist Files, CMH.

58. Voorhies, "MITT Happens: Insight into Advising the Iraqi Army," 17–18.

are acceptable to discard lifelong habits once they don a uniform. Historically, some societies have viewed military service as a pathway to greater wealth and power rather than an opportunity for selfless service. It is no wonder that persuading Iraqi officers to accept U.S. methods gained little traction given the lack of comparable rewards and absence of disincentives. Overemphasis on informal methods, fed by unwarranted American optimism, undermined U.S. attempts to overlay American values atop the Iraqi Army, not because the same problems did not exist on a smaller scale within their own military, but because deeply ingrained unproductive behaviors required far more punitive methods than appealing to morality and professionalism.[59]

Modern armies are inherently complex, which argues for better understanding of how they operate and what has an impact on their performance. Reflecting upon his experience during World War II, British Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery noted, "I know very well that the higher the command the more difficult are the outside influences, quite distinct from 'winning battles on the battlefield', which make for success or failure in the long run."[60] In the modern age, such outside influences include research facilities, shipping lines, media outlets, central banks, and manufacturing complexes. These factors exert considerable influence on politicians and soldiers alike, but technological and organizational advances, combined with population migrations and redrawing of national boundaries, have transformed military organizations into entities of unprecedented power, influence, and lethality. In fact, the power of modern armies has attained such unprecedented levels that many political leaders see military organizations as their most effective tool for fulfilling both national and personal agendas.

American soldiers need to accept that, even at the most fundamental level, advisers also operate within an environment shaped by outside influences. Grafting Western methods and professional values onto an entire army, therefore, is an extremely challenging train-and-equip scenario. Accomplishing that mission in the midst of a conflict, when friendly forces often find themselves at a disadvantage, exponentially increases both the risk and complexity of that task. Tying attainment of U.S. strategic goals to improving a foreign army is a scenario requiring careful thought and preparation simply because non-U.S. actors will exert disproportionate influence over the outcome.

59. Pollack, *Armies of Sand*, 352–54.
60. Stephen Brooks, ed., *Montgomery and the Eighth Army: A Selection from the Diaries, Correspondence and Other Papers of Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, August 1942 to December 1943* (London: The Bodley Head for the Army Records Society, 1991), 266.

American soldiers and politicians who ignore or downplay cultural factors place the attainment of strategic goals at risk, as evidenced by the fact that the U.S. military needed to return to Iraq following the collapse of that nation's military in 2014. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the U.S. Army fully embraced modern ways of making war, a key feature of which is independent decision making at multiple levels of command. As a result, the Army expected and encouraged the Iraqis to do the same. The Iraqis, conditioned by social norms that limited trust outside of family to what could be witnessed personally, held the opposite view. The U.S. military did not adjust its own viewpoints to accommodate Iraqi ways, nor could it accept the fact that a central tenet of its own worldview would prove to be an anathema to another army. This disconnect was far too complex for PowerPoint slides to convey, which ensured the problem remained unacknowledged. Cultural resistance within MNF-I blinded it to the fact that diametrically opposed professional norms fatally undermined its transition-centric exit strategy. Americans continually transmitted their professional beliefs in the hope of eventual adoption by partnered forces while Iraqis, who remained true to their long-standing core values, eagerly accepted responsibility for their own nation's security. Both armies erred at a fundamental level, yet neither admitted a problem existed. Consequently, Iraqis and Americans neglected to seek a middle ground that could have accommodated their respective viewpoints.

While the U.S. Army has invested significant effort in updating train-and-equip methods, the importance of understanding the institutional dynamics and core beliefs of partnered forces remains under appreciated. Doctrinal manuals describe how to convince counterparts to perform like American troops, but they do not discuss the systemic shortcomings that might prevent advisers from achieving that standard. Although some aspects of a foreign military's potential may be difficult to pinpoint, making a conscious effort to do so—in a thorough manner similar to the continuous collection and reassessment of battlefield information—could transform future train-and-equip programs into better-informed, tailored, and holistic endeavors rather than the unimaginative mirror-image efforts they currently are. A welcome byproduct of this mindset is that advisers no longer would bear responsibility for partner shortcomings.

Neither the CPA nor any military entity involved with the train-and-equip effort saw fit to commission a historical study of the Iraqi military between 2003 and 2011. In sharp contrast, updates on insurgent behavior were eagerly sought. However, a detailed study of a partnered force could

offer just as many useful observations.[61] In the case of the Iraqi Army, readily available records of its performance when under British tutelage would have revealed a host of comparable trends: officers promoted based on sponsorship rather than merit, unimaginative planning, the absence of a functional noncommissioned officers' corps, a preference for scripted rather than dynamic training, and complete unfamiliarity with Western-style doctrinal development.[62]

Lacking cultural and professional insights as well as reasoned counterarguments and effective compliance mechanisms, Americans tended to downplay the need to confront forcefully what they perceived to be counterproductive Iraqi practices. When discussing issues impacting ongoing training and equipping programs in 2005 and 2006, the MNF-I commanding general cited British officer T. E. Lawrence, saying, "Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them."[63] Such axioms are incompatible with the presumption that U.S. training methods will produce a partnered force capable of operating as effectively as the American military.

When recrafting the U.S. national strategy in 2002, the White House overlooked the basic fact that governments with strong institutions gain legitimacy while those lacking such entities are deemed illegitimate.[64] American efforts to remake the Iraqi Army focused on symbolic rather than practical solutions, largely because they were influenced by a strategic concept that equated the spread of American political notions with increased security. CPA Order No. 2 sought to banish Ba'thist influence within the Iraqi military prior to remaking it into a force consistent with American strategic aims rather than serve as a corrective mechanism to offset its historical shortcomings. Arguments that Bremer's actions were driven by U.S. intentions to remake Iraq into a functioning democracy merely shift

61. Pollack, *Armies of Sand*, 19.

62. Many of the reports maintained by the National Archives in London are filed under Foreign Office, Political Departments, General Correspondence 1906–1966; Political: Eastern, Iraq (FO 371/21853, FO 371/16891, and FO 371/24551). Other useful documents are found in Air Ministry and Defence Ministry Papers accumulated by Air Historical Branch: General: Iraqi Army: Political Questions (AIR 20/210) and Colonial Office; Iraqi Original Correspondence (CO 730/124).

63. T. E. Lawrence explained that this advice applied only to Bedu (Bedouin) rather than all Arabs. T. E. Lawrence, "Twenty-Seven Articles," *Arab Bulletin* 60 (20 Aug 1917): 347–53, https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100048503667.0x0000aa, quoted in George W. Casey Jr., *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom, July 2004–February 2007* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012), 51.

64. Toby Dodge, *Iraq: From War to a New Authoritarianism* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2012), 118–20.

blame higher up the chain of command. Transforming the Iraqi security forces into a strong institution required far more effort than simply depriving Ba'thists of their livelihood.

Doctrine written during Operation Iraqi Freedom stated that security force assistance efforts are designed primarily to achieve shared strategic goals.[65] In both Iraq and Afghanistan, that doctrine fed into security force assistance programs focused on creating armies capable of accepting security responsibilities in order to facilitate the United States' strategic exit. In both instances, prioritizing the withdrawal of combat troops as the penultimate goal obscured the fact that this priority was but one of several interrelated goals. Most significantly, training and equipping a reasonably effective army capable of maintaining an acceptable level of performance after American combat troops departed remained an unrealized goal in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

The account of the United States' train-and-equip experience in Iraq contained in this volume provides detailed evidence of the need to balance the attainment of U.S. strategic goals with the task of creating a foreign army that is accepted as legitimate by the populace, capable of mounting basic types of military operations without U.S. assistance, and equipped with the weapons and equipment it wants rather than what Americans believe it needs. Some of the more complex aspects of that effort—such as promoting effective leadership, increasing motivation, and combating corruption—are more difficult to achieve than others and therefore deserve an approach more nuanced than simply stating, "Americans do it this way, and it works."

65. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3–0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 11 Aug 2011), V–15.

APPENDIX

TABLE A.1—IRAQI OFFICERS' RANK INSIGNIA

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

PRIMARY SOURCES

DOCUMENTS

Reforging Babylon's Sword: The U.S. Army's Role in Building the Iraqi Army, 2003–2011 depends heavily on campaign plans, daily update briefings, and monthly and weekly reports compiled or composed before, during, and immediately after the events described in this account. These were collected in Iraq by command historians and military history detachments (MHDs); from U.S. Central Command servers at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida; and during visits to various military units and formations in both the United States and at overseas installations by center historians and Headquarters, Department of the Army records management representatives. The material, painstakingly compiled over the course of almost two decades, is now the core of the Global War on Terrorism electronic database used by official historians working at the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) on Fort McNair in Washington, D.C.

The process of researching material for this book took place between 2009 and 2024. Official historians originally maintained paper and electronic primary sources as working papers in the sensitive compartmented information facility (SCIF) in the CMH library or in the Historical Studies Directorate's common area secure storage containers. Much of that material had been copied from portable hard drives to air-gapped servers in the SCIF with the original medium acting as a backup file. Over the past several years, CMH has transferred all of the electronic material to an offsite server to make it easier for historians to access the collection, which had been threatening to overflow its original storage space. Although consolidating electrons increased access to the voluminous number of records collected between 2003 and 2020, some of the original electronic storage and identification protocols were slightly modified. In addition, unclassified and classified electronic documents were mixed together, which means that they all are now accessible only via a secure internet protocol router network. The primary source materials cited in *Reforging Babylon's Sword* are identified according to the protocols used when they were stored in the SCIF. Paper

copies of documents that remained in the SCIF or the Historical Studies Directorate storage containers were not modified in any way.

Documents collected in Iraq were produced by Multi-National Force–Iraq; I, III, V and XVIII Airborne Corps while serving as Multi-National Corps–Iraq; I Corps (Forward) deployed as Task Force Olympia, and major subordinate commands deployed as multinational divisions, including the 1st, 3d, 4th, 25th and 42d Infantry Divisions; the 1st Armored Division; the 1st Cavalry Division; the 82d Airborne Division; and the 101st Airborne Division. Other contributing organizations included the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, the Office of Security Assistance–Iraq, and the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team. There are few documents from the period after Multi-National Force–Iraq transformed into United States Forces–Iraq. This is because all MHDs and most of the command historian positions were eliminated as the number of American troops shrank before the departure of the last combat unit in December 2011.

The primary sources were collected for the most part by MHDs and command historians for the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, Multi-National Corps–Iraq, and Multi-National Force–Iraq during the course of their daily duties in Iraq. However, several targeted efforts to collect documents from U.S. Central Command and various headquarters in Iraq were made. Contributors include Lt. Col. Robert O. Kirkland and Lt. Col. Jerry Brooks, both assigned to Multi-National Force–Iraq, as well as a trio of Multi-National Corps–Iraq command historians: Col. William S. "Shane" Story, William W. Epley, and Dr. Robert S. Rush. A Department of the Army civilian employee from the Army War College, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Thomas L. Hendrix, voluntarily traveled to Iraq in 2009 specifically for the purpose of filling gaps in the train-and-equip materials being assembled for this book. In addition, then Maj. Jeanne H. Godfroy provided a trove of useful electronic documents chronicling the activities of Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, which she compiled while serving on the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq staff in 2004–2005. Primary source documents gathered by the above individuals were organized into files identified by the contributor's name. These files are not part of an archive or formal collection, but every effort has been made to describe their locations at CMH accurately as of the time of this writing. File locations may change as CMH continues its current reorganization efforts.

In addition to the working papers maintained at CMH, a number of other sources accessible via the internet proved useful. Many of the interviews referenced in this book were obtained from the Ike Skelton Combined Arms

Research Library Digital Library at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (https://cgsc.content dm.oclc.org/); George Washington University's superlative National Security Archives (https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/); the Public Broadcasting System's "Year in Iraq" files (https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/documents); the Coalition Provisional Authority collection hosted by the University of North Texas (https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/cpa-iraq/index.html); the Defense Technical Information Center (https://discover.dtic.mil/); and selected Operation IRAQI FREEDOM documents maintained by the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania (https://ahec.armywarcollege.edu/CENTCOM-IRAQ-papers/index.cfm). Representatives of Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld maintain a commercial website where a selection of declassified documents from his tenure in the Pentagon are posted (https://papers.rumsfeld.com/).

WEBSITES

Although the internet contains a tremendous amount of information, that data is not available in perpetuity. In some cases, websites have been taken down entirely; in other instances, websites either archive or remove articles at predetermined intervals. Those intervals vary from the Bahrain News Agency and *Arab News*, which maintain material for twenty years or more, to the Department of Defense, which removes articles after ten years. Both the *Boston Globe* and the United States Military Academy at West Point delete materials after five years. Additionally, numerous agencies have moved articles and reports, which originally had been available for free, to archives that now reside behind a paywall. Webpages that were known to have been discontinued at the time of this volume's publication have been noted as such in the citations.

PUBLISHED WORKS

A number of senior policymakers and commanders published firsthand accounts of events covered in *Reforging Babylon's Sword*. Frequently consulted books include Ambassador L. Paul Bremer's *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope*; George W. Bush's *Decision Points*; Douglas J. Feith's *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism*; General (Ret.) Tommy R. Franks's *American Soldier*; Robert M. Gates's *DUTY: Memoirs*

of A Secretary at War; Christopher R. Hill's *Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy*; Donald H. Rumsfeld's *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*; and Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Ricardo S. Sanchez's *Wiser in Battle: A Soldier's Story*. The most useful reference from a senior participant was George W. Casey Jr.'s *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom, July 2004–February 2007*. Casey's exceptionally candid report lends much-needed perspective to developments that occurred during his tenure in command. Incidents recounted in several of the above referenced memoirs were cross-checked using Emma Sky's *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missing Opportunities in Iraq*.

Other useful published sources, which examined events from a tactical level, included: Col. (Ret.) Anthony E. Deane's *Ramadi Declassified: A Roadmap to Peace in the Most Dangerous City in Iraq*; Lt. Col. Seth W. B. Folsom's *In the Gray Area: A Marine Advisor Team at War*; Wesley R. Gray's *Embedded: A Marine Corps Adviser Inside the Iraqi Army* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2009); Konrad R. K. Ludwig's *[Stryker] The Siege of Sadr City*, which discusses events during the Phase Line Gold operation from an enlisted soldier's viewpoint; Peter R. Mansoor's *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq* and his follow-on account entitled *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War*; Capt. Eric Navarro's *God Willing: My Wild Ride with the New Iraqi Army*; Owen West's *The Snake Eaters: An Unlikely Band of Brothers and the Battle for the Soul of Iraq*; and *The Ragged Edge: A US Marine's Account of Leading the Iraqi Army Fifth Battalion* by Michael Zacchea and Ted Kemp.

ORAL INTERVIEWS, PERSONAL MONOGRAPHS, AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Many individuals consented to requests for interviews during the preparation of this account. In addition, other individuals agreed to review portions of the draft or provided additional material to the author. Special thanks are due to General (Ret.) David H. Petraeus for reviewing an early draft of the complete manuscript. Others who contributed are listed below in alphabetical order and according to their rank at the time they were involved in the preparation of this book: Lt. Gen. (Ret.) John M. "Mick" Bednarek, Col. Philip F. Battaglia, Lt. Col. Daniel R. Barnett, Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell, Capt. William D. Chesher, Col. Edmund "E. J." Degen, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Paul D. Eaton, Lt. Col. Jeanne H. Godfroy, Col. Casey P. Haskins, Col.

Bart Howard, Col. John H. Hort, Lt. Col. Stuart M. James, Lt. Col. Joseph S. McLamb, Maj. Scott C. Nauman, Brig. Gen. Scott M. Naumann, Col. Peter A. Newell, Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Robert L. Ochsner II, Capt. Jeffrey A. Oster, Lt. Col. Michael F. Pappal, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Dana J. H. Pittard, Col. Brett G. Sylvia, and Col. (Ret.) Thomas F. Thaler, U.S. Marine Corps.

Recognizing the need to capture information about key events as they occurred, the U.S. Army deployed a number of MHDs to Iraq throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom. Each detachment performed its responsibilities in a unique manner, in part influenced by the support they received from their supervising headquarters but also reflecting the predeployment training they had received along with the collective determination of their members. Virtually all of the MHDs conducted dozens of interviews, although the utility of these interviews varied in terms of scope and quality, mirroring the MHDs' access to maneuver units. Training also played a part in how MHDs conducted interviews and whom they chose to interview. The U.S. Army Reserve Command was responsible for predeployment training for the first several years of Operation Iraqi Freedom; thereafter, CMH was responsible for that mission. The author had the good fortune to provide MHDs with some instruction on their duties, including asking them to make a special effort to obtain interviews from individuals working with the Iraqi Army. However, the number of detachments deploying to Iraq fell dramatically following the surge, with the result that MHD coverage of the Iraqi Army concentrates on the 2006 through 2009 timeframe.

The Combat Studies Institute on Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has assembled the most extensive set of interviews of Operation Iraqi Freedom personnel currently available to researchers of that conflict. Although not all of the interviews are available online, the ones that are can be found in the Operational Leadership Experiences section of Fort Leavenworth's Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library. The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, hosts a comparable online collection of personal experience papers authored by senior noncommissioned officers while attending the academy. Several hundred first-person monographs written by students attending the Infantry Officer's Career Course can be found on the Digital Collections website of the Donovan Maneuver Center of Excellence Research Library at Fort Moore, Georgia. Those seeking access to that material will require a Department of Defense common access card as the monographs have been moved from the defunct Army Knowledge Online website to the Joint Lessons Learned Information System.

SECONDARY SOURCES

A trio of unit histories by Army Reserve formations taking part in the Foreign Army–Training Assistance Command initiative provided a surprisingly complete account of their experiences in Iraq. These included Steven E. Clay's *Iroquois Warriors in Iraq*; Maj. Gen. Thomas P. McLaren, Col. Paul Linkenhoker, and Maj. Gary Schreckengost's *80th Division in Iraq: Iraqi Army Advisors in Action, 2005–2006* (Middletown, DE: CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2016); and Lt. Col. Voris Weldon McBurnette's *The 108th Training Command: A History Embracing & Shaping the Future*. The accounts of the 80th Division (Institutional Training), now redesignated as the 80th Training Command, and the 98th Division (Institutional Training) are available in paperback; the history of the 108th Training Command (Initial Entry Training) is accessible at the Internet Archive (https://archive.org/details/108thtrainingcom00wash).

Commercially published accounts served to augment or fill gaps in a narrative otherwise dependent on primary sources. Although many publications in this category were consulted, a few are worthy of singling out. Michael R. Gordon and General (Ret.) Bernard E. Trainor coauthored two volumes that deliver an informed overview of the Iraq conflict between 2003 and 2011. These are *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* and *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, From George W. Bush to Barack Obama*. Three of the books in journalist Bob Woodward's series covering the Global War on Terrorism—*Plan of Attack*, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), and *The War Within*—aided in filling gaps in available official records.

Think-tank papers and government reports can make for difficult reading but almost invariably contain myriad facts unavailable elsewhere. First and foremost among these sources were the 440 audits, fact sheets, reviews, inspection summaries, and reports produced by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), which began its life as the Office of the Coalition Provisional Authority Inspector General between 2004 and 2013. Of particular note are the following documents, which are available on the Defense Technical Information Center's website (https://discover.dtic.mil):

Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–05–018. "Management of Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund Program: Acquisition of Armored Vehicles Purchased Through Contract

W914ns-05-M-1189." 21 Oct 2005. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA524197.pdf.

Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–032. "Iraqi Security Forces: Review of Plans to Implement Logistical Capabilities." 28 Oct 2006. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA460534.pdf.

Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–06–33. "Iraqi Security Forces: Weapons Provided by the U.S. Department of Defense Using the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund." 28 Oct 2006. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA460516.pdf.

Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–08–015. "Interim Analysis of Iraqi Security Force Information Provided by the Department of Defense Report, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*." 25 Apr 2008. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA480449.pdf.

Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–10–009. "Interim Report on Projects to Develop the Iraqi Special Operations Forces." 25 Mar 2010. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA545427.pdf.

Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–10–016. "Most Iraqi Security Forces Fund Appropriations Have Been Obligated." 23 Apr 2010. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA545989.pdf.

Ofc Special Inspector Gen Iraq Reconstruction Rpt, SIGIR–11–004. "Iraqi Security Forces: Special Operations Force Program Is Achieving Goals, But Iraqi Support Remains Critical to Success." 25 Oct 2010. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA545722.pdf.

In addition to providing more than one hundred personnel to the SIGIR, the Office of the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) oversaw its own audit and reporting effort, albeit narrower in scope, beginning in October 2004. Unlike the SIGIR program, the DoDIG program did not end with the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. These documents, which cover Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn, are found in a searchable database on the DoDIG website (https://www.dodig.mil). These two reports are of particular note:

U.S. Dept. Def Inspector Gen Rpt, DODIG–2015–177. "Assessment of DoD/USCENTCOM and Coalition Plans/Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Iraqi Army to Defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and

the Levant." 30 Sep 2015. https://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/Article/1119206/assessment-of-doduscentcom-and-coalition-planseffortsto-train-advise-and-assis/.

U.S. Dept. Def Inspector Gen Rpt, DODIG–2017–033. "Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, Assist, and Equip the Kurdish Security Forces in Iraq." 16 Dec 2016. https://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/Article/1119338/assessment-of-us-and-coalition-efforts-to-train-advise-assist-and-equip-the-kur/.

Among private institutions, the Santa Monica, California–based RAND Corporation produced the greatest number of useful references, including:

Bensahel, Nora, et al. *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq*. 2008.

Dobbins, James, et al. *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority*. 2009.

Hosmer, Stephen T. *Why the Iraqi Resistance to the Coalition Invasion Was So Weak*. 2007.

Johnson, David E., et al. *The U.S. Army and the Battle for Baghdad: Lessons Learned—And Still to Be Learned*. 2019.

Johnson, David E., M. Wade Markel, and Brian Shannon. *The 2008 Battle of Sadr City*. 2011.

Kelly, Terrence K., et al. *Security Cooperation Organizations in the Country Team: Options for Success*. 2010.

Rathmell, Andrew, et al. *Developing Iraq's Security Sector: The Coalition Provisional Authority's Experience*. 2005.

A RAND study entitled *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and Disestablishment of United States Forces–Iraq* by Richard J. Brennan Jr. et al. (2013) was especially useful given the relative lack of primary source materials covering the drawdown.

Other government and academic institutions that produced reports and articles germane to the overall research effort include the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center and the Army War College; the Center for a New American Security; the Center for Strategic and International Studies; the Congressional Research Service; the Council on Foreign Relations; the Foundation for Defense of Democracies; and the Institute for the Study of War. The most helpful works included:

Cordesman, Anthony H. *The Real Lessons of Mosul (And Sixteen Years of War in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria)*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2017.

Cordesman, Anthony H., and Patrick Baetjer. *Iraqi Security Forces: A Strategy for Success*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006.

Crane, Conrad C., et al. *Lessons in Lethality: The Army's Cycle of Basic Combat Training, 1918–2019*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, 2019.

Dubik, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2009.

Dubik, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) James M. *The U.S. in Iraq Beyond 2011: A Diminishing but Still Vital Role*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2011.

Pickering, Thomas R., and James R. Schlesinger. *Iraq: The Day After*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003.

Terrill, W. Andrew, and Conrad C. Crane. *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 1 Feb 2003.

Useful media sources on Iraq included the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, *Dawn*, and Agence France Presse. When consulting these sources, the author normally compared accounts from various publications to compensate for any inadvertent errors that may have resulted from writing under very compressed deadlines. However, some of these sources are no longer readily accessible, either because the publication itself has closed down or because archived articles are now behind paywalls. Specialist journals such as *Military Review*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *PRISM–The Journal of Complex Operations* (published by the National Defense University) were consulted frequently as they contained well-researched and insightful pieces, examples of which include Maj. Wilson C. Blythe Jr.'s "III Corps During The Surge: A Study in Operational Art," Stephen Biddle's "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," and Najim Abed al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen's "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening."

FURTHER READING

This book originally contained an appendix devoted to the history of the Iraqi Army. Although the appendix did not make it into the final product, the following sources were exceptionally useful in gaining an understanding of partnered forces—an understanding that many U.S. advisers lacked when they first reported for duty in Iraq. Although the British military molded and shaped the Iraqi Army for two decades following World War I, these accounts revealed that Iraqi martial traditions and professional culture owed as much if not more to the influence of the Ottoman Empire. Among the more informative accounts on that topic are:

Erickson, Edward J. *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Provence, Michael. *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Shaw, Stanford J. *The Ottoman Empire in World War I*, vols. 1 and 2. Ankara, Turkey: Turkish Historical Society, 2006.

The United Kingdom, which administered the League of Nations mandate in Iraq during the interwar years, dispatched a robust military mission to that nation to work with the nascent Iraqi Army and Air Force. Documents in the Foreign Office and Air Ministry files, available from the British National Archives at Kew, address a variety of topics that range from annual reports to quarterly assessments and studies on specific aspects of the Iraqi Army. A sampling of those sources include:

A.I. 2.a. Rpt, AIR 20/210. "Political Factions Within the 'Iraqi Army'–March 1938." 24 Mar 1938. Annual Rpt, FO 371/16891. "General Headlam Report Iraq, Annual Report, 1933, Code 93 File 7 (papers 5606 - 5880)." N.d.

British Advisory Mil Mission Iraq Army. Quarterly Rpt No. 21, FO 371/21853/448. "The Iraq Army and Royal Iraq Air Force for the Period Ending 31st December 1937." 2 Jan 1938.

British Advisory Mil Mission Iraq Army. Quarterly Rpt No. 32, FO 371/24551/15. "The Iraqi Army and Royal Iraqi Air Force for Quarter Ending 31st August 1940." 31 Aug 1940.

Archival sources in the United States reveal that Americans played a part in rearming the Iraqi Army after the British military departed following World War II. See:

Howland, Nina D., ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968*, vol. 21, *Near East Region; Arabian Peninsula*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000.

Noring, Nina J., ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963*, vol. 18, *Near East, 1962–1963*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995.

Numerous secondary sources on the Iraqi Army also were consulted. A representative selection of the most helpful publications include:

Browne, J. Gilbert, *The Iraq Levies 1915–1932*. London: Royal United Service Institution, 1932.

His Majesty's Stationery Office. *Paiforce: The Official Story of the Persia and Iraq Command, 1941–1946*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1948.

Lyman, Robert. *Iraq 1941: The Battles for Basra, Habbaniya, Fallujah and Baghdad*. London: Bloomsbury, 2006.

Malovany, Pesach. *The Wars of Modern Babylon: A History of the Iraqi Army from 1921 to 2003*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017.

Razoux, Pierre. *The Iran-Iraq War*. Translated by Nicholas Elliott. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015.

Renfrew, Barry. *Wings of Empire: The Forgotten Wars of the Royal Air Force, 1919–1939*. Cheltenham, U.K.: History Press, 2015.

Rutledge, Ian. *Enemy on the Euphrates: The British Occupation of Iraq and the Great Arab Revolt, 1914–1921*. London: Saqi Books, 2014.

Sluglett, Peter. *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country, 1914–1932*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Woods, Kevin M., et al. *Saddam's War: An Iraqi Military Perspective on the Iran-Iraq War*. Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2009.

Although not dealing exclusively with the Iraqi Army, the following books offer incomparable insights into the wide range of influences affecting Arab military performance in both peacetime and combat:

Pollack, Kenneth M. *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948–1991*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.

Pollack, Kenneth M. *Armies of Sand: The Past, Present, and Future of Arab Military Effectiveness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAB	advise and assist brigade
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
BOC	Baghdād Operations Center
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Command
CJTF-7	Combined Joint Task Force 7
CMATT	Coalition Military Assistance Training Team
CMH	U.S. Army Center of Military History
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FPS	Facilities Protection Service
IA	Iraqi Army
IAG	Iraq Assistance Group
ICDC	Iraqi Civil Defense Corps
ICDF	Iraqi Civil Defense Force
ICTF	Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force
IED	improvised explosive device
IGFC	Iraqi Ground Forces Command
IIF	Iraqi Intervention Force
IIG	Iraqi Interim Government
ING	Iraqi National Guard
ISAM	Iraq Security Assistance Mission
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISOF	Iraqi Special Operations Forces
ITAM	Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission
JSS	joint security station
MAT	military assistance team
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MiTT	military transition team
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps–Iraq
MND-B	Multi-National Division–Baghdad
MND-C	Multi-National Division–Center
MNF-I	Multi-National Force–Iraq
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NIA	New Iraqi Army
NP	National Police
NSC	National Security Council
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance
OSC-I	Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq
OST-I	Office of Security Transition–Iraq
RA	Regular Army
RPG	rocket-propelled grenade
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SEAL	sea air land
UN	United Nations
USF-I	United States Forces–Iraq
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

CHART AND TABLE ABBREVIATIONS

(-)	one or more subordinate components are detached elsewhere
30K	30,000
3–2 ACR	3d Squadron, 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment
AID	U.S. Agency for International Development
Armd	Armored
AST	Advisory Support Team
Bde	Brigade
BMP	infantry fighting vehicle (*boyevaya mashina pyekhoty*)
Bn	Battalion
CAATT	Coalition Army Advisory Training Team
CCC	Chairman, Coordination Council
CG	Commanding General
CMATT	Coalition Military Assistance Training Team
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CPATT	Civilian Police Assistance Training Team
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
Div	Division
DOB	Defenders of Baghdād
DoIA	Directorate of International Affairs
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Device
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
GST/LGT	Governance Support Team/ Local Governance Team
HQ	Headquarters
IA	Iraqi Army
ICDC	Iraqi Civil Defense Corps
ICDF	Iraqi Civil Defense Force
IGFC	Iraqi Ground Forces Command
IIF	Iraqi Intervention Force
IMA	Individual Manning Augmentee
ING	Iraqi National Guard
ISOF	Iraqi Special Operations Forces
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
LNO	liaison officer
Mech	Mechanized

MNC-I	Multi-National Corps–Iraq
MNF-I	Multi-National Force–Iraq
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq
MTLB	multipurpose light-armored towing vehicle (*mnogotselevoy tyagach legky bronirovanny*)
Mtrzd	Motorized
Muth	Muthanna
N/A	not applicable
NCO	noncommissioned officer
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NIA	New Iraqi Army
OCINC	Office of the Commander in Chief
OST-I	Office of Security Transition–Iraq
PM	Prime Minister
QRF	Quick Reaction Force
RA	Regular Army
RCG	Requirement Coordination Group
RTC	Regional Training Center
S	South
T55	T55 main battle tank
T72	T72 main battle tank
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
TT	Transition Team
UN	United Nations

MAP SYMBOLS

Function

Armor 

Cavalry (Armored) 

Infantry 

Infantry (Airborne) 

Infantry (Air Assault) 

Infantry (Mechanized, Armored) 

Infantry (Mountain) 

Infantry (Wheeled, Armored) 

Infantry (Wheeled, Armored with Gun System) 

Marine Expiditionary Force 

Ranger (Airborne) 

Size

Team

Squad

Section

Platoon or Detachment

Company, Battery, Troop

Battalion or Squadron

Regiment or Group

Brigade

Division

Corps

Task Force 

Example

3d Battalion, 2d Armor

3d Cavalry Regiment

82d Airborne Division

101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

3d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment

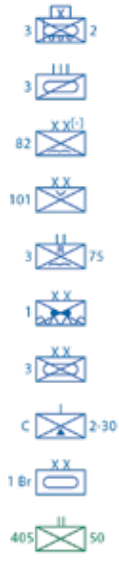
1st Marine Expeditionary Force

3d Division

C Company, 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry

1st Armor Division, British

405th Battalion, 50th Brigade, Iraqi Army



MAP ABBREVIATIONS

(-)	one or more subordinate components are detached elsewhere
BOC	Baghdād Operations Command
Br	British
CAV	cavalry
CDO	commando
CJSOTF	combined joint special operations task force
COB	contingency operating base
CTAC	critical threats advisory company
ERU	emergency response unit
FOB	forward operating base
IA	Iraqi Army
ICDC	Iraqi Civil Defense Corps
ID	infantry division
ISOF	Iraqi Special Operations Forces
MEF	marine expeditionary force
MND-B	Multi-National Division–Baghdad
MND-CS	Multi-National Division–Center South
MND-N	Multi-National Division–North
MND-NC	Multi-National Division–North Central
MND-NE	Multi-National Division–North East
MND-NW	Multi-National Division–North West
MND-SE	Multi-National Division–South East
MNF-W	Multi-National Force–West
MP	military police
MSR	main supply route
NP	National Police
PL	phase line
SIB	strategic infrastructure battalion
SOF	special operations forces
TAC	tactical action center
TF	task force
USMC	United States Marine Corps

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