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HOW SOON IS SAFE?

IRAQI FORCE DEVELOPMENT AND CONDITIONS-BASED US WITHDRAWALS

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Executive Summary

No one can be certain whether setting a timeframe for US withdrawals that ends in 2011 will lead to instability in Iraq, or that such a timeline will lead the US to hand over responsibility to Iraqi Security Forces before they are able to do the job. There also is nothing wrong with setting broad goals for withdrawing US forces from Iraq. The US wants to leave as soon as this is feasible, and at least since 2004, Iraq's Kurds have been the only group in Iraq that showed a consistent desire for the US to stay.

It also is impossible to be certain that the risks of early withdrawal will really be greater than the risks of trying to stay longer than Iraqi politics permit. There are good reasons to extend the US military and advisory presence at steadily diminishing levels until Iraq has developed security forces that are fully ready to take over key missions without US support, and Iraq has achieved a greater degree of stability.

It is at least possible that setting early timelines will force Iraqis to move towards political accommodation, to take hard decisions, and to develop security forces that are more effective. In fact, if all goes well in Iraq, deadlines like 2011 may prove practical – particularly if such deadlines do not preclude a large number of US military advisors. Moreover, the US “occupation” is so controversial and unpopular that the cost of staying long enough to do every job right could be far higher in terms of Iraqi resentment and political backlash than the security benefits would be worth.

At the same time, it is not a good idea to bet a country -- and the outcome of a war -- on the strategic equivalent of filling an inside straight. Political rhetoric often makes such "bets on the come;" it also often loses the bet. Iraq still faces a large number of risks and problems where a US military presence does more to stabilize the situation than destabilize it, and where both Iraqi and US leaders will need to be careful and realistic about how quickly they can move.

The US now plays a critical role in developing effective Iraqi forces, providing stability in areas with deep sectarian and ethnic tensions, and in helping Iraq achieve political accommodation and more effective governance. If at all possible, US withdrawals need to be “conditions-based,” not tied to political timelines.

Iraqi and US leaders need to be careful about exaggerating Iraqi capabilities and the speed with which the US can safely withdraw its forces and advisory teams from Iraq. Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are very much a work in progress. Both the Iraqi minister of Defense and General Dubik, the head of the MNF-I advisory effort from July 2007-July 2008, stated in 2007 that the Army was unlikely to be able to take over the counterinsurgency mission before 2012, and there are good reasons why even the basic goals for shaping the police force remain uncertain.

This does not mean that the US cannot make force reductions over the next few years if conditions permit. If all goes well, the US should be able to steadily phase out its combat forces, and then remove its entire military presence if this is what Iraq desires. Iraq will, however, need a stabilizing US military presence for at least several years to come, and will need a substantial US military advisory effort for several years longer. Iraq's forces are not yet ready to provide the security and stability that Iraq needs, and US withdrawals need to be tailored to the progress they actually make and not to politically correct deadlines that are decoupled from conditions on the ground.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Iraqi Forces

Creating effective Iraqi security forces that can defeat the insurgency, provide national defense, and serve the nation - not sectarian or ethnic interests, is critical to Iraq's future. The key to success will be realistic and fully resourced plans for the development of the Iraqi Security Forces, developing realistic measures of ISF capability, and carefully reviewing plans for US withdrawals to make sure they reflect the progress various elements of the ISF have actually made and the level of overall security, stability, and political accommodation in Iraq. Realism is the key to success, and Iraq and the US may be reaping some of the consequences of past reports that exaggerated the progress in developing the Iraqi security forces. Both Iraqi and US politicians now seem to take such exaggerated reporting too seriously and are unaware of how much still needs to be done. Both Iraqis and Americans need to understand the level of incremental progress that Iraqi forces have actually made, and how far they still have to go.

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

- **Battle of Basra:** The Battle for Basra in Spring 2008 revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of the still-developing ISF. The bad news was the ISF showed only limited capability to plan and execute a major operation on its own, suffered from serious desertions and failures, had to turn to the US and UK for emergency fire support and logistical support, and needed an Iranian-brokered compromise to deal with Sadr. The good news is that the ISF was eventually able to field a large force, and some troops from more experienced units performed well. By the end of the fighting, the ISF was winning most tactical engagements. The ISF did not face sustained resistance from elements of the JAM or other forces, and the fact that it has been able to occupy and control the city has depended heavily on Sadr's cease-fire order.

- **Other "Successful" Operations:** Following the battle of Basra, the ISF, together with Coalition forces, launched a series of offensive operations in Mosul, Sadr City, Maysan and Diyala. These operations put pressure on the insurgent and militia groups they targeted, and resulted in the arrests of some mid and low-level enemy combatants. These operations have generally led to a decrease in violence and demonstrated the ISF's growing ability to deploy tens of thousands of personnel to geographically disparate regions for several operations in relatively rapid succession. This is a major accomplishment for a force that found it difficult to deploy a few brigades to Baghdad to support operations there in the spring of 2007

However, these operations built on a quiet campaign the US had begun in the spring of 2007 that had sharply reduced Iranian support of the Mahdi Army, and "special groups," and targeted the most radical and dangerous elements of the Sadr movement. Iraqi "victories" also have often displaced or dispersed elements of Al Qa'ida in Iraq and the Mahdi Army rather than actively defeated them. Iraqi forces have often been heavily dependent on US "enablers" and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R) support.

None of these operations have shown that the ISF is able to handle a well-armed, organized, and motivated enemy that is willing to stand and fight. Contrary to popular belief, these operations have not featured protracted battles against dug-in opponents willing to fight to the death, but rather featured checkpoints, sweeps, and raids against enemies that were fleeing or had already fled for the most part. The only protracted battle the ISF has fought so far has been the battle for Basra, in which, as previously mentioned, ISF performance was decidedly mixed.

- **Localization of Security in the forces of Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI):** The regular Iraqi Armed Forces seem to be gradually becoming a more national force, with fewer highly Kurdish and Shi'ite elements, and reducing problems with Sunni officers. This progress, however, is slow and uncertain.

  No such progress is taking place in the regular police. MoI forces are heavily influenced by local actors, large elements are locally recruited and are very briefly "trained and equipped" at the national level. This percentage seems to be growing. The Iraqi Police (IP) and other MoI security forces will therefore be locally and regionally tied, with some national elements. Attempts to free IP units from local influence have largely failed, and MNSTC-I seems to have accepted de-facto local control of MoI forces for the time being.

- **Kurdish Forces:** There are deep tensions between Iraqi Kurds and Iraqi Arabs, Turcomans, and other minorities. This threatens to divide the ISF along Kurdish and Arab lines, and weaken ISF efforts to fully defeat Al Qa'ida in Iraq. The KRG receives 17% of the GOI budget, and trains and equips its own forces as it sees fit. This leaves a huge hole in official reporting on the ISF. The size, disposition, equipment levels, and training of the forces under the KRG remain unclear. Some of the numbers reported by the DoD and State Department on IP and IA force development do not include the police and other security forces under the Kurdistan Regional Government.[i] (The ISF Report, 1227 and 9010 do include Kurdish IP forces. At this time there is only one point of contact for IP personnel numbers updates in those three provinces so the data in all three provinces is updated as often as possible.)

  While integrating 2 Kurdish divisions into the IA has been discussed, it is unclear whether the political will exists for integration, or how interoperable the divisions will be with the rest of the ISF. The same is true of the two new Kurdish divisions now in formation, and of Kurdish acceptance of non-Kurdish units in Iraqi forces. Reports that a Kurdish brigade operating in Diyala – the Peshmerga 34th Garmiyan Brigade-- refusing orders from the GOI and answering only to the KRG have exacerbated these tensions, as did local Kurdish resistance to sending Iraqi forces into Khanaqin. Partially in response to the controversy over Khanaqin, Kurdish leaders began questioning the sale of advanced weapons to the ISF, asking for guarantees the weapons not be used against them.[ii]

- **Iraqi Police Force:** Progress in developing the IP remains extremely uncertain in spite of repeated MNF-I claims that there would be a "Year of the police" since 2005. There has been little useful official reporting on the progress of the Iraqi Police Force. It is unclear what MNF-I's current goals are for developing various elements of the police. Official reporting on the manning, equipping, and training of the IP remains misleading. Senior MNF-I officers have reported that 88,000 locally hired police officers are currently serving, but have only received a bare minimum of 80 hours of training. These officers, along with those personnel hired through normal channels but still awaiting training, combine to form a huge backlog of 250,000-300,000 men awaiting police training. It is also unclear how the new provincial powers law, and upcoming provincial

elections, will affect the police force, how local and central elements will influence the force, and even how large the force will be in its end state.

- **Slow Progress in the Local Rule of Law:** There has been some progress at the highest levels in establishing courts and some rule of law. Yet the central government lacks an effective presence in many areas, and the criminal justice and courts system is unable to support the police. The IP needs effective governance and a functioning court system to back it up. The establishment of reliable and impartial courts has been extremely slow, which has seriously harmed the development of effective MoI forces at the local level. There is little official reporting on Iraq's jails, the availability of defendants to find counsel, the status of due process, and the role of religious and tribal courts. How all of these elements will interact, both at the central and local level, remains entirely unclear.

- **National Police:** Until 2007, the National Police (NP) acted largely as a Shi'ite force within the MoI, and were responsible for much sectarian violence against Sunnis. Far from being a central-government run nationwide police force, they more often resembled a government-funded tool of sectarian intimidation. MNF-I instituted a massive reform program in the NP in 2007. This ongoing program has clearly had some positive outcomes, and has reduced the previous Shi'ite dominance of the force and resulted in the firing of a huge number of the NP's senior commanders, officers, and other personnel. There is, however, a critical shortage of officers and NCOs in the National Police, and many elements still present problems. It remains to be seen whether the reform program can make the NP a truly non-sectarian force, though the GOI now plans for the National Police to play a major role in enforcing Iraqi security, and to eventually station one NP brigade in every province.

- **Sons of Iraq:** This large mostly Sunni and tribal force is supposed to be temporary, and the ultimate destination of the over 100,000 men in these units is a major uncertainty. While Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq believes that 20-25% of the Sons of Iraq will be absorbed into the ISF[iii], progress has been extremely slow in this area. The numbers of SOIs reported as currently being incorporated into the ISF vary widely, from 20,000 to only 5,200. What will become of the other 75-80% of these heavily armed men, accustomed to their relatively high salaries, is also a major concern. Unless jobs and economic opportunities are found for the entire force, and Sunnis and mixed tribal groups come to trust in government help and funding, the gains this force has made will be lost and many elements could become hostile to the central government.

- **Political and militia influence in the ISF:** The "competition among ethnic and sectarian communities"[iv] that Gen. Petraeus believes is at the heart of conflict in Iraq includes the struggle for control of the MoD and MoI. Several major political parties, and their respective militias, have gained partial control over many GOI ministries. The MoI and MoD are no exception.

  JAM, ISCI/Badr, Dawa, Kurdish groups, Fadilah, Sunni Awakening groups, and a host of smaller groups all vie for control of the various parts of the ISF. In many areas, such as Basra and much of southern Iraq, the Coalition has effectively ceded control of security and local government to these parties. JAM influence over the IP and elements of the IA were exposed in the significant desertions of ISF personnel during the fighting in Basra in March, 2008.

  The MoI is heavily influenced by Shiite parties. At the center, control of the Ministry itself is largely balanced between ISCI and Dawa. Kurdish parties also exert some influence. The JAM exerts varying but significant levels of control at the local level, particularly in the south and in the NP.

  The MoD is less influenced by these parties than the MoI, but still faces serious issues. The heavy Coalition presence at all levels of the MoD has helped to contain sectarianism somewhat, as has the presence of a significant number of Sunni officers in key posts. Sadly, much of the truly

impressive progress the ISF has made in the last 5 years will be rendered moot if its personnel are not loyal to the GOI.

- **Intelligence:** Iraq's intelligence capability continues to mature, and its many diverse intelligence institutions improved their initial operating capabilities during the course of 2008. MoD's Joint Headquarters M2 (Intelligence) and the Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS) are operational, providing intelligence support to ISF. Likewise, MoI's National Information and Investigation Agency (NIIA) has filled its ranks and markedly improved its operations at the provincial level. The Counterterrorist Command G2 is the least mature intelligence element, but has taken great strides in improving support to Iraqi Special Operations Forces. Concurrently, ground and air forces are fielding new ISR capabilities, including SIGINT, IMINT, and HUMINT. The establishment of Interagency Intelligence Fusion Cells (IFCs) and the growth of the Iraqi Intelligence Network (I2N) have greatly increased intelligence sharing and cooperation between Iraq's intelligence organizations, including with the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS). As these organizations become fully operational in 2009-2010, institutional interdependencies will likely increase cooperation and enterprise effectiveness. However, Iraq's national-level intelligence apparatus remains divided between a CIA-supported 'official' agency (the Iraqi National Intelligence Service or INIS) and a Shi'ite-run agency (under the auspices of the Minister of State for National Security (MSNSA), Shirwan al-Waely). The levels of competition or cooperation between these agencies remain unclear.

- **Provincial Powers Law:** The balance of power between the central and Provincial governments remains undecided, and how power shifts between the provinces and Baghdad will affect the ISF is also unclear. These issues are further compounded by unrealistic reporting on the transfer of security responsibilities by province, when the Iraqi forces are clearly unready to take over the mission, yet transfer to Provincial Iraqi Control takes place regardless.

- **Equipment and Logistics:** The ISF has made significant progress in the areas of logistics and equipping forces in the field. The series of large offensive operations conducted by the ISF in Spring/Summer 2008 have demonstrated the ISF's ability to rapidly deploy in large numbers. However, many units, especially in the IP, remain critically short of equipment. The IA still lacks armor, although a recent purchase of 140 M1A1 Abrams tanks has begun to address this problem. While its independence is increasing, the ISF remains dependant on Coalition support, particularly during combat operations.

- **Metrics:** Multi National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) and the GOI continue to provide misleading and optimistic public reporting and metrics on ISF performance. The ISF is making progress in many areas, but MNF-I and GOI reporting and metrics sharply understate the real-world timelines and efforts needed to deal with problems and delays in shaping credible force plans, getting proper training facilities and throughput, embedding competent advisors, providing effective equipment, fomenting competent Iraqi leaders and force retention, and dealing with ethnic and sectarian issues. Official reporting on the MoI and the IP in particular is misleading. The DoD reports the number of "Trained and Equipped" IA and IP personnel by counting the cumulative total of forces trained since 2003, without reporting on how many of these men are still actually serving, or still have their equipment. This number was recently described by a senior US commander as "worthless." MNSTC-I experts state, however, that."This number allows MNF-I to make a statement about training throughput, hardly a worthless statistic. The senior US commander may be more used to seeing Trained of Assigned-- of those personnel assigned how many are trained. However, in the Iraqi Security Forces where much of the maintenance of data is kept in paper ledgers, this is not an easy statistic to obtain. MoD forces, including Special operations, do not get assigned a unit until those personnel are trained. MoI is currently implementing E-ministries which should allow each individual to be tracked to include training they have received."

- **Turbulence during force expansion:** These problems have been compounded by unrealistic budgets and plans that require progress that cannot be achieved for several years to come. The need to cope with the turbulence caused by a series of new plans that call for expanding Iraqi

forces without proper regard for the trade-offs between force quantity, force quality, financial and manpower resources, and time. Virtually every official timeline for security transition created since 2003 has been overoptimistic. These problems have been made worse by US government progress reporting that lumps together Iraqi units actually capable of independent action with units requiring very different levels of support, as well as reporting that grossly understates real-world dependence on US enablers and partner units. At least some of the the Department of Defense reporting on the progress in Iraqi forces development has has done a major disservice in leading the Congress, Iraqis, and others to have unrealistic expectations of what can be accomplished within a given timeframe.

- **A lack of coherent plans for the future**: No clear unclassified plan now exists to give Iraq all of the capabilities its forces need to assume the counterinsurgency mission. No coherent plan exists to wean the ISF off of dependence on US forces and "enablers" to handle heavy combat, provide airpower and air mobility, artillery and armor, logistics and service support, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R) capabilities, much less develop the land, air, and naval forces it needs to deal with any major outside threat without US support. Deadlines like 2011 have been set for political purposes, not because Iraq and the US have joint and credible plans to make this date feasible either for the counterinsurgency or national defense missions. As one MNSTC_I expert notes, "that both MOI and MOD share the mission of counter insurgency while the MOD has a further mission to protect Iraqi from foreign incursion. Plans include an agreed force structure and training plan while taking into consideration the political state of Iraq. Our military plan changes slightly as often the PM or MoD decides to deviate from coalition plans. A reasonable stable GOI (with regards to planning) should be able to support a "mission complete" for MOD forces; thereafter, force generation and replenishment of forces should fall squarely into the GOI (MOD) hands."

Correcting the Problems in Iraqi Security Forces

The growing numbers of Iraqi security forces are impressive, and Iraqi forces are performing with increasing effectiveness. However, there are still serious ethnic and sectarian divisions and tensions in the Army and National Police.[v] For example, Kurdish-Arab tensions remain a critical problem. As yet, there is no agreed dividing line between Kurdish areas of control and the control of the central government. The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) is a de facto autonomous region but there is no clear constitutional or legal definition of this autonomy.

The KRG also occupies a mix of different provinces in the area that made up the former Kurdish security zone established after the failure of the Kurdish uprising in 1991. This zone dominates Dahuk, Irbil, and Sulayamniyah, and occupies roughly 10% of Iraq's territory. Kurdish forces, however, are also present in parts of Ninevah. Tamim, and Diyala. The Kurds have shown an interest in controlling parts of the greater Mosul area and towns as far south as Sinjar. There is a serious and potentially violent struggle for the control of Kirkuk and the oil fields around it, and for cities in Diyala like Khanqin and Jalawa. This threatens to both divide the ISF along Kurdish and Arab lines, and weaken ISF efforts to fully defeat Al Qa'ida in Iraq.

The entire Kurdish police force and its Peshmerga militia operate independently of the Iraqi Ministries and beyond MNSTC-I's advisory effort. There are two Army divisions that are effectively Kurdish, and two more Kurdish divisions being formed out of the Peshmerga. At least one Kurdish brigade operating in Diyala – the Peshmerga 34th Garmiyan Brigade -- refused orders from the GOI to move in August 2008, and

maintained that it only answered to the KRG. At the same time, local Kurds in Khanaqin demanded that Iraqi Army forces not be sent into the area. The Peshmerga and Kurdish residents of Khanaqin prevented IA units from entering the city, and a tense standoff between the IA and Peshmerga units remained unresolved as of mid September 2008.[vi]

Sunni-Shi'ite tensions are also still a serious issue, compounded by the uncertain future of the Sons of Iraq and efforts to increase the Sunni share of the ISF, and eliminate the sectarian character of some elements like the National Police. In mid August 2008 a Shi'ite emergency response unit under the Ministry of the Interior conducted a "rogue operation" against Iraqi Sunnis in a government complex in Diyala. While a spokesman of the Ministry of Interior stated that the raid was done without authorization, Dr Salim Abdullah al-Juboori of the Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party stated that, "We believe such a raid could not have taken place unless Mr. Maliki at least had prior knowledge of it."[vii] This incident serves to illustrate the larger problem of sectarianism within the various GOI forces. Furthermore, the continued GOI refusal to incorporate large numbers of the SOIs into the ISF could lead to a serious confrontation between the Awakening movement and the GOI.

Sunni-on-Sunni tensions could divide the ISF, as could Shi'ite-on-Shi'ite power struggles. The special groups in the Moqtada Al Sadr's Mahdi Army, and the Iranian support effort for these groups, was severely degraded by US operations during the surge in 2007 and early 2008. The Mahdi Army as a whole has been sharply weakened since the battle of Basra, but cadres and key elements still exist, and at least some elements of the ISF may be loyal to Sadr. Similarly, some elements are dominated by former members of the Badr Brigade. The problems the ISF faces in the future may be shaped more by Arab-Kurd tensions, problems in dealing with the Sons of Iraq and Sunni expectations, and Shi'ite on Shi'ite tensions between the Sadr faction and Maliki's Al Dawa and the SIIC, than by the diminished threat posed by Al Qa'ida in Iraq.

These lingering sectarian and ethnic issues will take time to resolve, and ISF capabilities will be heavily shaped by the future success or failure of Iraqi political accommodation. At the same time, there are many severe qualitative problems in all elements of the ISF. There are major shortages of qualified officers and NCOs, and Iraqi Army forces (currently totaling 180,296 in August 2008) are still in the process of a major expansion. The bulk of the Army still has combat capabilities that make it more a force of battalions than a force that is ready to operate as full brigades and divisions. It is steadily improving, but it will need US partner units; embedded advisors; help with logistics and sustainability; artillery and armor support; air combat and helicopter support; and support in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) for at least several years to come.

For all the progress Iraqi battalions are making in taking the lead, most of the battalions in active combat (91 of 103 as of May 2008) are still "Category II" units that need US aid and support. Only 10% or less of the units "in the lead" are really ready to operate on their own. This is why both the Iraqi Minister of Defense and the most senior US military advisors have talked about timelines such as 2012 for the Iraqi Army to take over the counterinsurgency mission. The ability to conduct the counterinsurgency mission is

also scarcely an ability to defend and deter against foreign pressure or military action. In fact, there still is no clear plan to rebuild Iraqi Army forces into a true national army as distinguished from a counterinsurgency force, and Iraq already faces the threat of pressure from Iran and Iranian support of elements of the JAM and other militias.

Readiness and force development problems are even more critical in the case of the Iraqi Air Force (1,887 paid personnel as of end June, 2008), and Navy, (1,872 paid personnel as of end June, 2008). The Air Force and Navy still do not have clear procurement plans to acquire the combat systems they need. They are making real progress, but they remain cadres that are years away from becoming mature forces. How many years? Once again, there still is no agreed plan to make them into the kind of forces Iraq needs to deter its enemies and defend its interests.

In fact, Iraqi and US leaders seem to have agreed on possible timelines for US withdrawal without any clear plan or even a serious examination of what it will take to ensure that Iraqi forces can and will be ready to operate without US support and security guarantees. This will be a critical priority for action in 2009 if a 2011 deadline for withdrawal is to involve minimal risk. Readying the ISF in time will also mean eliminating most of the 6 month delay in US process of arms sales and deliveries – and the 12 month Iraqi delay in planning and executing them – that now places basic limits on force expansion.

What is equally serious is that Iraq needs effective police forces and a local rule of law to go from "win" to "hold," and government services and local development and economic activity to go from "Win and hold" to "win, hold, and build." This is not happening. There was no "year of the police" in 2007 and there is no “year of the police” in 2008. The US is still experimenting with how to train and equip the police and other security forces, and there are major shortfalls in police and other Ministry of Interior advisors, Iraqi leader, equipment, and facilities.

The National Police (39,739 personnel as of August 2008) are making progress, and are far less tied to Shi’ite sectarian influence, but only have around 40% of the officers and NCOs they need. The regular Iraqi police – the core of local security – generally have only token training and token capability. State Department reports show a total strength of 299,170 personnel as of August 2008 and only 62% would be "trained" -- even if all trained Iraqi police were still in service. The reality is that desertions and departures have probably reduced the number of trained forces actually in service to around 40%.

Once again, Iraqi and US leaders seem to have agreed on possible timelines for US withdrawal without any clear plan, or serious examination of what it will take to ensure that Iraqi police forces and a local rule of law effective. This too will be a critical priority for action in 2009 if a 2011 deadline for withdrawal is to involve minimal risk

The Interaction Between The Development of Iraqi Security Forces and Solving the Broader Problems in promoting Stability

Security forces are only part of the issues involved in shaping conditions-based US withdrawals. The timing and nature of Iraq's elections – both local/provincial and national – remains uncertain. It is certain, however, that they will again create tension between Iraq's sectarian and ethnic groups, and there will be new intra-Shi'ite and intra-Sunni power struggles as well. Neither Iraq's exile-party-dominated central government, nor its national Sunni parties have ever faced truly competitive and fully democratic elections where Iraq's people get to vote for more than closed lists and largely unknown politicians.

Three key elements could turn violent: the Sadr movement and JAM, the Sunni "Sons of Iraq," and the Kurdish, Arab and minority factions along the ethnic fault line in the north. There also are still major problems in mixed areas, particularly Baghdad, Diyala, and the greater Kirkuk and Mosul areas. Moreover, Al Qa'ida in Iraq has shown that it can sustain its past levels of potentially destabilizing suicide bombings in spite of its defeats and the reductions in virtually every other kind of attack.

US forces may not be popular, but they do have a stabilizing effect that helps damp down the risk that these power struggles may turn violent. This stabilizing effect is also likely to increase during the critical transition period involving elections and political accommodation if it is clear to Iraqis that the US is leaving, and their own forces and government are taking over. On the one hand, setting broad targets for US withdrawal can help. On the other hand, enforcing the wrong targets could push US forces and influence out too quickly if things do not go extraordinarily smoothly. If things go wrong, or there are delays, a year or two more of a limited US presence might make all the difference.

Both Iraqi and US leaders also need to be more realistic about the real glue that can bind Iraqis together into some form of stable political accommodation. Elections are important, but money and oil revenues are at least equally important and are the prize in Iraqi politics. Iraq is making slow progress in using its money, but it has no oil law, no accepted plan to develop its resources, and no ability as yet to spend on the overall development of its petroleum and electricity sectors. Iraq also has vast numbers of unemployed and underemployed young men; there is no viable business sector or free market, and virtually all job creation comes from government spending on either the security forces or civil service and government-dominated industries.

This lack of governance, rule of law, essential and government services, and government spending helps create further sectarian and ethnic problems for the ISF, as well as forcing the ISF to deal with high levels of crime and corruption. It is still more dangerous to be a policeman than a soldier, and police support and facilities are inadequate. Even where sectarian and ethnic issues are not a major factor, the police still tend to be passive unless paid to act, and to force confessions rather than investigate and gather evidence.

At present, the Iraqi central government only seems to have spent about 18% of its development funds for FY2008, in spite of accounting tricks the Iraqi Ministry of Finance has used to claim that the Iraqi central government has brought the total up to 57%. The limited data available indicate that the flow of money has left key provinces like Anbar with little real spending, and that the critical oil and electricity ministries are counting "advances" that may not actually be spend until 2009 or beyond as actual expenditures.

A continued US troop presence is not the answer to the lack, or mismanagement, of government spending -- although US advisors are still critical to the reform and effectiveness of the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. A combination of US help in enforcing stability, coupled with the presence of civilian US advisors is, however, potentially critical to assisting and encouraging Iraq to spend its money. US influence has so far proved vital in pushing Iraq's leaders to spend in ways that show all factions they can get a fair share, and buying time for the post-election mix of central, provincial, and local government officials to work out a practical way to spend their budgets.

Here, it is critical to remember that money, governance, and government services are the critical "build" element in "win, hold, and build." Until Iraq is successful here, Iraq and the US need to be as cautious about eliminating a stabilizing US presence as they need to be about eliminating US forces before Iraqi security forces and the rule of law are ready. Joint, real world US and Iraqi planning and cooperation to achieve these goals will be just as high a priority for the next Administration(s) as creating effective Iraqi forces.

Iraqi Force Development and Conditions-Based Withdrawals

None of these points mean that the US should not agree to Iraqi efforts to set potential goals for withdrawal or that 2011 is a bad goal. Neither the US or Iraq have reason to want US forces to stay any longer than necessary, and creating a joint set of pressures for the US to leave as soon as possible is likely to be more constructive than destructive. *At the same time, both Iraq and the US now need to develop far clearer plans for such a transition, determine what goals are really feasible, and be prepared for problems and delays.*

They also need to make most of the details of such plans unclassified and actively communicate them to the legislatures, political leaders, media, and people of Iraq and the United States. It is particularly important that Iraqis understand how fact the ISF can develop and that the US has no intention of maintaining even an advisory or support presence that is not a response to the desires of the Iraqi government. “Conditions-based withdrawals cannot simply be based on Iraqi security needs, they also must consider how strongly Iraqis want the US and other Coalition forces to leave and the negative impact of a US presence on Iraqi politics and public opinion.

Iraqis need to understand that the US is committed to helping Iraq achieve full sovereignty and fully end its security dependence on the US, and that the US really is willing to totally withdraw all of its forces. They need to see that progress is occurring as rapidly as is feasible given the security situation and speed with which the ISF can be

made effective, and that the US is not favoring any sect or ethnic group and is steadily letting Iraq take charge of the force development effort. Americans need to see that there is a clear end game that can result in success and in an end to a US combat presence and the spending of US resources.

The resulting mix of real-world planning and real-world conditions in Iraq may well lead to pauses in US withdrawals. It may well prove harder to go below the level of 4-6 US combat brigades in a strategic overwatch role than either Iraq or the US desires, or the goals set in a document like a Status of Forces Agreement call for. Iraq may need US air, naval, and IS&R support well beyond 2011, as well as large teams of US advisors.

If so, it will scarcely hurt Iraqi sovereignty to wait a few years for total US withdrawal. If the US presence continues to be stabilizing, a slower pace of withdrawals might lead to more Iraqi political accommodation, allow the pace of development to increase, and give Iraqi forces time to become fully capable of defending the country without US support. This may not prove necessary, and every month should see the Iraqi take more control and the US carefully assess what troop cuts it can make. The history of states facing a predicament similar to Iraq's present position, however, shows that time and patience is critical. Stability takes as long as it takes to build, and no one can win if the result of rushing forward is sectarian and ethnic violence, and/or politics that exacerbate conflict rather than produce lasting stability.

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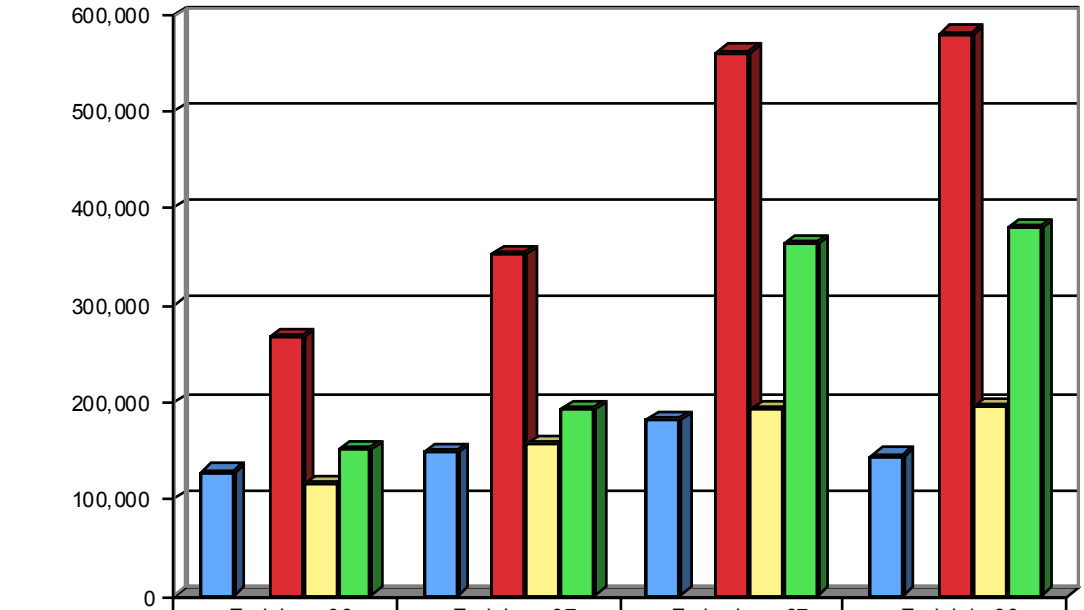
US Versus Iraqi Force Levels

Americans and Iraqis share a common goal. Both want to see the US withdraw as soon as Iraq can defend itself and as soon as Iraq can reach the level of political accommodation needed to provide both stability and security. The majority of Iraqis, excepting the Kurds, have long wanted US forces to leave as soon as Iraq became secure. American popular opinion supports such US force cuts. Equally important, the US has other priorities like Afghanistan and reducing US deployment levels and rates to preserve its all volunteer force structure.

Figure 1 shows that Iraq is already making major progress towards developing forces of the size it needs to take over the counterinsurgency mission, and defend the nation. It shows that US forces have begun to decline since the height of the "surge," and it should be noted that these levels will drop by another 8,000 US military in early 2009 according to the plans set forth by President Bush in September 2008. It also shows, however, that US force levels still remain high. These forces do more that fight insurgents like Al Qa'ida in Iraq. They help secure large parts of the country against sectarian and ethnic violence, and are critical to training and supporting Iraqi forces in the field. Accordingly, the key question is how soon and how safely can US forces turn the security mission over to Iraqi forces.

Figure 1: US versus Iraqi Force Levels: 2006, 2007, and 2008-



	End June 06	End June 07	Early June 07	End July 08
Total US	128,798	150,336	182,060	146,000
-				
Total Iraqi	268,400	353,100	561,963	580,970
Total Iraqi Mol	116,100	158,900	193,324	196,362
Total Iraqi Mol	152,300	194,200	365,030	380,826

Source: US State Department, Iraq: Weekly Status Report, various editions; JoAnne O'Bryant and Michael Waterhouse, US forces in Iraq, CRS RS22449, July 24, 2008, p. 5. Data for Iraqi forces are for assigned personnel. US troop levels for end August are taken from Associated Press, Sep 4, 2008 (9:21 a.m.)

Iraq's Real World Performance in Combat: The Battle for Basra, the South, and Baghdad

The most critical near-term factor in the development of Iraqi forces is how soon and how well they can replace US and allied forces in defeating Al Qa'ida (AQI) in Iraq, and in bringing stability and security in ways that put an end to ethnic and sectarian conflicts and infighting, and give ordinary Iraqis day to day security. The "Battle for Basra," which began in March 2008, marks the first major stage in central government efforts to take over the direction of the fighting, and has been followed by a several major operations across the country.

The Battle for Basra: Setting the Stage in Southern Iraq

The central government had three major reasons to act in Basra. One reflected its own interests. If Al Dawa and ISCI were to control the south, they had to control Basra, which was the most critical economic prize in the country, the source of most of its oil exports and overall imports, the location of Um Qasr (Iraq's biggest port), and a key to

dominating Shi'ite politics. The second was the need to deal with crime, violence, and intra-Shi'ite power struggles that affected the life of ordinary citizens. The third was to better Maliki's political position in light of the coming provincial elections.

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

According to Rob Tinline, a spokesman for a British PRT, "They have these overlapping spheres of gangsterism and politics, militias and legitimate businesses, and legitimate politics."[viii] The areas of control of each faction were well-defined: "Fadhila controls the electricity sector and shares power with the Mahdi at the ports; Dawa and Fadhila have a strong grip in the lucrative southern oil operations, and a different branch of Dawa — the one to which Mr. Maliki belongs — holds sway at the Basra airport."[ix] The Fadhila party also controlled the dockworker's union. The rampant corruption of Fadhila, combined with the decrepit state of Um Qasr's infrastructure, made the port extremely inefficient.[x]

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

All of these issues were apparent during a visit in February 2008, and additional problems affected all of the other Shi'ite dominated provinces in the South. ISCI had de facto control over the Shi'ite governorates in the south, extensive influence over the IA, and was steadily expanding its influence and sometimes control over the Iraqi police. It was clearly positioning itself for power struggle with Sadr and for any elections to come. It also was positioning itself to support Hakim's call for a nine-governorate Shi'ite federation -- a call that had clear Iranian support. Sadr's supporters complained of increasing harassment from the ISF, including the detention of hundreds of JAM members, and even torture and abuse.[xi]

US experts working in the southern governorates made it clear that these appointments by the central government had no real popular base. If local and provincial elections were held with open lists, it was likely that ISCI and Dawa would lose most elections because

they are seen as having failed to bring development and government services. Members of the US team differed over how much the Sadrists had a popular base and broad support among the poor Shi'ite Iraqis in the south, and how well the Sadrists could do in any provincial and local elections, although most felt Sadr still had a broad base of support in Baghdad.

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

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

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

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

In response to the mounting violence and entrenched corruption in Basra, a number of senior Iraqi officials announced a campaign, in mid March, 2008 to reassert control of the city and of Iraq's main port, Um Qasr. Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih stated that the move to retake the port would "definitely" involve an Iraqi troop buildup, and could also involve Coalition troops.[xviii] According to Mowaffak al-Rubaie, the Iraqi National

Security Advisor, "Whoever gets in the way [of the ISF's re-taking Um Qasr] will be dealt with swiftly, decisively, and with no mercy."[xix] It appears, however, that this operation to reassert control in Basra, originally scheduled for July 2008, was launched far sooner than originally planned, leading to a bloody battle with the JAM and an embarrassment for the ISF.

The Government Offensive in March 2008

The ISF launched a major offensive against JAM forces in Basra in late March 2008. Roughly 6,600 troops were brought in to reinforce the 30,000 ISF personnel already stationed in Basra.[xx] Six IA brigades were amassed in and around Basra, and 16,000 police officers were stationed in the city.[xxi] The resulting offensive was later described by President Bush as a "defining moment" in Iraq's history, but it occurred with little preparation by the ISF or coordination with MNF-I forces.[xxii]

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

The ISF began its offensive against militia forces and JAM strongholds in Basra on March 25. [xxiii] The operation, dubbed "Operation Knights Assault," initially involved as many as 15,000 Iraqi Army soldiers and was personally overseen by Prime Minister Maliki.[xxiv] Several other Iraqi officials accompanied Maliki down to Basra, high ranking MoD officials, Interior Minister Jawad al-Boulany, and Minister of State for National Security Shirwan al-Waely.[xxv]

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

PM Maliki issued a 72-hour ultimatum on that called for militants to lay down their arms and sign a pledge renouncing violence, or else "they [would] face the most severe penalties."[xxvii] Maliki stated: "Those who were deceived into carrying weapons must deliver themselves and make a written pledge to promise that they will not repeat such action within 72 hours. Otherwise, they will face the most severe penalties."[xxviii] In practice, however, the ISF had not been give the time to properly prepare and deploy and many of its units were in serious trouble.

The fighting also spread to Kut and neighborhoods in southern Baghdad when Mahdi Army fighters captured, stripped, and then released a number of Iraqi police officers.[l] The fighting eventually spread to Hillah, Karbala, Najaf, Diwaniyah, Nasiriyah, and

Amarah. Police vehicles were burnt and weapons taken in the attack. In Baghdad rocket and mortar attacks originating in Sadr City landed on the Green Zone.

This forced MNF-I forces to intervene. US and British aircraft, and various British and US units -- including special forces -- began to provide air support as the ISF stalled. Only limited numbers of Coalition ground forces were involved in the operation in Basra, aside from an unreported number of Special Forces and embedded trainers. [xxix]

Maj. Gen. Kevin Bergner, a spokesman for the MNF-I, stated that the only Coalition forces in Basra were the typical contingent of transition teams working with the ISF, adding "And we do not have any conventional forces there."[xxx] Nevertheless, two senior American military officers — a member of the Navy Seals and a Marine major general — were sent to Basra to help coordinate the Iraqi planning, the military officials said. Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division were pressed into service as combat advisers while air controllers were positioned to call in air strikes on behalf of beleaguered Iraqi units. American transport planes joined the Iraqis in ferrying supplies to Iraqi troops.

It is also important to note that the US was actually better prepared, and had laid more ground work for Iraqi and US success, than was made public at the time. The US had greatly improved its intelligence and targeting coverage of the Mahdi Army and particularly the more extreme elements within it during the course of 2007. The US had also used special forces, and other elements of US forces, in a quiet campaign that had sharply reduced Iranian support of the Mahdi Army and "special groups," and targeted the most radical and dangerous elements of the Sadr movement. In spite of the lack of warning from Maliki, the US was much better prepared to assist in dealing with Sadr, and Sadr had also seen how effective the US could be in targeting and attacking elements of the Mahdi Army.

This aid gave Iraqi Army units time to reinforce key points and organize themselves for the fighting, and the ISF became more effective.[xxxi] These improvements included some mixed Shi'ite-Sunni units like the 1st and 7th Divisions, which initially performed poorly and need time to regroup.[xxxii]

Iraqi Army forces gained the initiative during the next few days. Maliki issued an offer of money to Mahdi fighters willing to turn in their weapons on Friday, March 28, when the ISF proved unable to take many JAM strongholds.[xxxiii] Few JAM fighters took the offer, but the JAM was now losing most tactical engagements, and the fighting increasingly threatened Sadr's ability to act as a political force in Iraq.
This may explain the pressures that led Sadr to agree to the ceasefire that went into effect on March 31st, although he evidently did so after some Iranian encouragement.[xxxiv]

This ended much of the violence in Basra, although some violence continued on a much smaller scale. The ISF was able to effectively control Basra after this new ceasefire, and Sadr had never revoked his previous general ceasefire -- despite all of the fighting. He only called for nationwide civil disobedience once the fighting began, though some of the

Mahdi Army involved in the fighting cited an earlier statement by Sadr that appeared to grant Sadrist fighters the right to self-defense.[xxxv]

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

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

It is important to note that the political motives behind the fighting were mixed. Much of the media coverage of the fighting in the south assumed that Moqtada al-Sadr and the Sadr militia were the "spoilers," or bad guys, and that the government forces were the legitimate side and bringing order. There was considerable truth in this assumption, but it was also an oversimplification. There is no question that many elements of the JAM have been guilty of sectarian cleansing, and that the Sadr movement in general is hostile to the US and is seeking to enhance Moqtada al-Sadr's political power. There is also no doubt that the rogue elements in the JAM were violent extortionists who continued acts of violence in spite of the ceasefire, and that some had ties to Iran and Iranian training and support. No one can romanticize the Sadr movement, understate the risks it presents, or ignore the actions of the extreme elements of the JAM.

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

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

ISF Performance in the Battle for Basra

In spite of its successes and the final results of the battle, many aspects of the ISF's performance were a disappointment to the central government. The failures of the ISF in the battle of Basra can be broken down into 3 general categories:

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

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

- **Logistics:** The ISF was poorly provisioned in Basra, and there were reports of ammunition and even food shortages, although once again some of these problems occurred because the Prime Minister rushed Iraqi forces into battle. There were also problems with using equipment effectively in the urban combat environment; or example, IA armored vehicles were too wide to fit in the narrow alleys of Basra. The Iraqi Air Force did, however, perform well in ISR and supply missions.

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

The positive side of the issues encountered in Basra is that senior elements of the GOI and the ISF became aware of these problems, and are now trying to correct them. According to Brigadier General Steven L. Salazar, Deputy Commanding General, Coalition Army Advisory Training Team, MNSTC-I, the problems revealed during the battle for Basra prompted an Iraqi-led lessons-learned process that went all the way up the chain of command to the Prime Minster himself.[xxxix]

Loyalty and Desertions

Loyalty was a key issue. Some poorly performing units were clearly not loyal to the central government, and there were outright desertions by some soldiers and police officers. The exact numbers of desertions, defections, and personnel refusing to fight remains unclear. Reports emerged in the week following the ceasefire that more than 1,000 ISF soldiers and policemen either refused to fight or abandoned their posts. Some ISF personnel even shed their uniforms, kept their weapons, and joined the JAM.[xl] While

most of the deserters were low-level soldiers or police, officers also deserted, including at least 2 senior officers. Iraqi estimates of the number of officers who deserted varied from several dozen to more than 100.[xli]

Some sources claimed there were worse problems with desertions. One Iraqi official, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated that as many as 30% of the ISF personnel involved had abandoned the fight by the time the cease-fire was reached. Some IPs had even gone over to fight for JAM. He added that the ISF was hindered by food and ammunition shortages, not surprising considering the logistics problems mentioned elsewhere in this report.[xlii] The ISF continued to lack fire discipline, wasting huge quantities of ammunition by firing indiscriminately.[xliii]

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

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

While the exact details remain unclear, it appears that an entire IA brigade (most likely the brigade mentioned by the British officer above) disintegrated during the fighting. The *Long War Journal* reported that the 52nd brigade of the 14th IA division deserted almost in its entirety, and its equipment may have been turned over to the JAM.[xlv] The 52nd brigade was one of the newest in the IA, having graduated from the Besmaya Unit Set Fielding Program on Feb. 18, 2008.[xlvi]

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

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

Planning

Planning for the assault was clearly flawed, as was initial coordination with the US and MNF-I. The GOI had been planning an operation in Basra for months, and had set up an operational command center there for that purpose. Yet the operation was scheduled to take place over the summer, and sufficient assets were not in place by late March. Yet Maliki apparently decided to launch the offensive on March 25, in response to the escalating violence in Basra. [xlviii]

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

Ambassador Crocker had been led to expect a gradual operation, building up ISF forces and squeezing militia groups in Basra.[l] While he stated that he knew the ISF was planning a Basra operation, he stated on April 3rd "I was not expecting frankly a major battle from day one. But then again it's not clear to me that they'd decided that's what they were going to do. The enemy has a vote in combat." The US was unaware of the size and pace of the operation beforehand, and its military and political efforts to aid the GOI were largely improvised. [li]

The poor planning of the assault was compounded by the confusing chain of command in the ISF. The DoD noted in early March, 2008, (before the Basra operation commenced) that:

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

The DoD added in its June, 2008 Quarterly Report that:

> Poorly defined lines of command and control continue to inhibit planning, decision making and the ability to execute coordinated operations at all levels. Decision-making remains centralized at the highest level, often bypassing key elements of the chain of command. The inability of the MoD and JHQ to delegate authority to subordinate organizations hampers overall effectiveness. For example, ministerial approval is still required for MTOE development, international training assignments and materiel distribution.[liii]

Many US officials portray ISF performance in a positive light in spite of these problems, and not without some justification. US National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley stated that he believed that the Iraqi government's efforts against the militias were "an indication of the continued maturation of this government in its willingness and capacity

to take increasing responsibility for security."[liv] Yet, anonymous Pentagon sources have been less positive, stating that reports from the Basra area indicated that militiamen had overrun a number of police stations and that it was unclear how well the Iraqi security forces were performing overall.[lv]

The Mahdi Army also did stand its ground until Sadr accepted an Iranian-brokered ceasefire. The JAM even gained control of five districts in Kut and fought police in two neighborhoods in the center of Hilla. One senior MoD official believed that "If the British and American forces were not there, the Mahdi Army would have gained a victory."[lvi] Maj. Gen. Kevin Bergner, in an understatement typical of official US reporting on the ISF, stated only that the ISF have "had some tough encounters in their initial day or so of operations."[lvii]

The other elements of the ISF also performed less well than the Iraqi Army. One Western official estimated that IP desertions were as high as 50% in JAM stronghold such as Sadr city and parts of Basra.[lviii] The MoI announced that 407 police officers had been fired in Basra for involvement with militias. Another 60-man unit was fired in Al-Fajr for collusion with Shi'ite extremists.[lix]

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

Maliki also announced the hiring of some 10,000 Shi'ite tribesmen into the IA and IP following the ISF failures in Basra.[lxiii] This move was portrayed as a way to stabilize the area. However, it was not clear who these 10,000 new recruits were, and if they were actually from local tribes or were simply Badr Brigade members recruited to replace the ISF members sympathetic to the JAM who had quit or been fired in the wake of the Basra fighting.[lxiv]

The IA commander in Basra, Lt. Gen. Mohan al-Fraiji, and the IP commander in Basra Gen. Jaleel Khalaf, were removed from their posts and sent to MoD jobs in Baghdad in mid April. While the move was characterized by MoD officials as routine, many saw it as a response to the widespread criticism of the planning of the operation.[lxv] `

Logistics and Support

Some IA logistical units performed well, and the ISF was able to transport a large number of troops and supplies down to Basra in a relatively short period of time. The IAF flew over 100 missions in support of the ISF, fulfilling "100 percent of all requests from Basra."[lxvi] Two C-130 transport planes and Iraqi Huey and Mi-17 Hip multi-mission helicopters were involved in the operation. More than 500 IA soldiers were sent to Basra by air. [lxvii] The IA also conducted more than 50 ISR missions.[lxviii] However, the IA has little armed combat support capability, and all of those missions were carried out by the Coalition

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

The Battle for Sadr City

Partly in response to the ISF offensive in Basra, JAM forces began launching rocket attacks on the Green Zone in Baghdad from Sadr City. This prompted a Coalition-led offensive to secure Sadr City. Coalition forces were much more heavily involved in these operations than they were in Basra. Only two Iraqi brigades, roughly 2,000 to 3,000 soldiers, were deployed for operations in Sadr City.[lxix]

While the ISF forces involved did not experience massive desertions as they did in Basra, ISF performance was still lacking, even in the role of supporting US troops.
By mid April, most of Sadr City remained under JAM control despite heavy fighting, although a walled-off section had been taken by ISF and Coalition forces.[lxx] This walled-off section covered the southernmost third of Sadr City, and was the area from which many rocket and mortar attacks on the Green Zone had been launched.

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

ISF forces were, however, able to deploy throughout much of Sadr City on May 20th, 2008. This operation, dubbed 'Operation Salam,' was not an advance under hostile fire, as most JAM forces obeyed the ceasefire.[lxxiv] The ISF, without Coalition troops (evidently including their embedded advisors), took up a number of positions in Sadr City, establishing checkpoints and strongpoints. The political headquarters of the Sadrist movement was surrounded by IA armored vehicles. Six battalions, including a number of armored vehicles, entered and took up positions in Sadr City.[lxxv] Between 4,000 and 5,000 IA soldiers were operating within Sadr City as of May 20th, 2008, without any major incidents.[lxxvi]

Since May, the ISF has occupied Sadr city without any major resistance from the JAM. The GOI and Coalition began a large program of reconstruction and aid in Sadr city that was ongoing as of September 2008.

The Battle for Mosul

In a striking and positive development, the largely intra-Shi'ite fighting in Basra and Sadr City did not halt the fight against Al Qa'ida. The battle against Al Qa'ida had shifted dramatically in the fall of 2007, and the role of the ISF continued to shift in response. During the rest of 2007, the surge of US troops, and increasing ISF activity combined

with the awakening movement and the SOI, put Al Qa'ida on the defensive and drove it from much of Baghdad and Anbar. By early 2008, the largest remaining urban Al Qa'ida stronghold was in Mosul. After a series of bombings there in mid January 2008, Prime Minister Maliki promised a "decisive" offensive to destroy AQI in Mosul.[lxxvii]

Unlike most previous major operations against AQI, the battle to drive Al Qa'ida from the Mosul area and its remaining positions in the northwest was largely led by IA forces. The US troop presence in Mosul remained relatively small, at 1,900 troops.[lxxviii] Previous major operations against Al Qa'ida have involved more than 10,000 US troops.

The IA had around 7,000 troops in or around Mosul, most in the Iraqi 2nd and 3rd divisions, some of the best in the IA. An additional battalion from the Iraqi second division was added before the offensive, and the addition of another (700 person) battalion was planned. Additionally, 2 more IA battalions were planned to deploy to western Ninewa, and the MoI announced that 3,000 additional police officers would be dispatched to reinforce Mosul.[lxxix] In all, roughly 18,200 ISF forces, both IA and IP were involved in operations in Mosul by February 2008. Additionally, an Iraqi operations command to coordinate the offensive, was set up in February, and was due to be completed by April.[lxxx]

Serious problems did remain in ISF forces. Iraqi officers complained of a lack of trucks, weapons, and ammunition.[lxxxi] Brigadier-General Nourdeen Hussein Tartar stated that for a brigade of 3,000 men he had only 53 combat vehicles, 11 of which are damaged.[lxxxii] According to Sgt. James Luce "Al Qa'ida is better equipped and better trained than they [the IA] are. Without us out here, they don't stand a chance."[lxxxiii]

The police force, which played a key role in efforts to hold ground taken from Al Qa'ida, remained badly underequipped. According to Hassan Abdallah, a Mosul police captain, he and his men must buy their own uniforms, and lack winter gear. "We have no government support," he stated.[lxxxiv] These problems were aggravated by sectarian tensions. Mosul is a largely Sunni city, but the ISF in the area is seen as being led by Kurds. The unpopularity of the ISF partially explains why very few SOI groups have been created in the area.

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

On May 10, 2008, however, US and Iraqi forces launched a major offensive, dubbed 'Lions Roar,' in Mosul.[lxxxvi] Maliki, repeating his actions in Basra, took personal charge of the offensive on May 14.[lxxxvii] Al Qa'ida was apparently unable to organize a coherent defense after months of successful ISF/Coalition offensives throughout central, western, and northern Iraq, and did not put up a fierce resistance. According to Maj. Gen. Mark Hertling, 1,200 militants were captured in the crackdown, about 200 of whom were believed to be members of "terrorist organizations."[lxxxviii] Hertling also added that the

number of daily attacks in Mosul had dropped 85% since the beginning of the operation.[lxxxix]

The offensive did not defeat AQI and its supporters, however, as much as suppress and displace them. AQI still had significant cadres in the greater Mosul area at the beginning of September 2008, and was able to carry out low level attacks and bombings. The ISF still was slow to react in conducting operations, and its operational security was often poor. As a result, AQI forces either dispersed before the ISF closed on their location, or put up a short fight and then dispersed.

The Battle for Diyala

Some of the same problems occurred in Diyala. The ISF launched a major offensive in late July 2008, which was only briefed to US commanders on July 29th. This time, however, the battle plan was considerably better developed. Lt, General Ali Gaidan Majidran, the commander of the offensive, was able to give a sophisticated presentation, using three dimensional maps and clearly defined troop positions. The Iraqi 1st Division, one of the first formed in the new Iraqi Army, also showed that experience did give Iraqi forces the ability to operate largely on their own, although the Iraqi forces had substantial US aid and air support, and fought with the aid of the US Army 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.[xc]

As was the case in Mosul, however, the resulting offensive did not defeat AQI as much as suppress and displace it. AQI still had significant cadres at the beginning of September 2008, and was able to carry out low level attacks and bombings. There also was sometimes significant tension between the IA units and Iraqi police and local Sunni leaders and the Sons of Iraq.

More generally, it is important to note that Iraqi operations have often displaced or dispersed elements of Al Qa'ida in Iraq and the Mahdi Army rather than actively defeated them. They also have often been heavily dependent on US "enablers" and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R) support. There is an important difference between growing capability and success and the ability to stand alone. The ISF's success has to be kept in proportion. The image of independence is not yet the reality.

The Broader Challenges: National Unity, Political Accommodation, and Governance: The Ability to "Hold" and "Build"

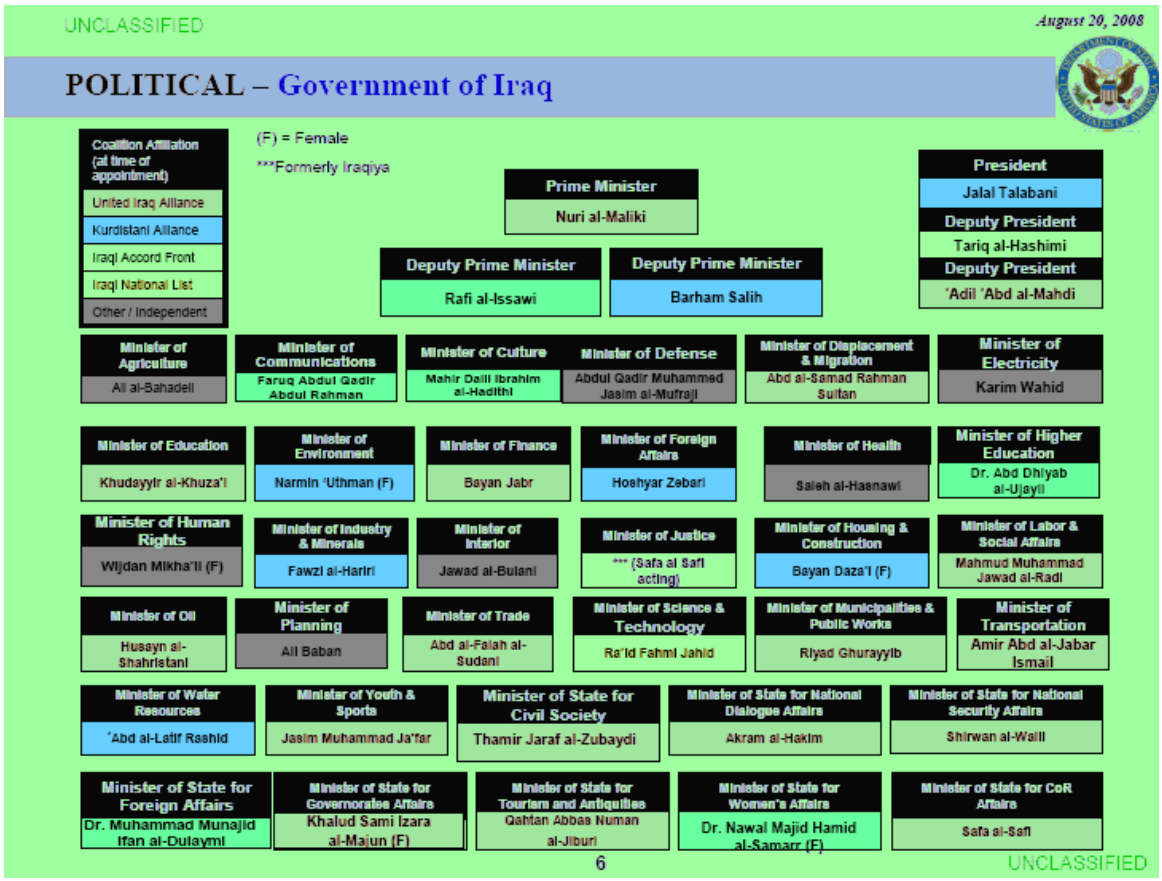
The victories that Iraqi and Coalition forces have won to date may have largely dealt with the "win" aspects of a "win, hold, and build" strategy, but this is only part of the story. The future of Iraq's security forces, and Iraq's future security and stability, will depend on how well the force development effort is supported by political accommodation and effective governance at the national, province, and local level. Such progress is necessary not only to consolidate the gains made against AQI and the JAM, but it is critical to both avoiding new forms of sectarian and ethnic conflict, and to giving the ISF the mix of civilian partners that will allow Iraq to "build and hold" as well as to win. Conditions-based US withdrawals need to be tied to these developments as well as to the progress in developing the Iraqi security forces.

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

Figure 2 shows the formal structure of the Iraqi government. The US does not report officially on the problems created by the personalities at the top of the Iraqi security structure, and the way that they organize and function. It is a reality, however, that the top levels of government are divided along ethnic and sectarian lines; there are deep internal rivalries for power. Any visitor to Iraq who travels outside the Green Zone learns how often Iraqi commanders and officials criticize the central government for taking forever to decide and coordinate, for making sectarian and ethnic choices in recruiting, promotion, the supply of equipment and ammunition, and similar issues.

There is no way to determine how many of the complaints that the Prime Minister's office is directly to blame for such decisions are valid. Such complaints are so common, however, that they illustrate one of the key problems that will affect the speed with which the US can safely withdraw from Iraq without creating problems in Iraqi stability.

Figure 2: The Current Structure of the Iraqi Government



Source: Bureau of the Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State, Iraq: Weekly Status Report, August 20, 2008, p. 6.

Progress and Non-Progress Towards Political Accommodation

The key challenge, however, is not the role of the Prime Minister's office, or of the Iraqi central government, but the need for the kind of political accommodation that will allow the ISF to function as a non-sectarian and non-ethnic, truly national, force; and allow the Iraqi central government and national command authority to act in the nation's interest, rather than that of competing sects and ethnic groups.

As Figure 3 shows, Iraq has not completed much of legislation and actions necessary for political accommodation. The list in this figure is focused on US benchmarks that often do not reflect real world Iraqi priorities and needs, and does not include key issues like a referendum on the Kurdish area (Article 140), the futures of the sons of Iraq, repatriation/resettlement of over four million displaced persons (at least 15% of the population) other areas of the constitution, and defining the role of Islam in the state and the rule of law.

The US State Department provides a different list in its weekly status reports on Iraq, and one that highlights additional tasks and challenges:[xci]

-
- **Provincial Elections:** Passed July 22; vetoed July 26. Negotiations continued after the scheduled July 30 recess but no compromise was reached. The CoR recessed August 6and is scheduled to reconvene on September 9 after summer recess.
- **Hydrocarbons Package:** The level of control allocated to the central government in the July 2007 draft version of the Framework Law (currently in CoR Committee) is the key point of disagreement; there may be more progress on the Revenue Management Law, currently with the Shura Council, in the coming months.
- **Amnesty Law:** Passed: CoR approved the law on February 13; the law was signed by the Presidency Council February 26 and was implemented March 2.
- **Pensions Amendment**: Passed: Published in the Official Gazette December 2007.
- **De-Ba'athification:** Passed: Approved by default by the Presidency Council February 2008. Reform published in the Official Gazette in mid-February.
- **Provincial Powers:** Passed: CoR approved the law on February 13; the Presidency Council vetoed the law, February 26. The veto was rescinded on March19, allowing the law to take effect.
- **Refugee Update:** Iraqi refugees in the region: 2-2.4 million, Internally displaced persons in Iraq: 2.7 million. The U.S. expects to admit 12,000 Iraqi refugees in FY08; 10,477refugees have been admitted thus far in FY08. 12,085 Iraqi refugees have been admitted since FY07.

Key Issues and Tensions

It should be stressed that passing laws does not mean implementing them – either fairly or at all -- and that only sustained government action will produce real political accommodation. Iraq needs time and aid to properly function as a central government and reach the necessary level of political accommodation to support national stability and security.

It is easy to blame the Prime Minister's office, but much of the problem is the widespread tension between Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, and Kurd, and the fact that key

political compromises have not yet been reached between them. The unity and effectiveness of Iraqi security forces cannot be separated from progress in political accommodation at the national, governorate, and local level. Military forces can "win," but "build" and "hold" require unified and effective governance, and this is still very much a work in progress.

There are still grave questions about what will happen if Iraq does not hold fair and open local/provincial elections. The same questions arise as to what will happen if Iraq does not resolve the issues affecting the development of the oil sector and oil revenues, or does not show it can spend its national budget in ways that share the money properly between sectarian and ethnic factions. The success and national character of the ISF will be critically dependent on how well the top levels of Iraq's government and political leadership deal with these and the other crucial aspects of political accommodation.

Critical security issues jeopardize Iraqi force development in many ways. It is all very well, for example, to talk about disarming militias, but Iraq is now a country whose citizens are heavily armed, where many factions still have hidden significant numbers of weapons, and where Article 117 of the constitution allows each "region" to organize internal security forces, a provision which already legalizes the Kurds' *Peshmerga* militia.[xcii]

The Arab-Kurd-Turcoman-minority issue goes far beyond Kirkuk. It affects every part of the "ethnic fault line" from the area around Mosul to the Iranian border. The Arab-Kurd-Turcoman-minority issue is also an issue where US negotiators and the US presence in Iraq do provide a considerable stabilizing influence. Iraqi talks and the UN negotiating effort may well resolve this issue without Iraqi violence, but it is a key "conditions-based" factor that should influence the pace of US withdrawals.

There are still serious Arab Shi'ite-Arab Sunni tensions at both the top of the government and throughout mixed areas in Iraq. They also affect day-to-day military, National Police, and police operations. Baghdad is still secured in part by the divisions put in place by US forces during the surge. Shi'ite-Sunni tensions still are high in mixed areas like Mosul and Diyala, and the US presence has a major stabilizing impact. Once again, Iraqi progress may well remove the need for such US efforts, but the timing of such progress is far from clear.

Figure 3: Iraqi Progress in Political Accommodation: Meeting the Congressional Benchmarks

1. Forming Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) and completing review

CRC continues debating 50 amendments regarding federal vs. regional powers and presidential powers; Kurds want Kirkuk issue settled before finalizing amendments. Sunnis want presidential council to have enhanced powers relative to prime minister. Some progress on technical, judicial issues. Deadlines for final recommendations repeatedly extended, now beyond latest May 2008 deadline.

2. Enacting and implementing laws on De-Baathification

"Justice and Accountability Law" passed Jan. 12 unanimously by 143 in COR present. Allows about 30,000 fourth ranking Ba'athists to regain their jobs, and 3,500 Ba'athists in top three party ranks would receive pensions. But could allow for judicial prosecution of all ex-Ba'athists and for firing about 7,000 ex-Ba'athists in post-Saddam security services, and bars ex-Saddam security personnel from regaining jobs. No appointments yet to the seven-seat High Commission that will implement the law.

3. Enacting and implementing oil laws that ensure equitable distribution of resources

Framework and three implementing laws stalled over Kurd-Arab disputes; only framework law has reached COR to date. Revenue being distributed equitably, and 2008 budget adopted February 13, 2008 maintains 17% revenue for KRG. Kurds and central government setting up commission to resolve remaining disputes.

4. Enacting and implementing laws to form semi-autonomous regions

Regions law passed October 2006, with relatively low threshold to form new regions, but main blocs agreed that law would take effect April 2008. No active movement to form new regions yet evident.

5. Enacting and implementing: (a) a law to establish a higher electoral commission, (b) provincial elections law; (c) a law to specify authorities of provincial bodies, and (d) set a date for provincial elections

Draft law stipulating powers of provincial governments (and elections by October 1, 2008) adopted February 13, 2008, took effect April 2008 after dropping of presidential council objection to Baghdad's ability to remove provincial governors. Election law required to implement elections not yet adopted due to Kurdish opposition to proposed interim arrangements for Kirkuk power sharing, as well as Arab attempt to replace *Peshmerga* in Kirkuk with ISF. Agreement apparently reached to use "open list" (vote for candidates) voting system, favored by Sadrists. About 4 months preparation (registration, candidate vetting, ballot printing) needed after law is passed. Some of the nine Higher Election Commission (IHEC) members to be replaced by UNAMI due to "non-transparent" selection process, despite passage of IHEC law in May 2007.

6. Enacting and implementing legislation addressing amnesty for former insurgents

Law to amnesty "non-terrorists" among 25,000 detainees held by Iraq, passed on February 13, 2008. Of 17,000 approved for release (mostly Sunnis and Sadrist Shiites), only about 1,600 have been released to date due to slow judicial process. Does not affect 25,000 detainees held by U.S.

7. Enacting and implementing laws on militia disarmament

Basra operation, discussed above, viewed by Bush Administration as move against militias. On April 9, 2008, Maliki demanded all militias disband as condition for their parties to participate in October 2008 provincial elections. Law on disarmament and demobilization stalled.

8. Establishing political, media, economic, and services committee to support U.S. "surge"

No change. "Executive Steering Committee" works with U.S.-led forces.

9. Providing three trained and ready brigades to support U.S. surge

No change. Eight brigades were assigned to assist the surge.

10. Providing Iraqi commanders with authorities to make decisions, without political intervention, to pursue all extremists, including Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias

No significant change. Still some, although diminished, concern over the Office of the Commander in Chief (part of Maliki's office) control over appointments to the ISF-favoring Shiites and excluding many Sunnis. Still, some politically motivated leaders remain in ISF. In the past year, the commander of the National Police has fired over 5,000 officers for sectarian or politically motivated behavior, and Ministry of Interior said to have been purged of sectarian administrators and their bodyguards.

11. Ensuring Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) providing even-handed enforcement of law

Administration interpreted Basra operation as effort by Maliki to enforce law even handedly, but acknowledges continued militia influence and infiltration in some units.

12. Ensuring that the surge plan in Baghdad will not provide a safe haven for any outlaw, regardless of sectarian affiliation

No change. Administration sees ISF acting against JAM in Sadr City, and ethnosectarian violence has fallen sharply in Baghdad.

13. (a) Reducing sectarian violence and (b) eliminating militia control of local security

Sectarian violence continues to drop, but militias still armed, despite Basra operation. 103,000 Sunni "Sons of Iraq" combating Al Qa'ida, but still distrusted as potential Sunni militia forces. Only 20,000 allowed to join ISF to date.

14. Establishing Baghdad joint security stations

No change. Over 50 joint security stations operating, more than the 33 planned.

15. Increasing ISF units capable of operating independently

Continuing but slow progress training ISF. U.S. officials say ISF likely unable to secure Iraq internally until 2009-2012; and against external threats not for several years thereafter. Basra operation initially exposed continued factionalism and poor leadership in ISF, but also ability to rapidly deploy.

16. Ensuring protection of minority parties in COR

No change. Rights of minority parties protected by Article 37 of constitution.

17. Allocating and spending $10 billion in 2007 capital budget for reconstruction projects.

An estimated 63% of the $10 billion 2007 allocation for capital projects was spent. Another $18 billion is in 2008 Iraqi budget adopted February 13, 2008, and significant additional capital funds in $22 billion supplemental budget of July 2008.

18. Ensuring that Iraqi authorities not making false accusations against ISF members

Some governmental interference in ISF operations still observed.

Source: Adapted from Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Reconciliation and Benchmarks," Congressional Research Service, RS21968, August 4, 2008

Unemployment, Underemployment, and the ISF

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

These figures would be much higher, and much more destabilizing, if it had not been for the steady expansion of Iraq's security forces, the creation of the Sons of Iraq, and US and other economic aid programs. It is doubtful that anything like Iraq's present progress towards stability would have occurred without US efforts to both create the ISF and ensure it would absorb Sunnis as well as Shi'ites, or if the US had failed to support the Sons of Iraq as they emerged in Anbar, and fund a steady expansion of the program.

If one includes the Facilities Protection Service and present strength of the Sons of Iraq in the total manning of the ISF, the result is building up to over 600,000 men. For many younger Iraqi males, the ISF is currently the only source of employment and lasting job creation. Iraq did maintain much larger forces during the Iran-Iraq War and the time of Saddam Hussein. Nevertheless, much of the force created under Saddam consisted of draftees that got only token pay. Funding better paid, volunteer security forces at levels of 600,000 men may be difficult to sustain. This number also represents nearly 10% of the entire country's labor force (around seven million according to CIA estimates), and scarcely represents an ideal use of manpower in a stable democracy.

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

More broadly, however, unemployment and underemployment also illustrate that real-world political accommodation will be dependent on the ability of the central government to spend Iraq's oil wealth in ways that share the money reasonably fairly, and find the proper balance between meeting urgent human needs and moving the country back on the path towards development. Iraq is making slow progress in improving its budgets, and in spending them. The government of Iraq, however, is far from showing that it can spend the money wisely and fairly. "Follow the money" is a key axiom in practical politics, and Iraqi progress in this area is at least as critical to Iraqi stability, and the speed at which US forces can safely leave Iraq, as any issue listed in Figure 3.

Two Critical Elections and the Real Meaning of Political Legitimacy

At the same time, Iraq needs to be successful in creating a stable political outcome of two critical elections, and in making a wide range of follow-on improvements in governance. Real political legitimacy is not determined by holding elections, but by the quality of government that follows and how Iraqis of all factions perceive their new local, provincial, and central government.

Iraq has yet to demonstrate that it has a political process that can help resolve key Sunni on Sunni and Shi'ite on Shi'ite political struggles that have their own potential for violence. The fact the US is still present in strength does have a stabilizing impact, as well as helps the US push for early and open local and provincial elections desired by some factions outside the government, as well as fair and open national elections in late 2009.

The present national government is heavily weighted towards Al Dawa and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), largely because most Shi'ite Iraqis voted along sectarian lines for a coalition that these two "exile" parties dominated in the last national election. It is far from clear how much popular following these parties have, and at least part of Prime Minister Maliki's actions in using the ISF, and making decisions about its development, seems increasing concerned with maintaining Al Dawa SIIC power in Shi'ite areas (such as Basra), and preparing for the next elections.

The very name of the United Iraqi Alliance that won the December 2005 elections has become something of an oxymoron. Fadhila (15 seats) and the Sadr faction (28 seats) left the government in 2007. The remaining parties are divided into the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, \ led by Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim (30 total); Al Da'wa Party (25 total: Maliki faction (12), and Anizi faction (13); and independents (30). [xciii] All are to some extent rivals and all still have to show that they can win popular support at the local and provincial level.

The Sunni political parties now in the legislature gained their present number of delegates largely because the Sunnis who decided to participate in the December 2005 election had limited real opportunity to prepare and campaign, and the vote did little to determine who really had broad popular support. At present, Sunni representation consists largely of the Iraq Consensus Front (44 seats -- Islamic Party (IIP, Tariq al-Hashimi, 26 seats); National Dialogue Council of Khalaf Ulayyan (7); General People's Congress of Adnan al-Dulaymi (7); independents (4); and the .National Iraqi Dialogue Front (Sunni, led by former Ba'athist Saleh al- Mutlak (11)). [xciv] It is far from clear how much local and popular support any of these various Sunni parties really have, or how much support they too can win in local and provincial elections.

The Kurds are still deeply divided into Barzani and Talibani factions, as are the Peshmerga, in spite of claims to unity. The Kurdistan Alliance is split into three groups – the KDP (24); PUK (22); independents (7) – and there is a Kurdistan Islamic Group with 5 seats that normally votes with the government. There also are small Turcoman (Iraqi

Turcoman Front (1), and Assyrian Christian parties (Rafidain National List (1)), that represent minorities in or around the Kurdish dominated regions.

It is important to note that there are few examples of nations in Iraq's present position that actually held free and fair elections without major outside assistance, and the stabilizing presence of some outside force. It is equally important to remember that Iraqis are likely to have little patience with the learning curve of officials who have to learn how to govern on the job, who prove to be corrupt or favor a given faction, and who do not bring government services and effective security forces down to the local level. No matter how successful the ISF becomes, its progress must be matched by improvements in the quality of both governance and on-the-scene political accommodation.

The Sadrist Movement and the JAM

The problem also remains of how the Sadr movement and Mahdi Army (JAM or Jaish Al Mahdi) will evolve in the future. So far, Sadr has preferred political options to any form of decisive battle. He has done so at least partly in response to systematic US attacks on the more extreme elements of the Mahdi Army during 2007, and US ability to target key cadres in the Mahdi Army and some of their Iranian advisors. He also has had to respond to steadily growing political pressure from the Maliki government, Al Dawa, the SIIC, and military pressure from the ISF. Sadr originally ordered a six-month ceasefire in Mahdi Army activities in August 2007, after JAM forces clashed with security forces in the shrine city of Karbala on August 27th. In spite of the fighting described earlier, he extended the ceasefire for a further six months in February 2008, and ordered an indefinite suspension of JAM military activity on August 28, 2008

The JAM has avoided lasting conflict with the ISF, and the JAM seems to be growing steadily weaker. Sadr's office in Najaf issued at statement in August saying that all of his followers had to obey the ceasefire, that he was disbanding most of the JAM, and that, "The Mahdi Army suspension will be valid indefinitely and anyone who does not follow this order will not be considered a member of this group."[xcv]

Senior US commanders are, however, worried about the prospect of the Sadr movement turning violent, and worried about the creations of a Hezbollah-like Shi'ite force with Iranian support. Sadr also said that he would create a special force within the JAM to fight coalition forces and the occupation, and that the JAM would resume the fighting unless the US entirely withdrew from Iraq.

There were reports, beginning on August 30, 2008, that large numbers of the more radical elements of the JAM and Sadr movement had blood oaths to continue the fight against US forces in Iraq, despite an order from their leader Moqtada al-Sadr to put down their arms. According to a report by Agence France, "Children as young as 10 were among those seen cutting their thumbs with scalpels and putting a bloodied fingerprint to a document circulated by members of the Sadr movement in the cleric's eastern Baghdad bastion of Sadr City." Whole families signed the oath, and a Sadr official was reported to have said that the Sadrists had begun signing the blood oath 16 days earlier and would continue doing so until the end of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan in September. [xcvi]

Accommodation and Withdrawal

None of these issues will prevent the US from making sharp force reductions, and then eliminating its presence in Iraq, *if suitable progress occurs*. US influence is also time-limited, and there are serious risks of making things worse if the US is perceived as staying too long, pushes too hard, or becomes caught up in any of the forms of Iraqi violence it is seeking to prevent. Nevertheless, a "conditions-based" tight rope walk still seems to offer more chances of success than any adherence to timelines agreed to far in advance of the necessary progress in political development and accommodation.

Transfer of Provinces from MNF-I to Iraqi Control

A conditions-based US withdrawal from Iraq needs to be closely linked to progress in security at the local and provincial levels. A great deal of past US and MNF-I reporting has focused on the *formal* transfer of provinces from MNF-I Iraqi control. At least through early 2008, however, it was never clear what this transfer really meant. In many cases, it was clearly more cosmetic than real.

The practice of prematurely transferring provinces to Iraqi control exacerbated these problems. All Iraq provinces were originally scheduled to transfer to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC) by the end of 2008.[xcvii] However, this plan proved impractical and many of the provinces that were transferred to Iraqi PIC were clearly still not ready. Many of the southern provinces under Iraqi PIC had become de-facto protectorates of various Shiite militias, or criminal gangs. In practice, the ISF still had very uncertain or inadequate capability in several of the transferred provinces and any effective security action depended heavily on continued US or other Coalition support. In many areas in such provinces, there was no ISF or central government presence.

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

The same was true of some aspects of the handover of Anbar on September 1, 2008, which marked the 11th transfer out of 18 provinces, and the pullback of US troops from the cities in 13 provinces. Anbar had made great progress towards stability since the beginning of 2007, both as the result of a spontaneous tribal uprising against Al Qa'ida in Iraq and its supporting organization, and US support of the uprising that capitalized on the Awakening Movement to create the Sons of Iraq. Violence in Anbar had been reduced from the highest level outside of Baghdad Province to close to the lowest. The number of insurgent attacks had been reduced over 90% since its peak in 2007, and former insurgent groups like the Islamic Movement of Holy Warriors had first turned against AQI and then become part of the Sons of Iraq.[xcix]

Although the transfer had been delayed from a target date of June 2008 because of the lingering presence of AQI, and weak support from the central government, the US had been able to reduce its presence from a peak of 37,500 to below 26,000 at the time of the transfer. The ISF had both experienced a major build up and had steadily improved its capabilities. The Iraqi Army had built up from 8,300 men at the start of 2007 to 24,000, and the Iraqi police from 11,000 to 24,000. US funding and encouragement had also strengthened the tribes, local authorities, and provincial government.[c]

The transfer occurred, however, before the central government had shown that it could successfully replace US aid, or spend the money allocated to Anbar. Although it occurred at a time when US authorities stated that only 4,000 men were still on the US-paid rolls of the Sons of Iraq in Anbar, some reports put the number of Iraqi young men in Anbar

still funded by the US at closer to seven times that number. It was far from clear what would happen when the former members of the Sons were no longer receiving $300 a month from the US, and while the Sons of Iraq totaled over 99,000 nationwide, as the central government had only agreed to fund 54,000 of them when it assumed responsibility for paying them on October 1, 2008.[ci]

It also occurred at a time when many Sunnis were deeply suspicious of the Maliki government's failure to support the Sons of Iraq, and when only about 20% at most of the Sons of Iraq seemed likely to be absorbed into the ISF – most in low grade police positions. At least some of the fighters were threatening to return to the insurgency, and some groups in the Sons of Iraq were in hiding near a US base because the Iraqi military sought to arrest them. Elements of the Iraqi Army also talked about the Sons as if they were part of the threat.[cii] Government investment and services remained poor to very poor.

Moreover, intra-Sunni tensions exist between tribal leaders, local authorities, the provincial government and the Sunni parties in the central government. There were reports in late August 2008 that the Anbar Provincial Council had asked US forces to delay the transfer of Anbar Province to the Iraqi central government by a year because Iraqi forces were not ready to keep order, and because of friction between the Awakening Councils that the Sons helped create and Sunni parties in the central government like the Iraqi Islamic Party.[ciii]

As in every aspect of planning and executing a successful US withdrawal from Iraq, optimistic or unrealistic reporting threatens to cripple the very effort such distortions were intended to aid. Distorted reporting leads to political pressure to make Iraqi forces ready too quickly and to withdraw U.S. forces too soon. It also leads to unfair frustration with Iraqi performance, makes the United States and its allies slow to identify and correct the problems, and understates the time and resources required.

The Uncertain Rate of Past and Future Transfers

The US had transferred responsibility to the Iraqi government for 11 of 18 provinces by September 2008, and had withdrawn US troops from 13 of 18 provinces.[civ] All formal transfers are now supposed to be complete by some point in 2009, but the "successful" implementation of this plan may well be more cosmetic than real. As the GAO noted in its June 2008 report on *Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq*,[cv]

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

> In January 2007, The New Way Forward stated that the Iraqi government would take responsibility for security in all 18 provinces by November 2007. However, this date was not met, as only 8 of 18 provinces had transitioned to Iraqi control at that time. According to DOD, in September 2007, the principal cause for the delay in transitioning provinces to Iraqi control was the inability of the Iraqi police to maintain security in the provinces. For example, as a result of the February 2007 Baghdad Security Plan, an increased number of terrorists, insurgents, and members of illegal militia fled Baghdad for other provinces, and the Iraqi police were unable to handle these threats.
>
> As of May 2008, nine provincial governments have lead responsibility for security in their province. Six of the nine provinces that have assumed security responsibilities are located in southern Iraq, where the British forces had the lead and have continued to draw down their forces. The remaining three provinces are located in northern Iraq, in the area controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

More recent reports describe significant progress, but also describe ongoing problems. Reporting by the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR) in July 2008 noted that, [cvi]

> On July 16, 2008, Qadissiya became the tenth province to achieve PIC. Anbar did not achieve PIC on June 29, 2008, as expected. Sandstorms were cited as disruptions to the Anbar ceremony.
>
> The Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) reported that Anbar is expected to achieve PIC status by July 31, 2008.418 Transition of security for PIC requires approval from the Joint Committee to Transfer Security Responsibility (JCTSR), which is an Iraqi-chartered group with members from MNFI and the GOI. The JCTSR assesses the province's capacity to assume security responsibility in four areas:
>
> - governance
> - external threats
> - local ISF capabilities
> - MNF-I's ability to respond to security issues should the ISF require assistance
>
> A province is transferred when external threats are minimal and Iraqi and Coalition groups deem the other three areas satisfactory. Thus, the conditions-based process reflects the changing security situation on the ground, and dates for achieving PIC remain in flux. Since 2005, timelines have shift ed eight times. For the status of PIC timelines,
>
> …In mid-July 2008, the last of five surge Brigade Combat Teams returned to the United States, which necessitates altered military positioning. Once a province achieves PIC, U.S. and Coalition troops modify their security footprint. Between May 2006 and March 2008, DoD regularly reported on the operational status of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). Only two FOBs were transferred or closed between June 2007 and January 2008.
>
> Increases in FOB transfers to the GOI have generally been attributable to improved ISF capacity in that area, with emphasis on FOBs "under Iraqi control." Ultimately, the process of transferring control back to the ISF is accomplished through operational and strategic overwatch, which leverages Coalition support through the least number of strategically located FOBs and Convoy Support Centers.
>
> Drawing down Coalition forces also affects efforts designed to strengthen civilian institutions within provinces that have achieved PIC. U.S. military forces and the Embassy are coordinating the protection of the PRTs. A recent U.S. Embassy survey noted that PIC has affected PRTs differently. In some provinces, the ISF is competent or improving, and has provided PRT escorts after incidents. In other locations, PRTs have had a different experience. In Basrah, for example, the PRT faces a more dangerous security situation both on and off \ the base, and it now receives security protection from the Coalition.

The GAO estimate of claimed progress, as of May 2008, is shown in Figure 4. The SIGIR estimate of future progress is shown in Figure 5, and Anbar achieved PIC on September 1, 2008. The fact remains, however, that even the more stable provinces have been termed "stable" largely on the basis of the level of insurgent and Mahdi Army activity, and not on the basis of whether they are potential trouble spots for future ethnic and sectarian violence if political accommodation fails.

Province-by-Province Stability and Security

A province-by-provide survey of Iraqi security that SIGIR conducted in July 2008 illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of Iraqi security, and the challenges the ISF and US forces have to face in making a stable transition at the provincial and local level:[cvii]

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

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

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

- **Ninewa (Mosul)**: *(Average daily attacks: 12/1/07-2/22/08 = 16.30; 2/23/08-5/31/08= 13.55)* DoD reports that Ninewa is only partially ready to transfer to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). It is expected to achieve PIC in early 2009. The PDS noted these challenges to Ninewa's security environment:
  - lack of a central operation command post
  - lack of an intelligence system to provide security information
  - lack of the role of the media in uncovering criminals and terrorists
  - lack of modern technology for security agencies in uncovering and foiling explosives

  Ninewa had the second highest rate of insurgent attacks in all of Iraq, averaging nearly 13.6 each day from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008In May 2008, following the deployment of aviation, engineering intelligence, and intelligence assets, Iraq's Prime Minister launched a coordinated campaign targeting terrorists and militias. DoD reported that the operation interrupted terrorist and militia activities and stirred additional support from the local population. Operations in Mosul were largely conducted by Iraqi forces.5 Police training will be expanded, and a 440-man commando battalion will be based in Mosul.

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

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

- **Tameem (Kirkuk)** *(Average daily attacks: 12/1/07-2/22/08 = 2.63; 2/23/08-5/31/08= 1.80)* DoD reported that there were just under two attacks daily in Tameem from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008, making the province the sixth most violent in Iraq. Despite the relatively low level of attacks, the security situation is deteriorating, and Coalition and Iraqi troops are still fighting insurgent groups. Car bombs and assassinations have been increasing as different ethnic groups vie for power ahead of provincial elections. Tameem is expected to achieve PIC by December 2008.

- **Salah Al-Din:** *(Average daily attacks: 12/1/07-2/22/08 = 8.73; 2/23/08-5/31/08= 6.28)* 11-kV overhead electrical distribution lines to benefit approximately 35,000 local residents in the province. This quarter, the ESF Quick Response Fund supported the distribution of more than $147,000 in medical textbooks for physicians across the province. The local PRT also helped to establish a local medical NGO to coordinate activities to improve medical conditions in the province. In June 2008, DoD reported that Salah Al-Din was the third most violent province in Iraq, averaging more than six daily attacks. However, attacks have fallen by 28% since last quarter. The situation remains challenging, and military operations in neighboring Ninewa have created an uneasy security situation in northwestern parts of the province. Iraq's Prime Minister has ordered an additional National Police Brigade to be established in the province to help meet these security challenges. The Sons of Iraq also continue to provide protection at the neighborhood level. In Tikrit, the United States funds an Iraqi-led reeducation and reintegration pilot program to help Sons of Iraq members transition from their current security teams to long-term employment when their service ends. Salah Al-Din is expected to transition to Provincial Iraqi Control in early 2009.

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

  Anbar was expected to transition to Provincial Iraqi Control in July 2008.574 Preparatory events for PIC included an MNF-West hosted the "Anbar Leadership Conference" at Camp Falluja, which was attended by senior provincial officials, mayors, Provincial Council members, and tribal sheiks. At the conference, Anbari leaders were briefed on the security situation and discussed a range of economic and reconstruction issues. Additionally, officials from the Ministries of Defense and Interior flew to Ramadi to discuss PIC issues. 5 However, the planned transition did not occur. According to the U.S. military, a sandstorm delayed the ceremony.

- **Diyala:** *(Average daily attacks: 12/1/07-2/22/08 = 5.256; 2/23/08-5/31/08= 3.58)* In June 2008, Diyala was the fourth most violent province in Iraq, averaging more than 3.5 at- tacks each day.589 Since 2007, violence has been declining, but there were a series of attacks this quarter by female suicide bombers. Diyala is now expected to achieve PIC status by January 2009.

- **Baghdad:** *(Average daily attacks: 12/1/07-2/22/08 = 15.60; 2/23/08-5/31/08= 24.02)* Baghdad is expected to achieve Provincial Iraqi Control in May 2009, but it continues to sustain more attacks than any other province in Iraq, averaging 24 each day.610 In early May 2008, the Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. troops battled militants in Sadr City until the Sadrists called a cease-fire on May 11, 2008. ISF and Coalition efforts served to diminish the capabilities of the indirect fire and rocket-propelled grenade launchers from Sadr City that were hitting the International Zone and other parts of Baghdad. Despite the ceasefire, violence continues. In late June 2008, a Baghdad ePRT staff member, two DoD civilian employees, and two military soldiers were killed in an explosion in Sadr City.

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

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

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

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

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

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

  Muthanna was the first province to be transferred to Iraqi control (July 2006).692 Several factors contribute to the province's reputation as one of the least violent areas in Iraq:
  - religious and ethnic homogeneity
  - improved cooperation with the ISF
  - capable and well-commanded Iraqi Security Forces

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

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

  Thi-Qar was the second province to achieve PIC (September 2006),705 and the province has averaged one to two attacks per week from February 23, 2008, to May 31, 2008. PRTs operate in the province without the assistance of Coalition forces, and Iraqi Security Forces escorts assist activities. More than 60 PRT missions have been completed in the past nine months without a single security incident.

- **Missan**: *(Average daily attacks: 12/1/07-2/22/08 = 0.02; 2/23/08-5/31/08= 0.0)* The PDS established these goals for security:
  - Strengthen the relationship between the local government, the police directorate, and the court.
  - Develop training for the police to reinforce their effectiveness.
  - Supply the detention centers and jails with essential equipment.

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

relationship between PRT representatives and provincial contacts who must travel outside the province to meet with PRT representatives.

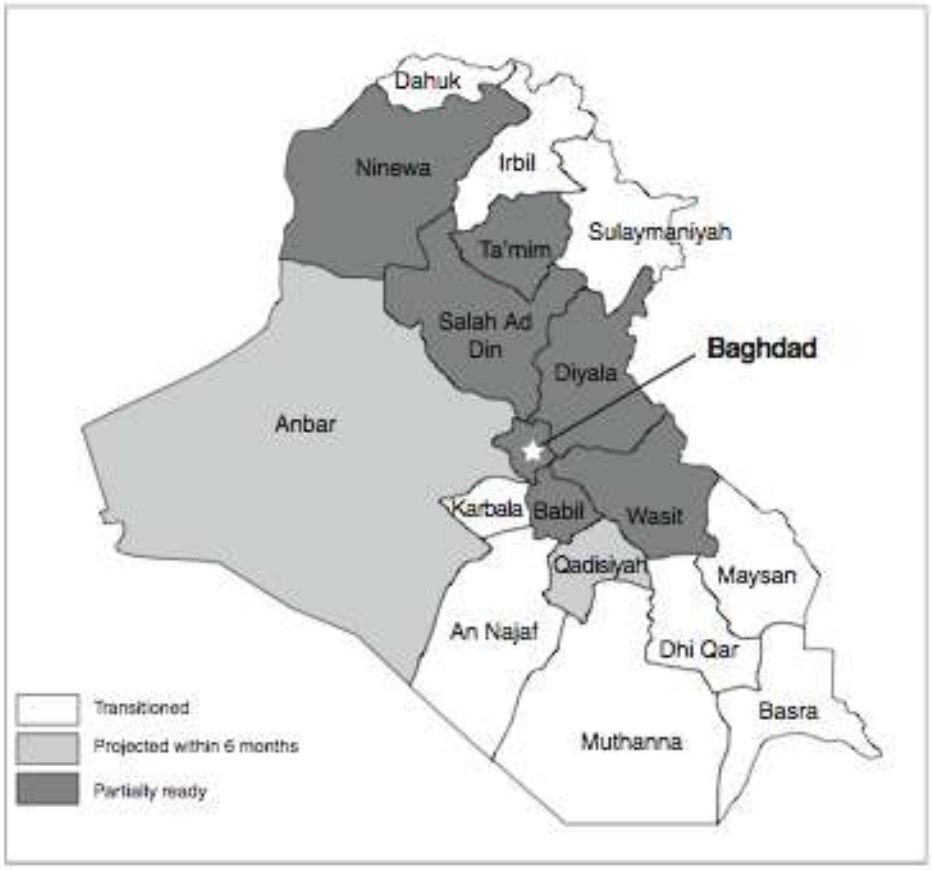
- **Basrah** *(Average daily attacks: 12/1/07-2/22/08 = 1.21; 2/23/08-5/31/08= 1.28)* Basrah achieved PIC in December 2007. Before and following the attainment of PIC, Basrah was the focal point of an intra-Shi'a power struggle between three groups over control of oil in southern Iraq as well as challenges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

These assessments do not take account of new forms of violence and instability that could grow out of tensions between Kurd and Arab, intra-Shi'ite power struggles, mishandling of the Sons of Iraq or a host of other issues. Serious questions also emerge over the future of mixed areas – particularly Baghdad, Diyala, and Salah al-Din provinces. The transfer of Baghdad Province may be particularly difficult, since a US presence plays a critical role in limited sectarian tension that the ISF may well not be ready to assume. General Petraeus has indicated that such a transfer, and US troop withdrawals, may be possible by July 2009, but only if "conditions permit."[cviii]

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

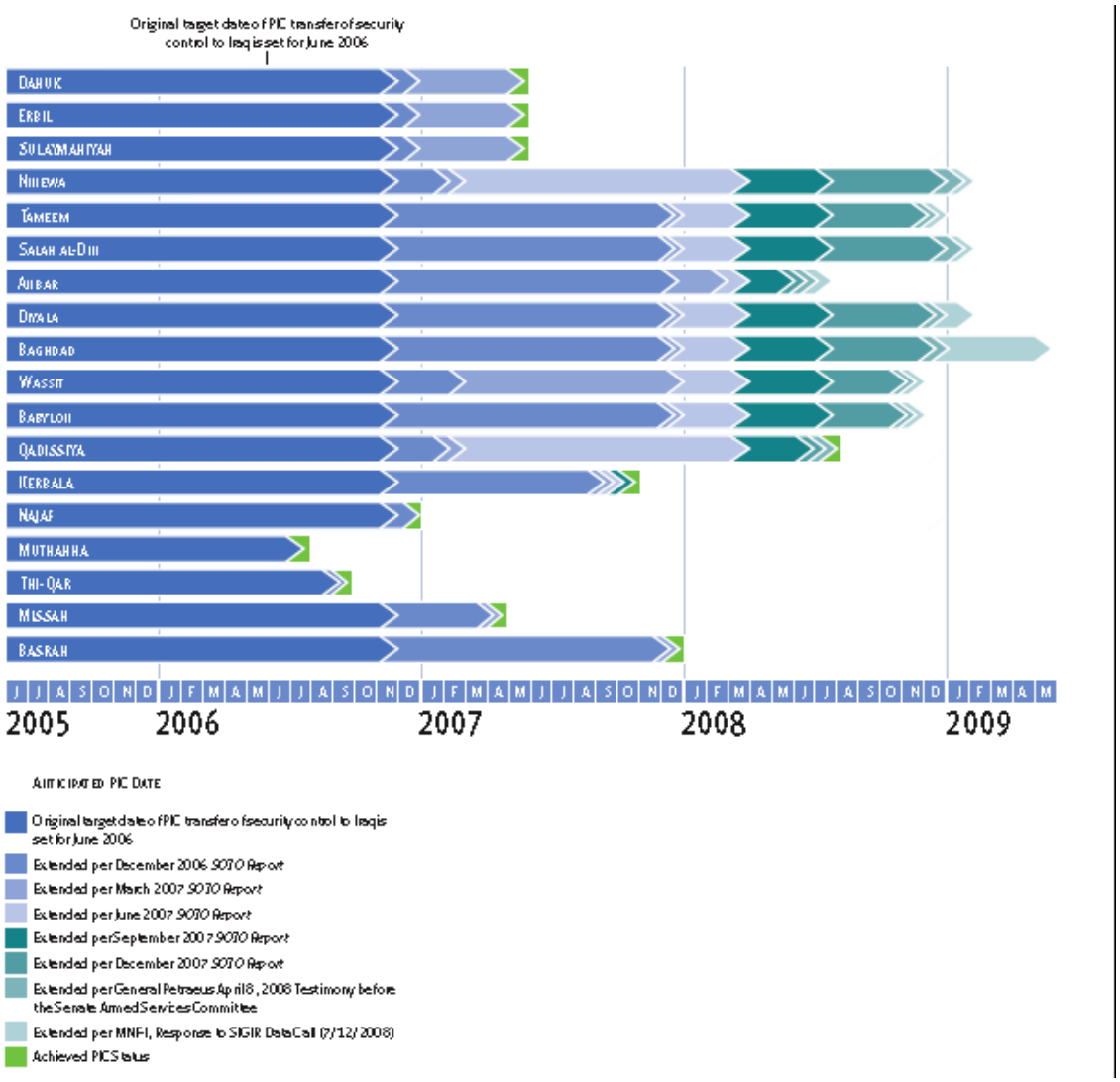
Figure 4: Progress in Transfer of Control of Provinces from MNF-I to Iraqi Central Government Control as of May 2008

(Note: Anbar and Qadisiyah have both transferred since this map was released. Babil and Wasit are scheduled to transfer next.)



Source: GAO, *Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq*, GAO-08-837, June 2008, p. 33

Figure: 5 SIGIR Estimate of Future Transfer of Provinces to Iraqi Government Control



Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress" July 30, 2008. Pg. 93.

Governance, Services, Investment, and the Rule of Law

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

Progress in creating effective mix of local courts, legal representation, and jails lags or is dangerously inadequate in much of the country, and the overall quality of governance and government services is poor. The Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction reported a "snapshot" of the current state of governance in each province in its July 2008 quarterly report to Congress.

Figure 6 summarizes some key judgments in that data, and is clear that that the ISF is years away from the level of support it needs to "build," or have the proper support in "hold," regardless of how well it does in security. It is also clear from GAO reporting that the actual ability of provincial governments to spend their capital budgets may be even lower than the figures shown in SIGIR estimates, since it counts money under contract as actually spent.

Figure 6: Population and Quality of Governance and Security in Each Province in July 2008 (SIGIR Estimate)

Province (North to South) 2008	Population	Internally Displaced Persons	Percentage Sunni	Shi'ite	Other	PRT Rating of Governance (Out of 5)	Allocated Capital Budget (Current $Millions) 2007	%Expended	
Dahuk	616,600	104,948	39	3	58	NA	1,560	95	2,528
Erbil	1,845,200	31,783	62	2	36	3	)	)	)
Sulaymaniyah	2,159,800	79,672	88	12	-	NA	(Kurdish Area)		
Ninewa	2,473,700	106,750	42	5	53	2	226	26	359
Tameem	839,100	36,202	73	22	5	2	91	34	146
Salah Al-Din	1,077,800	45,762	98	4	-	3	93	34	150
Anbar	1,280,000	64,536	99	1	-	3	107	3.7	192
Diyala	1,373,900	103,426	52	48	-	3	110	-	168
Baghdad	6,386,100	563,771	20	80	-	2	560	31	885
Wassit	941,800	75,325	-	100	-	2	83	41	137
Babylon	1,444,400	77,914	5	95	-	2	127	49	206
Qadissiya	866,700	26,320	-	100	-	2	64	39	137
Kerbala	756,000	55,962	-	100	-	2	71	41	170
Najaf	946,300	58,032	-	100	-	3	88	64	150
Muthanna	536,300	18,351	-	100	-	2	52	19	87
Thi-Qar	1,427,200	47,825	-	100	-	3	138	40	219
Missan	743,400	46,948	-	100	-	1	76	51	124
Basrah	1,761,000	35,718	-	100	-	3	195	21	322

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

Source: SIGIR, Quarterly Report and Semiannual Report to the United States Congress, July 30, 2008, pp. 46- 163

Force Development at the Ministerial Level

The structural and leadership problems in Iraqi force development go beyond the capability of individual elements in the Army, National Police, border police, and regular police forces that are the core of Iraqi current and future counterinsurgency capabilities. There are key problems at the top of the ISF that need to be addressed, such as manpower, equipment, and fiscal management. The Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior still need help in developing to provide the overall leadership, command, planning, programming, budgeting, and management functions that are needed.

Ministry of Defense

Both of the critical ministries shaping Iraqi force development face immediate and severe problems. Senior US officers feel that the Ministry of Defense is making real progress in planning, budgeting, and command activity. At the same time, US reporting makes it clear that the Ministry has a long way to go. The March 2008 report by the Department of Defense summaries the situation as follows, and shows how far the Ministry still has to go: [cix]

> …The MoD has made solid gains in institutional capacity and force generation—particularly unit set fielding—during this reporting period but is still developing capacity in other areas. The Joint Headquarters (JHQ) has significantly restructured its command and control arrangements. Coalition assistance provides fielded forces with some logistical support, but the MoD has assumed life-support responsibilities and is working to attain self-sufficiency in maintenance and logistics.
>
> …The MoD is showing genuine, but sometimes inconsistent, progress in its acquisitions processes. The MoD also demonstrates an increasingly joint and inter-service approach to the planning and management of all ministry requirements. However, lapses in coordination between the largely civilian-staffed MoD and the JHQ continue to occur.
>
> …The MoD continues slow, uneven progress to refine and institutionalize its internal processes, eliminate corruption, strengthen cross-MoD/JHQ relationships and more effectively engage with external stake- holders.
>
> …Overall, the MoD is assessed as "partially effective" at force management, resource management, personnel, acquisition, logistics and sustainment and training and development, but with an increased capacity to self-manage. The MoD has shown some progress in the areas of FMS management oversight and performing requirements-based budgeting. However, there will continue to be a need for Coalition assistance to provide fielded forces with required logistical and support services until MoD ministerial force management, resource management and sustainment processes mature.
>
> …MoD force management efforts experienced limited success during this reporting period in the areas of force planning, recruiting and command and control… The MoD and JHQ staffs continue developing their capabilities to program force generation in accordance with MoD 2007 force generation priorities, but the challenge of integrating activities across functional lines remains significant. The JHQ Chief of Staff has approved the 2008 Force Generation Priority List. However, senior MoD executives—including the Secretary General and the Minister of Defense—have yet to approve it, though they are working from it. While this inaction hinders the ability of MoD and JHQ staff to deliver a coordinated program, force generation is proceeding as scheduled.

Although command, control and coordination are sufficient at the operational and tactical levels, planning and inter-ministerial coordination are often shallow and slow at the strategic level. The defense policies and directives that flow from these immature processes are often labored, insufficient and vague. The Integrated Resource Requirements and Oversight Committee (IRROC) has served as a forum for coordinating the efforts of the various MoD directorates, though its proceedings often lack structure. However, the MoD is currently reviewing the IRROC portfolio, further exacerbating problems with coordination and the uneven quality of staff work within the MoD.

The MoD 2008 budget allocation is approximately US$5 billion. This results in a 2008 MoD funding shortfall of approximately US$3.0 billion, based on service plan requirements. This shortfall will require additional GoI funding support or re- programming capability acquisition into 2009 or beyond.

The MoD continues to develop a comprehensive personnel management program. Many policies and processes are now in place to support life-cycle personnel functions from recruitment to retirement. Underpinning much of this work has been the development of a robust electronic personnel and payroll system. The system provides salary payments to MoD personnel and auditable accounting records that feed directly into the MoD budgetary system. Various expansion and replenishment initiatives during 2007 attempted to generate force-manning levels to 120% of required authorizations for IA divisions—primarily to accommodate regular leave schedules.

…MNSTC-I continues to assist the MoD in purchasing and distributing critical equipment for the Iraqi forces. Through the FMS program, the MoD was able to acquire roughly 90% of all its 2006 requirements by the end of 2007. The Iraqi Direct Contracts Department filled the remaining 2006 requirements. Little improvement occurred in the Direct Contracts Department in 2007 and approval authority continues to be highly restricted and centralized. Due to cumbersome internal processes, the MoD completed only two direct acquisitions in the last six months of 2007. The Minister of Defense personally authorizes all MoD acquisition contracts exceeding 50 million Iraqi Dinars (approximately US$42,000). For routine spending, MoD officials are reluctant to exercise such authority for fear of corruption allegations, although they have been granted authority to approve expenditures to a given threshold.

…MoD's limited logistic and sustainment capacity is improving, but it remains a key area for development. The MoD still requires significant Coalition assistance, especially in warehouse and depot operations. Plans are underway to transfer responsibility for ammunition and supply warehouse operations from the Coalition to Iraqi control. These plans stipulate the transfer of responsibility of national supply and ammunition depots from the Coalition to Iraqi forces by the end of 2008 Furthermore, plans are in place to create motor
…The ability of the MoD forces to maintain accountability for U.S.-provided equipment remains a challenge. Battlefield attrition, normal wear and tear from a high operational tempo and maintenance shortfalls have resulted JHQ, IGFC and MNSTC-I continue their combined efforts to reconcile differences between issued and on-hand quantities of equipment through 100% inventories conducted by joint accountability inspection teams.

MNSTC-I involvement with issuing mission-critical items to the Iraqi forces has decreased at the same time as the numbers of these items issued by the MoD has increased. In December 2007, the JHQ established a Combined Logistics Operations Center (CLOC) to collect and track the amount of issued, on-hand and fully mission capable equipment, comprising the key pacing items of IA divisions. With the assistance of Coalition advisors, new reporting procedures are being developed to execute this mission. The MoD continues to receive delivery of, and train units on, U.S.-standard equipment, supporting ammunition and repair parts through FMS cases using MoD funds.

…The MoD implemented a Life-Support Self- Reliance (LSSR) program for military food preparation and services effective December 1, 2007…The long-term component of the LSSR

program involves procuring the infrastructure needed, and training soldiers in the skill sets required, for current and future units, BSUs and training units.

The MoD continues to receive monthly fuel allocations from the MoO that are below required levels. In December 2007, the MoO authorized an 80% increase in its allocation to the MoD, bringing the total amount supplied to20 million liters of diesel and six million liters of benzene per month. However, shortfalls will increase as the IA fields new vehicles and as the force structure continues to grow. Because of this, the Coalition has found it necessary to provide emergency fuel supplements.

…MNSTC-I is coordinating with the MoD to establish strategic-level ammunition self-sufficiency. …IA maintenance procedures have shown improvement, and data indicates that the maintenance backlog figure has stabilized.

…MoD has submitted requests for US$80 million in FMS contracts for the
procurement of vehicle spare parts. The MoD does not yet have an automated system, however, to ensure accurate and timely parts replenishment.

…The ability of the Joint Headquarters (JHQ) to deliver and execute operational plans and advise at the strategic level remains nascent. The lines of command remain opaque and serve to encourage control at the highest level.
Between operational and strategic boundaries, multiple conflicting lines exist—the Baghdad Operations Center reports to the Prime Minister, the Basrah Operations Center reports to the MoD and the IGFC reports to the JHQ.

While currently manageable, transfers of additional provinces to PIC will increase the operational requirement on the Defense Minister and the Prime Minister, whose focus should be on strategic, not operational, issues. The need exists for a national security architecture with clear chains of command and formal delegation of authority. Coalition force advisors are working with GoI officials on these issues.

Ministry of Interior

Senior US officers also feel that the Ministry of Interior is making progress, but at a slower rate than the Ministry of Defense, and that it faces more serious problems with corruption and sectarian divisions. The March 2008 report by the Department of Defense summaries the current state of problems and progress as follows: [cx]

…Although the Minister of Interior remains committed to reforming the MoI, Coalition advisors continue to report steady, but sometimes inconsistent, improvement in the MoI's ability to perform key ministerial functions such as force management, personnel management, acquisition, training, logistics and sustainment and developing and implementing plans and policies.

…Reducing corruption and improving professionalism are also focus areas. In 2007, the MoI Directorate of Internal Affairs opened 6,652 cases against ministerial employees. Of those cases, 6,159 were closed during the year. Upon adjudication of these cases, the MoI fired 1,112 employees, disciplined 438 and forced another 23 into retirement. The terminations and forced retirements constitute17% of the total disciplinary action taken against ministry employees.

One area that has shown improvement is the MoI Contracting Directorate. The MoI Contracts Director is committed to improving the productivity of all MoI contracting offices and has documented its policies and procedures. During 2008, the MoI plans to implement an important training initiative focused on implementing the MoI's procedures at the national and provincial level.

…Another area that has shown improvement is strategic planning. With the support of the MNSTC-I Ministry of Interior Transition Team (MoI-TT) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the MoI has made significant progress in developing a strategic plan to consolidate its plans across the organization. This plan represents a significant boost for MoI strategic planning and coordination and addresses such issues as human resource strategy, administrative and training reform, equipment procurement, infrastructure investments and funding strategies. This plan includes coordinated goals and objectives for each directorate and a comprehensive 2008 budget and capital investment strategy for the MoI. The MoI-TT anticipates plan approval and implementation during 2008 and continues to work with its counterparts to improve the 2009 plan.

…The MoI has no mechanism that correctly matches funding with valid requirements and growth projections. The Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation delayed the timely accession of new police recruits, but those processes are now clarified and have begun to produce faster results. The MoI's effort to reconcile police payrolls by identifying and removing ghost employees is making progress. 2,500 of these employees were removed from rosters nationwide in December 2007.

The 2008 budget, approved on February 13, 2008, by the CoR, includes separate accounts for the Baghdad Police College, the Higher Institute, the NP, the FPS, the DBE and the Patrol Police. The MoI 2008 budget request to the GoI was US$7.8 billion, of which the Ministry of Finance (MoF) approved US$3.8 billion. Even though this represents a 51% reduction of the submitted request, it represents a 21% growth over the 2007 MoI budget.

… The MoI is now working closely with the MoF to transfer those funds in order to ensure continued support and avert a gap in FMS equipment deliveries and subsequent fielding. With transfer of these 2007 FMS funds, the MoI will effectively achieve a 98% 2007 budget execution rate, compared to a 77% execution rate for 2006.

…The use of manual systems to report ministry expenditures is a systemic problem for the MoI. In many cases, the MoI receives monthly reports well over two months late. This reduces the usefulness of the information for decision makers. Through the end of CY2007, on-time expenditure reporting has averaged only 65%. To improve performance for 2008, the MoI will insist upon electronic reporting from its spending units and undertake administrative measures to reinforce timely reporting. Additionally, the MoI's nascent strategic planning structure will help sustain positive trends in budget execution. The MoI Finance Directorate, which has expressed interest in developing processes to conduct execution-year budget status reviews, will be a critical element within this new structure. This is a welcome indication of inter-ministerial cooperation. Such senior ministerial level emphasis will reinforce proper and timely budget execution.

…The MoI's "E-ministry" initiative—an Iraqi- funded system that will link human resource (HR) and payroll actions—is designed to address most personnel accountability issues. "E-ministry" is the result of a MoI HR committee plan to reform ministerial HR systems, with particular focus on linking HR, payroll and training management. Currently, "E-ministry" is in Phase I of a three-phased fielding plan, and the MoI HR department has started populating its database. In December 2007, the MoI called for a complete stand- down of "E-ministry" implementation until completion of off-site training in Amman, Jordan…The "E-ministry" program is projected to be operational prior to January 2009.

…The MoI uses a civilian model for logistics and therefore does not have logistics units, nor does it track personnel by occupational specialty. Once hired, police receive additional training to assume administrative or logistical duties as required. The one notable exception is the recently conceived NP Sustainment Brigade.

…MoI organic maintenance capability cannot yet sustain the level of maintenance required to keep vehicles operationally ready. As a result, two Coalition contracts are in place to maintain

operational readiness rates at or above 85%. These maintenance contracts expire on March 28, 2008, and May 30, 2008, respectively.

Measured progress in contracting for goods and services is creating new challenges with storage capacity and supply distribution. Large deliveries received in December 2007 have challenged MoI throughput capacity. As a result, there is a backlog of some ISFF-funded items at the MoI central warehouse and the ISFF-funded Coalition general support warehouse. As distribution plans were developed and items issued to subordinate units, improvements in weapons, ammunition and vehicles on hand are expected in the next few months.

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

…Overcoming the MoI training backlog faces significant challenges. Consequently, the MoI and the Coalition have formed a joint working group to develop options for training base expansion. …With the MoI Training Base expansion plan currently in progress through mid-2009, seat capacity will increase to enable yearly throughput of 117,100 enlisted personnel and 5,377 officers.
…The increased training will address three needs. First, increased capacity will help reduce the backlog of untrained police, allowing the MoI to reach authorized force levels in a reasonable timeframe. Second, operating a training institution in each province allows for wider recruiting efforts to ensure that training centers operate at or near capacity. Third, the in- creased capacity is required to handle anticipated force attrition rates associated with the expanded authorizations, as well as providing a broader range of professional training courses in the future.

…Across 2007, the MoI trained 344 Internal Affairs and 140 Inspector General Personnel across five training courses: basic internal affairs, interview and interrogations, anti-corruption, first-line supervisor and an internal affairs advanced course. Finally, Internal Affairs work is inherently dangerous. In November and December 2007, the MoI suffered four Internal Affairs officers killed and another three wounded. Throughout 2007, 14 Internal Affairs officers were killed with another 14 wounded. This remains a key focus area for both the Coalition and the MoI.

The MoI is also taking positive action to ensure accountability of current weapons distribution and to gain visibility of weapons issued prior to the establishment of standardized accountability procedures. In 2006, the MoI established procedures to account for pistols to the individual level. Concurrently, it established a national registry of all MoI-issued weapons and a system of administrative fines for lost weapons.

There are 263 Police Transition Teams (PTTs) assigned to the Iraqi Police, covering police commands from local police stations up through the district and provincial levels. There are 28 border transition teams assigned to about two-thirds of the DBE units at the battalion level and above. There are 40 NP TTs assigned to over 80% of the NP units at the battalion level and above, and the MoI-TT has 96 advisors assigned to the various directorates in the MoI, composed of Coalition military, Department of State (DoS) civilians and contracted personnel. Approximately 17% of the required number of PTTs for MoI forces are not yet established due to the unavailability of Coalition Military Police units around which the PTTs can base.

MoI-MoD Cooperation

Independent reporting indicates that cooperation and coordination between Army and Police units remains poor in most of Iraq. Local conditions strongly influence this cooperation, and in some areas the police, or National Police, and the Army work well together. The Prime Minister has set up several operational commands, which report

through the MoD directly to the Prime Minister's office. These operational Commands were designed to improve coordination between the Army and National Police. However, in many areas cooperation remains poor and the new commands are sometimes seen as pro-Shi'ite (and pro-Prime minister) rather than serving the national interest.

The state of IA-IP relations in Rawah, a small city in Anbar, reflects some of the larger problems facing the two organizations. The IA looks upon the IP as unprofessional and amateurish. According to Brig. Gen Ayad Ismael of the IA, "We are professionals. They are often not." Many IP, understandably, feel underappreciated by the IA. One young IP officer in Rawah stated "They do not respect us. They think they know everything."[cxi] The IA and IP have refused to share the Joint Coordination Center in Rawa, which was originally designed specifically to encourage cooperation between the two organizations.

Intelligence

The first Intelligence Transition Team (INTEL-TT) was established in the Fall of 2007. The INTEL-TT "was established to assist the Government of Iraq (GoI) in developing national intelligence capabilities. The team functions in a cross-ministerial capacity advising intelligence elements in both the MoD and MoI. The team is led by an SES-level DoD civilian intelligence professional and will soon grow to 78 embedded intelligence and law enforcement advisors." MNSTC-I officials noted that the ITT's Joint Manning Document calls for 78 advisors as well as 36 interpreters.

The removal of Iraq's Special Forces from MoD control to a new counterterrorism command has raised concerns among Iraqis and US advisors that Maliki is trying to tighten control over them. The ISOF, combined with Shirwan al-Waely's intelligence agency, give Maliki both an intelligence apparatus and a highly trained armed force directly under his control. According to Dan Maguire, a US intelligence advisor to Iraq, these developments gives Maliki dangerous power: ""This looks and smells very much like a Saddam-era structure, where the prime minister has his hand on the throttle and can use it as he sees fit. If he decides he wants to go and hit Sunni targets with these guys, he's got a killing machine to go do that."[cxii]

The Department of Defense also reports that serious problems still exist in developing other aspects of Iraqi IS&R capabilities:[cxiii]

> The National Information and Investigation Agency (NIIA) is the lead intelligence apparatus of the MoI. The organization consists of a National Headquarters, 15 provincial bureaus, six regional bureaus, 56 district offices and offices at 11 PoEs. NIIA analysis and investigations enable intelligence supported police operations across MoI. At the end of CY2007, NIIA had 4,700 of 7,000 authorized personnel on hand. Increased personnel numbers have measurably improved NIIA capabilities. An end-of-year shipment of 159 vehicles raised its vehicle fill from 62% to 84%.
>
> …However, NIIA effectiveness remains hampered by inefficient logistics processes, weak command-and-control systems and a primitive training base. However, improvements in these areas are anticipated based on several ongoing initiatives and projects.
>
> …The installation of the Iraqi Intelligence Network (I2N) throughout the Agency by the end of 2008 will provide a secure intelligence dissemination means and will facilitate command and control from the Baghdad headquarters to the provincial and border offices. The construction of

> the new headquarters and the Baghdad Bureau complex is on track, with completion anticipated in June 2008.
>
> ….To combat militia infiltration, foreign intelligence penetration and corruption, the NIIA is developing a Personnel Assurance Program that includes organic polygraph capability. Ongoing initiatives to improve manning, basing, equipping and training begun in 2007 will translate into improvements in NIIA's intelligence and law enforcement capabilities in 2008.

According to MNF-I, the I2N was 50% complete as of September, 2008, and was on track to be completed by December 2008.

Iraq's intelligence capabilities continue to mature as its many diverse intelligence institutions have begun to reach initial operating capabilities in 2008. MoD's Joint Headquarters M2 (Intelligence) and the Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS) are operational, providing intelligence support to ISF. Likewise, MoI's National Information and Investigation Agency (NIIA) has filled its ranks and markedly improved its operations at the provincial level.

The Counterterrorist Command G2 is the least mature intelligence element, but has taken great strides in improving support to Iraqi Special Operations Forces. Concurrently, ground and air forces are fielding new ISR capabilities, including SIGINT, IMINT, and HUMINT. The establishment of Interagency Intelligence Fusion Cells (IFCs) and the growth of the Iraqi Intelligence Network (I2N) have greatly increased intelligence sharing and cooperation between Iraq's intelligence organizations, including with the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS). As these organizations become fully operational in 2009-2010, institutional interdependencies will likely increase cooperation and enterprise effectiveness.

However, Iraq's national-level intelligence apparatus remains divided between a CIA-supported 'official' agency (the Iraqi National Intelligence Service or INIS) and a Shi'ite-run agency (under the auspices of the Minister of State for National Security (MSNSA), Shirwan al-Waely). The levels of competition or cooperation between these agencies remain unclear. There is certainly some level of mistrust between INIS and MSNSA.

The Coalitions advisory and supervisory capabilities are virtually nonexistent with regards to the MSNSA. According to MNSTC-I, ITT has no relationship with MSNSA. ITT does not advise nor train MSNSA. Contact is limited to those meetings in which MSNSA is in attendance or at the Intelligence Fusion Cells that support the Regional Operations Command Centers.

Arguably, MSNSA is not firmly grounded in Iraqi law. Moreover, MSNSA is the least integrated of the intelligence organizations although it does provide representatives at the Intelligence Fusion Cells. INIS is clearly the most mature of the intelligence agencies and there is some friction between INIS and the Ministerial level organizations, but that friction is decreasing as the other organizations become operational and contribute to the COIN effort.

Progress in Iraqi Funding of the ISF

The US has paid for much of the development of the ISF in the past. SIGIR reported in July 2008 that the passing of the supplemental to the US FY2008 budget had raised total US appropriations for the ISF to $17.9 billion, almost equaling the $18.4 billion appropriated to the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund 2. SIGIR reporting also noted that, "total U.S. funding for Iraq security now stands at $27 billion, equaling about $56,000 per Iraqi police officer, soldier, and security officer."[cxiv]

A successful transfer of security responsibility to the ISF requires Iraq to not only take over all funding of Iraqi forces, but do so efficiently enough to make them effective. There has been significant progress in this shifting the burden of ISF development to Iraq. A GAO report in August 2008 found that Government of Iraq had allocated: $12.3 billion to the security sector from the start of 2005 through April 2008, and had spent $2.9 billion. In comparison, the US had allocated $22,5 billion, and spent $13.7 billion.[cxv] GOI funding for the ISF has, however, increased rapidly since 2006. Record oil prices have contributed to a rapid rise in GOI revenue, and this has allowed them to increase their spending on the ISF. In both 2006 and 2007, the Iraqi security ministries spent more on the ISF than the US did.

The US reduced its Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF) request for FY 2009 from $5.1 billion to $2.8 billion based upon projected GOI spending on security of $8 billion in 2008 and $11 billion in 2009.[cxvi] A SIGIR audit in the summer of 2008 also found that Iraq had transfer significant amounts of money to the ISF budget,[cxvii]

> A new SIGIR review of ISFF funding revealed that $4.7 billion, or approximately one-third of all ISFF funding, has been programmed for infrastructure. Unobligated balances for infrastructure projects amount to more than $1 billion, which means that ISFF-supported security construction projects could continue into 2010

Despite clear progress in Iraq's ability to fund the ISF on its own, its budget execution remains inadequate. This problem is scarcely limited to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior. The July 2008 quarterly report of SIGIR notes that Iraqi oil export revenues may exceed $70 billion in 2008, but that,[cxviii]

> Notwithstanding its significant fiscal resources, Iraq continues to struggle to execute its capital budgets. In 2006, the GOI reported that it executed 22% of its capital budget. That rate notably increased to 63% in 2007, but execution rates of provincial capital budgets continue to be low. As of March 2008, only 2.7% of the cumulative capital budgets allocated to the provinces (excluding the Kurdistan Regional Government) for 2008 had been expended.4 To address budget execution problems, the GOI raised limits on contract authorization at the ministry level to $50 million for key ministries and to $10 million for the provinces. The GOI also eliminated the Central Contracts Committee, which had been attached to the Economic Affairs Committee of the Council of Ministers, replacing it with contract committees within ministries.

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

> From 2005 through 2007, the Iraqi government generated an estimated $96 billion in cumulative revenues, of which crude oil export sales accounted for about $90.2 billion, or 94 percent. For

> 2008, GAO estimates that Iraq could generate between $73.5 billion and $86.2 billion in total revenues, with oil exports accounting for between $66.5 billion to $79.2 billion. Projected 2008 oil revenues could be more than twice the average annual amount Iraq generated from 2005 through 2007. These projections are based on actual sales through June 2008 and projections for July to December that assume an average export price from $96.88 to $125.29 per barrel and oil export volumes of 1.89 to 2.01 million barrels per day.
>
> From 2005 through 2007, the Iraqi government spent an estimated $67 billion on operating and investment activities. Ninety percent was spent on operating expenses, such as salaries and goods and services, and the remaining 10 percent on investments, such as structures and vehicles. The Iraqi government spent only 1 percent of total expenditures to maintain Iraq- and U.S.-funded investments such as buildings, water and electricity installations, and weapons. While total expenditures grew from 2005 through 2007, Iraq was unable to spend all its budgeted funds. In 2007, Iraq spent 80 percent of its $29 billion operating budget and 28 percent of its $12 billion investment budget. For 2008, GAO estimates that Iraq could spend between $35.3 billion and $35.9 billion of its $49.9 billion budget.
>
> As of December 31, 2007, the Iraqi government had accumulated financial deposits of $29.4 billion, held in the Development Fund for Iraq and central government deposits at the Central Bank of Iraq and Iraq's commercial banks. This balance is the result, in part, of an estimated cumulative budget surplus of about $29 billion from 2005 to 2007. For 2008, GAO estimates a budget surplus of between $38.2 billion to $50.3 billion. If spent, a proposed Iraqi budget supplemental of $22 billion could reduce this projected surplus.
>
> … U.S. government, coalition, and international agencies have identified a number of factors affecting the Iraqi government's ability to spend more of its revenues on capital investments intended to rebuild its infrastructure. These factors include Iraq's shortage of trained staff, weak procurement and budgeting systems, and violence and sectarian strife.
>
> First, these officials have observed the relative shortage of trained budgetary, procurement, and other staff with the necessary technical skills as a factor limiting the Iraqi government's ability to plan and execute its capital spending. Officials report a shortage of trained staff with budgetary experience to prepare and execute budgets and a shortage of staff with procurement expertise to solicit, award, and oversee capital projects.
>
> Second, weak procurement, budgetary, and accounting systems are of particular concern in Iraq because these systems must balance efficient execution of capital projects while protecting against reported widespread corruption.
>
> Third, these officials have noted that violence and sectarian strife remain major obstacles to developing Iraqi government capacity, including its ability to execute budgets for capital projects. The high level of violence contributes to a decrease in the number of workers available, can increase the amount of time needed to plan and complete capital projects, and hinders U.S. advisors' ability to provide the ministries with assistance and monitor capital project performance.

The GOI increased its budget for the ISF by 23% between 2007 and 2008. [cxx] Yet the DoD reported in March 2008 that the baseline MoD budget allocation for 2008 was $3 billion short of operational requirements. According to the DoD, this would require ". . . additional GoI funding support or re-programming capability acquisition into 2009 or beyond."[cxxi] It is not clear how much a later supplemental has affected this total.

Operational budgets, which include salaries, have been disbursed slowly by the MoD and MoI, but have been timely enough to meet urgent needs. In contrast, SIGIR estimates that the MoD spent only 11.8% of its capital budget in 2007, and the MoI spent only 11.1%. As of mid-2008, the MoD had spent only 13% of its total 2008 budget of $4,831 million, and zero percent of its capital budget of $242 million. The MoI had spent only 18% of its total 2008 budget of $3,806 million, and 0.3 percent of its capital budget of $116 million.

The Ministry of Justice had spent only 21% of its total 2008 budget of $188 million, and 1% of its capital budget of $7.1 million.[cxxii]

A different GAO estimate is shown in Figure 7. On the one hand, this estimate shows that total expenditures are rising sharply, not just budgets. The GAO estimates that total spending by the Mod and MoI rose by an annual average of 48% in dollars during 2005-2007, and 36% in Iraqi Dinars. On the other hand, Figure 7 also shows that most of this rise occurred in operating expenses – heavily dominated by -- personnel compensation and that investment spending rose to only token levels.

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

SIGIR and MNSTC-I reporting note that progress is occurring in both ministries, and these problems do not necessarily preclude a successful transfer of security responsibility to the ISF by 2011. At the same time, the Special

Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction's (SIGIR) July 2008 report did note that,[cxxiii]

> a lack of coordination and delegation at the ministerial and military-service levels limits effectiveness. Coalition advisors still operate in a lead role for planning at the strategic and operational levels for the Iraqi Army. The MOD faces other challenging issues, including:
>
> - budget execution, decision-making, and business practices that continue to be influenced
> - by the practices of the former regime
> - rapid force growth
> - "normal behavior in groups"
> - trust
>
> According to DoD, the MOD requires significant assistance in logistics and sustainment but remains committed to making the ISF "mostly" self-sufficient by the end of 2008. Of the 13 planned logistics commands, 8 have been built. The largest of these logistics efforts is the Taji National Depot, which will be the primary logistics unit for the ISF, supplying parts, repair services, and other equipment.

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

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

SIGIR makes similar comments about the management and spending capabilities of the Ministry of the Interior,[cxxvi]

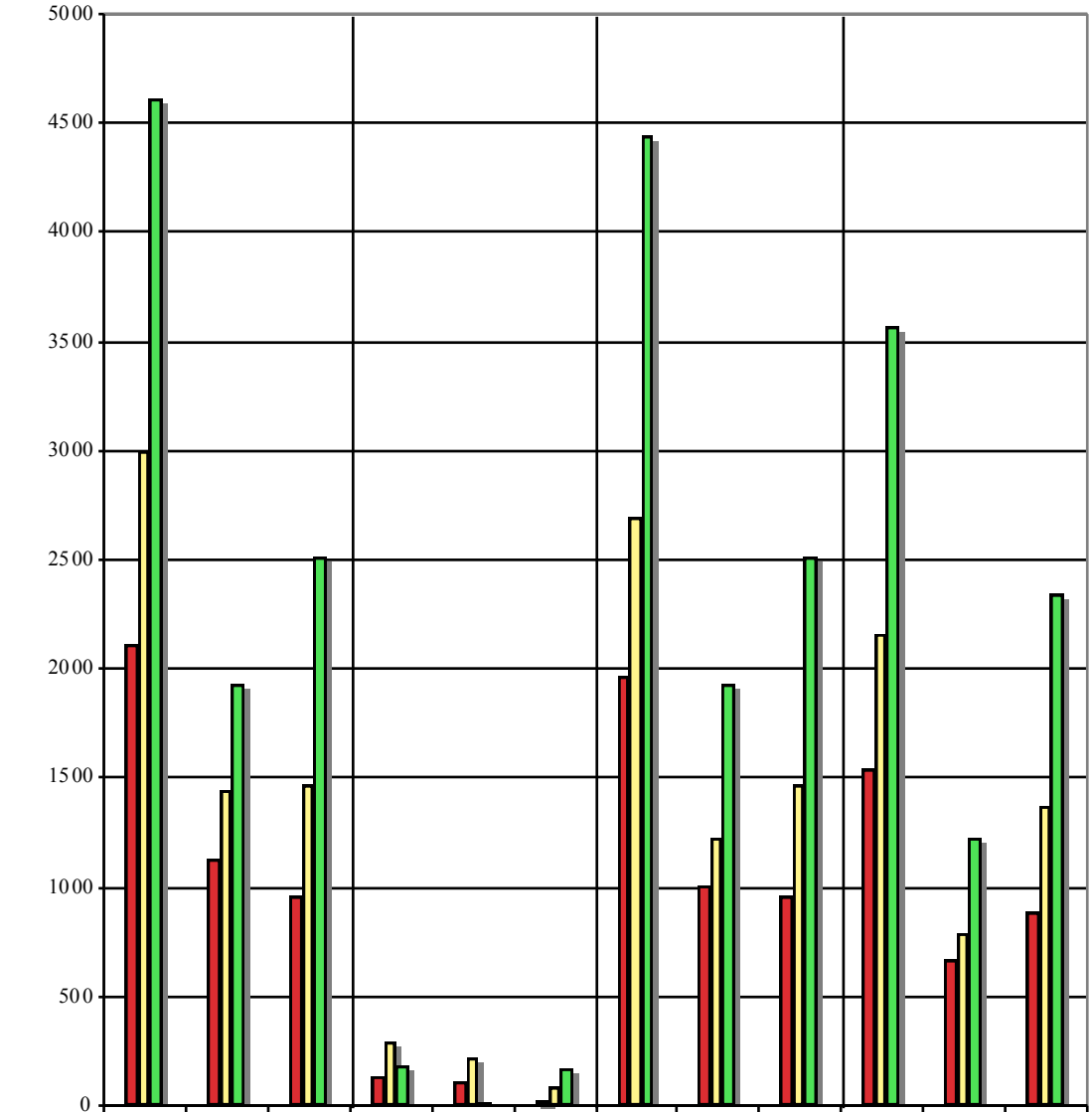
> Eliminating sectarianism and corruption have been the MOI's most significant challenges. The UN reported that a new MOI organizational structure and security strategy have been approved, which should improve the MOI's ability to develop the professionalism of the services and foster a security environment that respects the rule of law and human rights.
> … DoD reported that there is "steady, but uneven improvement" in ministerial capacity, but the fight against corruption continues, and the MOI services require more training to become a consistent professional service.372 Moreover, it must address these challenges:
> - managing rapid force expansion
> - modernizing hierarchy and processes
> - improving the professionalism of the services
> - integrating the Sons of Iraq
> - enhancing and integrating the rule of law
>
> …. Unlike the MOD, the MOI does not have a formal logistics system (including specialized units across all police services). There is a sustainment brigade for the National Police, which maintains a broader patrol area than the IPS. The Coalition is constructing additional warehouses to remedy backlogs of goods received through the ISFF.

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

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

Figure 7: GAO Estimate of MOD and MOI Actual Expenditures: Total, Investment, Operating, and Personnel Compensation: 2005, 2006, 2007

($US Millions)



Ministry	MoD/MO	MOD	MOI	MOD/M	MOD	MOI	MOD/M	MOD	MOI	MOD/M	MOD	MOI
	Total Expeditures			Investment Expendit			Operating Expendit			Employee Compen		
2005	2109	1126	958	138	112	26	1971	1013	958	1541	664	887
2006	2992	1443	1470	296	217	79	2697	1227	1470	2162	794	1368
2007	4617	1934	2517	176	10	166	4441	1924	2517	3564	1227	2338
Total	*9718	*4503	*4945	*609	*339	*270	*9108	*4164	*4915	*7268	*2685	*4583

Surplus," GAO-08-1031, August 5, 2008, http://www.gao.gov/htext/d081031.html.

Problems with Pay, Benefits, and Corruption

The U.S. military and MNF-I, as well as the Iraqi government, do not have an adequate system for tracking pay, leave, transfer of money to families, health benefits, and death and disability benefits. This failure of oversight is evident in all elements of Iraqi forces, particularly the National Police and regular police. The lower-level security forces, such as the Facility Protection Service (FPS) and the Provincial Security Force (PSF) have practically no oversight. The SOI program likewise has little oversight, although theoretically the SOI program is temporary.

There are many and continuing reports of corruption in recruiting and promotion, as well as in procurement, the handling salaries, and the transfer of goods and supplies. There were still press reports in July 2008 that Iraqi Army officers had to pay a $5,000 bribe for a place in some training academies, and that it could take a $30,000 bribe to become a general.[cxxviii] Work by the GAO and others found that weapons were not only unaccounted for, but sometimes seem to have "disappeared." Iraqi officers and officials stated that bribes were often necessary to obtain any action from the regular police, and that there was sometimes competing bidding between the complainant and possible criminal.

Another major problem facing the MoI, and to a lesser extent the MoD, are "phantom" soldiers. Commanders keep men on the pay rolls after they leave the force or are killed, resulting in units often having far more men on the rolls than those who actually serve. The pay accrued by these ghost soldiers is usually kept by the commanding officers. An MoI investigation found that 15% - 20% of the names on police payrolls no longer corresponded to active-duty officers. MoI investigators were sent out to provincial police stations, and took the straightforward approach of refusing to pay anyone who could not walk into the office and collect the money themselves. Over 11,000 names were purged from the police roles in wake of the investigation.[cxxix] The "phantom" officer problem was particularly acute in Sunni areas.

Crosscutting Challenges that Affect All Iraqi Forces

There are a wide range of crosscutting challenges that affect all elements of the ISF. These are areas where all need to make improvements to the point where they can both replace all US forces in the counterinsurgency mission and are ready to deter and defend against foreign enemies.

The Real-World Manpower and Force Building Situation

Far too much of the unclassified reporting on ISF manning levels has reflected a distorted view of force development planning progress, and has acted to create unrealistic and unfair expectations of progress. The most recent Defense Department quarterly report (*Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq)* was a major improvement over previous versions of the report, with more detailed and realistic appraisals of the ISF. However, the unclassified reporting on the transfer of responsibility to Iraqi forces need far more detail and transparency to show that ISF active strength is building up in ways that will truly allow safe withdrawal of all the elements of US forces.

Two major problems still exist in the kind of unclassified manpower reporting shown in Figure 8, and on combat readiness, that disguise the risks in too rapid a withdrawal of US forces:

One is treating forces as having national rather than sectarian and ethnic loyalties when many elements are all too clearly loyal to given Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, or Kurdish factions and have ties to various militias. Some reporting touches on these problems in broad terms but their seriousness is badly understated, as is the fact that creating truly national forces is probably impossible until there is real political conciliation between Iraq's main factions. ISF development is hurt by a central government that is tied to Arab Shi'ite interests and militias, and is afraid of reaching some kind of stable and lasting bargain with Arab Sunnis. It is also hurt, however, by the lack of serious Sunni alignment with the central government, and Kurdish efforts to maintain control over largely Kurdish forces. The integration of the SOI into the ISF will also exacerbate this problem, as the SOI members may not see their primary loyalty as lying with the central Iraqi government.

The second is the focus on reporting on the number of "trained" men in the ISF. For example, the State Department reported a total of 531,000 trained personnel in the ISF as of July 31, 2008.[cxxx] But the United States and MNF-I base such figures on the number of men that the MNF-I has trained and equipped, not on actual manning. Such figures bear little resemblance to the actual force levels that are really still in service. SIGIR found that "a number of continuing limitations to the data published quarterly on authorized, assigned, and trained [ISF] personnel. SIGIR found that a primary reason for the variances in numbers reported over time appears to be the result of changing methodologies from report to report."[cxxxi] SIGIR also found discrepancies in the Iraqi ministry's counting of absentees or AWOL personnel.

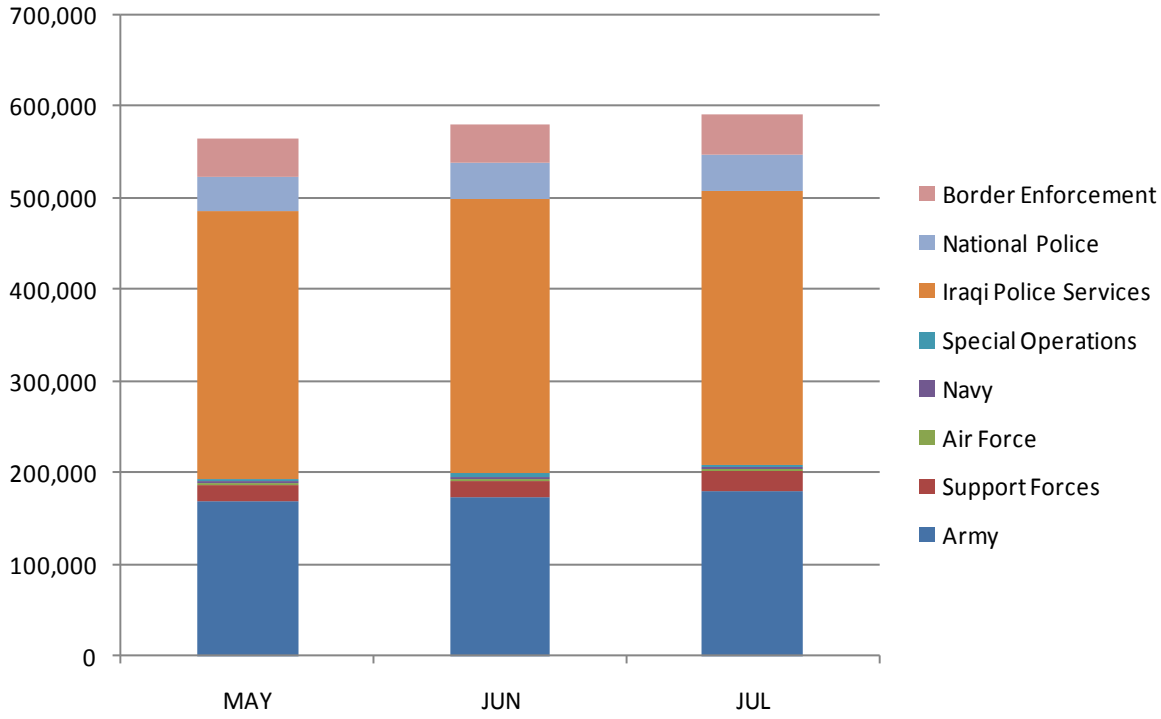
The DoD has stated that "It is unknown how many of the 165,400 Iraqi military personnel who have been trained and equipped by the Coalition are still on the payroll, or how many on the payroll have been through Coalition training."[cxxxii] A senior US

commander described the "Trained and Equipped" figure as "worthless". However, despite this admission, many observers cite the total "trained and equipped" numbers uncritically.

While well over 530,000 men have been trained and equipped since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, a large percentage have left or deserted, substantial numbers have been killed and wounded, and some 10 to 20 percent of those who remain are absent at any given time to take care of their families and transfer their pay in a country where there is no meaningful banking system. The Iraqi regular forces and national police may only be about 20 to 25 percent short of the totals reported for their trained and equipped manpower, but the percentages could be much higher. Certainly, many battalion elements have manning levels well under 50 percent, and as already mentioned, many units have critical shortages of commissioned and noncommissioned officers.

Figure 8: Total Size of Iraqi Security Forces May-July, 2008

(Number of Personnel)



Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008.

Problems with Weapons Procurement and Facilities Construction

The primary avenue for Iraqi military procurement continues to be the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. As of March 2008, the GOI had purchased roughly $3 billion worth of equipment and services through the FMS, and was expected to purchase another $1.5 billion in 2008.[cxxxiii] As the US government regulates the FMS program, it was hoped that this would help cut down on the corruption and mismanagement evident in previous Iraqi weapons procurement deals with other nations. According to the DoD, ". . . the GoI is making a substantial effort to address procurement and contracting problems within the MoD and MoI by very aggressively committing procurement funds to equipping and sustaining Iraqi forces through the use of U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS). Prime Minister Maliki is extending the US$1.72 billion in 2006 funds committed for FMS with an additional US$1.6 billion in 2007 funds, of which US$1.1 billion is for MoD and US$500 million is for MoI."[cxxxiv]

While the GOI has been somewhat successful in procuring weapons and platforms via the FMS system, there are signs that the ISF cannot handle the current pace of purchases. In late 2007 there were several hundred Humvees and other equipment in Iraq pending issue, as well as a backlog of 75 pallets and 250 vehicles in the US pending shipment.[cxxxv] In particular, the ISF has had particular problems processing vehicle repair parts.[cxxxvi]

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

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

The end result is that Iraq uses arms purchases outside of the FMS program to speed the acquisition of urgently needed arms. This continues to present problems that are far more serious than the problems in the FMS system. Like every aspect of Iraqi government activity, such arms purchases have been riddled with corruption. A major weapons procurement scandal in 2005, which brought down then Minister of Defense Hazam Shalan (who is now a fugitive), involved Iraqi officials using middlemen to ferry huge bags of cash in order to purchase sub-par or nonexistent equipment.[cxxxix]

While such blatant corruption seems to be less common today, a recently disclosed Iraqi deal to purchase arms from Serbia revealed the continuing problems with the MOD's procurement process. The $833 million deal to purchase from Serbia "a large number of helicopters, planes, armored personnel carriers, mortar systems, machine guns, body armor, military uniforms and other equipment"[cxl] was negotiated in September 2007 and was unusual in several ways.

It was negotiated without the knowledge of American commanders or many senior Iraqi leaders, and sidestepped anticorruption safeguards, including approval by uniformed IA officers and an Iraqi contract approval committee. The deal appears to have been negotiated largely by Minister Qadir and planning minister Ali Glahil Baban. In response to mounting criticism of the deal, it was reduced to $236 million.[cxli] As of August 2008, much of the equipment purchased in this deal had yet to arrive.

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

> 140 M1A1 Abrams tanks modified and upgraded to the M1A1M Abrams configuration, 8 M88A2 Tank Recovery Vehicles, 64 M1151A1B1 Armored High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV), 92 M1152 Shelter Carriers, 12 M577A2 Command Post Carriers, 16 M548A1 Tracked Logistics Vehicles, 8 M113A2 Armored Ambulances, and 420 AN/VRC-92 Vehicular Receiver Transmitters. Also included are: 35 M1070 Heavy Equipment Transporter (HET) Truck Tractors, 40 M978A2 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) Tankers, 36 M985A2 HEMTT Cargo Trucks, 4 M984A2 HEMTT Wrecker Trucks, 140 M1085A1 5-ton Cargo Trucks, 8 HMMWV Ambulances w/ Shelter, 8 Contact Maintenance Trucks, 32 500 gal Water Tank Trailers, 16 2500 gal Water Tank Trucks, 16 Motorcycles, 80 8 ton Heavy/Medium Trailers, 16 Sedans, 92 M1102 Light Tactical trailers, 92 635NL Semi-Trailers, 4 5,500 lb Rough Terrain Forklifts, 20 M1A1 engines, 20 M1A1 Full Up Power Packs, 3 spare M88A2 engines, 10 M1070 engines, 20 HEMTT engines, 4 M577A2 spare engines, 2 5-ton truck engines, 20 spare HMMWV engines, ammunition, spare and repair parts, maintenance, support equipment, publications and documentation, personnel training and equipment, U.S. Government and

> contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.[cxliii]

This purchase would be enough to equip 2 armored brigades, minus armored personnel carriers.[cxliv] Iraq also requested 160 M1117 Armored Security Vehicles (ASVs), which provide better protection than Humvees, 24 Bell Armed 407 Helicopters or 24 Boeing AH-6 Helicopters, likely used as light attack helicopters to support Special Operations Forces, more than 1100 120 mm and 81mm mortars, six C-130J-30 aircraft used for airlift, and 392 Light Armored Vehicles.[cxlv]

The 140 M1A1M tanks, together with Iraq's existing armored forces, will give Iraq a small, but advanced armored force. While this does not, by any means, give Iraq the ability to defend itself against its much better armed neighbors, it is a step in the right direction.

Localization, Sectarian, and Ethnic Issues in Force Development

There are a wide range of continuing problems in force development because of the failure to create truly national forces, and the impact of sectarian and ethnic tensions. Iraq has a very weak central government, and it is just beginning to show whether or not it can exercise effective national leadership and command. Local actors, ranging from provincial governors to militia and tribal leaders, have a great deal of influence outside of Baghdad. Indeed the central government has been increasingly challenged to make its policies felt outside of Baghdad. This weakness is reflected in the ISF, and the level of national leadership and control varies sharply by force element.

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

The IA is much more centralized and tied to the government in Baghdad than the MoI. While heavily Kurdish divisions of ex-Peshmerga fighters do pose a potential problem for MoD control of its forces, this issue has so far not been a major problem. The MoI, however, is much more decentralized, and much more heavily influenced by local actors such as militias and tribal leaders.

The structure of the MoI makes it very difficult for the central government to control the IP. Control of police forces in the provinces is held by the provincial director of police (PDoP). The PDoP is elected by provincial councils from a list of candidates provided by the MoI. However, once elected they are very hard to remove. PDoPs in general have been "closely tied to the governor and to the dominant political party in each province."[cxlvi] Furthermore, short of the drastic step of withholding funding altogether, the central MoI has few levers to directly influence provincial actions.

The central GOI has attempted to increase its control over ISF, and particularly IP forces in the provinces through the use of Joint Operations Command (JOC) centers. 5 JOCs were established as of April 2008, in Basra, Karbala, Baqubah, Samarra, and Baghdad.[cxlvii] The commander of each JOC is chosen by the prime minister and maintains operational control of all ISF forces in his AoR, including the IP and PDoP.

The end results, however, are uncertain at best. MoI continued to hire additional police beyond those trained by MNSTC-I. This is the result of "pressure from provincial and local governments that want additional police in their jurisdictions."[cxlviii] These "extra" police are hired, vetted, trained and equipped by the local governments, often making them unreliable. Gen. Dempsey stated in June, 2007 that there were "between 60,000 and 75,000 policemen on the payroll over the authorization and untrained by us [MNF-I]."[cxlix] However, MG Cannon stated that this number was 88,000 as of August 2008.[cl]

The "extra" police also strain the logistics of the already underequipped MoI forces. The US only funds provide equipment for the authorized force levels. The MoI procures and funds on its own the Police who have been hired in excess of the approved Objective Civil Security Force levels. The massive backlog in untrained police is greatly exacerbated by these 'extra' hires.

The DoD reports that "there are no reliable data on how many of these are the approximately 135,000 police who have received basic recruit and transition reintegration training from the Coalition. Estimates of the percentage of total trained by the Coalition that are still on the force range from 40% to 70%." The DoD also added that the attrition rate is estimated at 17% annually. [cli]

Sectarian and Ethnic Problems

Sectarian issues continue to plague the ISF. There is still far too little evidence that the Iraqi central government really wants truly national Iraqi Security Forces, as distinguished from Shi'ite dominated forces with limited numbers of Kurdish dominated units. While there have been notable, and sometimes courageous, exceptions, far too much of the ISF leans heavily towards the Shi'ite cause, either actively or through inaction.

The US officially soft peddles how serious this problem is, but it is all too apparent in much of Iraq. According to the DoD: ". . . the development of a unified, nonsectarian force that will be capable of securing the country in the event of a withdrawal of Coalition forces is hampered by the loyalty of soldiers within many military units to their tribal and ethno-sectarian or political affiliations and associated militias. These affiliations are often the basis for relationships between key officers and higher-level authorities who are not always in the direct chain of command."[clii]

The Badr Brigade, a major Shiite militia, appeared to have joined the ISF almost in its entirety. According to a senior US commander, the Badr Brigade had "melded" into the ISF. However, it is unclear the extent to which former Badr members retain their old loyalties.

The MoI continues to struggle with much more serious sectarianism than the MoD. The MoI building itself used to be the scene of sectarian violence, and MoI employees were often killed on their way to and from work. Violence at, or near, the MoI building itself had declined significantly by summer 2008, although this may be the result of a consolidation of power in the MoI by Dawa and ISCI/Badr.

The JAM exercises less influence at the higher levels of the MoI, but has much more sway over IP personnel in the field. In JAM strongholds, the police are often unapologetically sympathetic to the JAM.

The continued prevalence of the problem of sectarianism was demonstrated by an ISF raid on the Diyala Provincial government headquarters in August 2008. Diyala has a Sunni majority but has a largely Shi'ite government. An ISF special operations emergency response unit raided the government building to arrest Husain al-Zubaidi, a Sunni politician. The botched raid led to a half-hour long shootout between the emergency response unit and local police, and resulted in the death of the provincial governor's secretary.[cliii]

Karim Khalaf, an Interior Ministry spokesman who's serving as the interim commander of police in Diyala, described the emergency response unit as a counterterrorism force that's nominally under Interior oversight but with its own chain of command. The name of its leader and the size of its force are classified, according to Khalaf.[cliv]

The upcoming provincial elections will serve as a crucial test of the ISF's loyalty and capabilities. The ISF's role in protecting previous elections across Iraq has been held up as an example of the improving capabilities of the force. However, the provincial elections may prove a harder test, as many of the established powers now in control of the GOI and the ISF stand to lose influence to newer parties. A USA Today reporter directly witnessed an instance of an IA officer attempting to illegally obtain the names and addresses of voters at a registration center in Baghdad. There is an emerging pattern of voter intimidation by the ISF, according to Faraj al-Haydari, the chairman of Iraq's election oversight agency.[clv]

Kurdish Forces

As yet, there is no agreed dividing line between Kurdish areas of control and the control of the central government. The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) is a de facto autonomous region but there is no clear constitutional or legal definition of this autonomy. The KRG also occupies a mix of different provinces in the area that made up the former Kurdish security zone established after the failure of the Kurdish uprising in 1991. This zone dominates Dahuk, Irbil, and Sulayamniyah, and occupies roughly 10% of Iraq's territory.

Kurdish forces, however, are also present in parts of Ninevah. Tamim, and Diyala, and Kurdish political pressure extends into areas which cover roughly another 7% of Iraq. The Kurds have shown an interest in controlling parts of the greater Mosul area and towns as far south as Sinjar. There is a serious and potentially violent struggle for the control of Kirkuk and the oil fields around it, and for cities in Diyala like Khanqin and Jalawa. This threatens to both divided the ISF along Kurdish and Arab lines, and weaken ISF efforts to fully defeat Al Qa'ida in Iraq.[clvi]

The development of Kurdish Police and Army forces is something of a black hole for unclassified official reporting. The KRG receives 17% of the Iraqi budget and maintains its own MOI and MOD and runs its own forces military, paramilitary, and police forces almost entirely independent of GoI or Coalition supervision. The KRG maintains police units as well as army brigades independent of the ISF.

While the DoD Quarterly report on Security and Stability in Iraq does include data on the numbers of IPs in the KRG, virtually no other information on the forces in the KRG is available from official sources. Indeed, MNF-I stated that "At this time there is only one point of contact for IP personnel numbers updates in those three provinces [under KRG authority] so the data in all three provinces is updated as often as possible."[clvii] While it is not clear how often that is, one point of contact for the tens of thousands of IPs in the KRG is clearly inadequate.

The disposition, equipment levels, and training of the forces under the KRG remain unclear. However, unofficial reports from US military sources indicate that, in the PUK area at least, the Peshmerga have been organized into a brigade-centric infantry force with some armor and artillery and support units. It is believed that the Peshmerga number roughly 100,000 men.

Two new IA divisions (the 15th and 16th) are now being formed out of regular Peshmerga troops. The 15th division is being formed out of PUK soldiers, while the 16th is from KDP troops. Units transferred from the KRG to the regular ISF fall under the central Iraqi government's budget, thus giving the KRG a significant monetary incentive to transfer its forces.

While the Peshmerga are legally exempted from the GoI's ban on militias, they are only allowed to operate within the KRG. However, unofficial US military sources report that Peshmerga forces operate outside of this area frequently. Regular Peshmerga units appear to be permanently stationed in and around both Mosul and Kirkuk. The Asayish, KRG special paramilitary police force, has also been accused of operating, and even arresting suspects, outside of the KRG areas.

Another, more serious incident occurred when regular IA units were sent into Khanaqin, a largely Kurdish city outside of the KRG. PM Maliki had previously ordered the Peshmerga unit stationed in the city, the 34th Garmiyan Brigade, to leave. Peshmerga units appeared to have been stationed in Khanaqin for some time. The 34th Brigade refused to leave the city, agreeing to only take orders from the KRG. Kurdish pressure, both within the city and from the KRG, forced the removal of at least one IA unit from the city. As of September 2008, the Peshmerga forces within the city, and IA units stationed just outside of the city remained in a tense standoff. A "senior US military delegation" was sent to the city to help resolve the crisis on September 8, 2008.[clviii]

Partially in response to the controversy over Khanaqin, Kurdish leaders began questioning the sale of advanced weapons to the ISF, asking for guarantees the weapons not be used against them.[clix]

Incorporation of Sunnis into the ISF

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

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

In case after case, a long list of potential recruits is given to the committee, only to have it returned with almost all the Sunni names taken off. In one case, Brig. Gen Jim Huggins sent a list to the committee of 3,000, mostly Sunni, men who wanted to join the IP. The list was returned with only 400 men approved. All were Shi'ite. According to Huggins, "That's a blatant example that someone is still looking at this thing with a sectarian eye."[clxi]

The ISF and the Re-Ba'athification law

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

However, the bill was vaguely worded, and depending on how it is implemented the bill may result in the law having the opposite effect as originally intended. One US diplomat felt that "The law is about as clear as mud."[clxii] While it does include provisions for re-instating many Ba'athists, it excludes them from certain ministries, including the MoD and MoI. Some, including Ahmed Chalabi, head of the de-Baathification commission, believed that the law would result in the firing of all former Ba'athists now serving in the ISF, a total of 7,000 men.[clxiii] Implementation of the law would largely be overseen by a 7-member commission appointed by the cabinet and approved by the Parliament.[clxiv]

Concerns about the final effects of the bill delayed its approval by the Presidency Council, the last step before it became law.

Force Development Challenges: The Army

The rapid expansions of both the ISF and IP have caused myriad problems. Furthermore, the manpower tensions the US military is facing have strained the Coalition's ability to partner with Iraqi units. US commanders in Iraq announced in early May, 2008 that for the first time contractors, as opposed to US military personnel, would be used to staff MiTTs.[clxv]

This development may not necessarily hurt training efforts, so long as the contractors recruited to the MiTTs are of high quality. However, if the Status of Forces agreement to be eventually signed by the US and Iraq does not include immunity for contractors from Iraqi justice, the costs of hiring contractors of all types in Iraq may rise substantially.

Force elements built for local defense missions have instead been deployed on a national level. The challenges Iraq faces are further complicated by the fact that some Iraqi forces, including roughly half of the army divisions and almost all of the regular police, were originally recruited and equipped to serve locally in limited defensive roles; they were not trained and equipped as mobile forces to act as active combat units deployable throughout the country to deal with insurgency and civil conflict. This means that the recruiting base must be changed, that new pay and arrangements are needed to create a nationally deployable force, and that new equipment and facilities will be needed for the deployable units thrust into more serious combat.

The MoD and MoI both face very similar, but distinct problems in quickly training, equipping, and fielding ISF forces.

Expansion of the Iraqi Army: Expanding Too Quickly to Reach the Proper Level of Force Quality

During the time US forces 'surged' in 2007, Iraqi forces surged as well. According to General Petraeus "It is sometimes overlooked, but the Iraqi surge was over three times our surge. They added over 100,000 Iraqi Security Force members. That's an enormous generation of Iraqi forces."[clxvi]

Gen. Petraeus added in his Senate armed Services Committee testimony on April 8, 2008, that "133,000 soldiers and police [have been added to the ISF] over the last 16 months, and the still- expanding training base is expected to generate an additional 50,000 Iraqi soldiers and 16 army and special operations battalions throughout the rest of 2008, along with over 23,000 police and eight national police battalions."

While this expansion is impressive, sacrificing quality for quantity may not be the wisest strategy. As of early 2008, 14,000 men were being recruited into the IA every 5 weeks.[clxvii] Iraqi Ground Forces strength stood at 169,392 assigned personnel as of June 30, 2008.. There were 123 IA combat battalions conducting operations. The IA was divided into 12 infantry divisions and 1 mechanized division. A thirteenth infantry division was being generated.

The June 2008 DoD Quarterly report found that average assigned manning of IA divisions had reached 108% of authorized strength (short of their 120% goal). An MNF-I source reported that the IA had achieved a rate of 120% unit manning by early 2008, and

it was estimated that this would rise to 135%.[clxviii] Overmanning is necessary to make up for the 10 to 20 percent of personnel who are absent at any given time in order to transfer pay to their families.

These figures, however, had no clear relation to the number of men actually in units at any given time, and disguised major problems in terms of officer and NCO strength and imbalances between units, with some overmanned and some undermanned. Like virtually all public reporting on ISF manning levels, it was little more than statistical rubbish.

Other data make it clear that the rapid expansion program has exacerbated the strain on ISF NCO corps. The ISF has always been short of officers and NCOs. Officers and NCOs simply take time to promote up from the lower ranks, and the pace of ISF expansion has not allowed for this progression. The April, 2008 SIGIR report found a significant shortfall in officers, and suggested that a decade may be needed to address this problem. Even the DoD stated that "the shortage of leaders will take years to close."[clxix]

The IA is "short of leadership in the mid-range NCO ranks as well as the mid-range officer ranks. The IA is taking several steps to mitigate the leader shortage, such as actively recruiting prior service officers and NCOs using mobile recruiting teams and exploring accelerated promotions of personnel currently in the Army. It is unclear if sufficient candidates can be recruited to offset increased requirements. The MoD is also considering other ways of generating officer candidates from within the current force."

The overall IA manning figure of 108% disguises the NCO and officer shortage. This figure actually consists of a much higher manning for enlisted personnel, and just 68% manning for NCOs and 69% manning for officers.[clxx] It is also important to note that these figures are not the percentages of personnel that are present for duty at any given time. The IA has a present-for-duty rate of 79% of total authorized personnel. Furthermore, only the 5th and 6th division fields above 100% present for duty, with the rest of the IA divisions averaging far lower (See Figures 9 and 10). However, MNSTC-I notes that these present for duty numbers are proportional to the amount of leave the Division commanders allow.

The DoD did not provide a summary of present for duty rates of officers and NCOs. However, it is clear that 68% NCO and 69% officer manning results in even lower percentages of officers and NCOs being present for duty at any given time.

Problems in the Training Cycle

The current IA cycle, from recruitment to field, is 12 weeks.[clxxi] This accelerated cycle has severely undermined the development of the Iraqi forces and weakened immature Iraqi units that were not ready for full-scale combat. Some U.S. advisers and embedded training teams also have not been ready for their missions, compounding the problems inherent in creating new units. It helps to ensure that newly formed units, or units with large numbers of trainees, often are not ready for combat and can only function with even moderate effectiveness if given time to work with embedded US training teams and US partner units.

One key problem that is being addressed is the slow recognition that even the best training would not correct many of these problems. Training systems have historically only been effective in providing manpower for units with existing structures and experienced officers, NCO, and teams. Creating whole new units has always be a high risk effort and deeply problematic, and success has depended heavily on committing them slowly, with experienced combat units nearby and assisting them, and being able to transfer in proven officers and NCOs. No nation or culture, including the US, has been able to overcome these basic realities, and the fact that so many Iraqi units are being rushed into existence without meeting even minimal preconditions for success ensures troubled force development and a significant number of failures.

In short, the Iraqi Army development effort has been harmed by an accelerated timetable for force generation. In some cases, Iraqi battalions and force elements have been rushed through training and into combat well before they were ready.

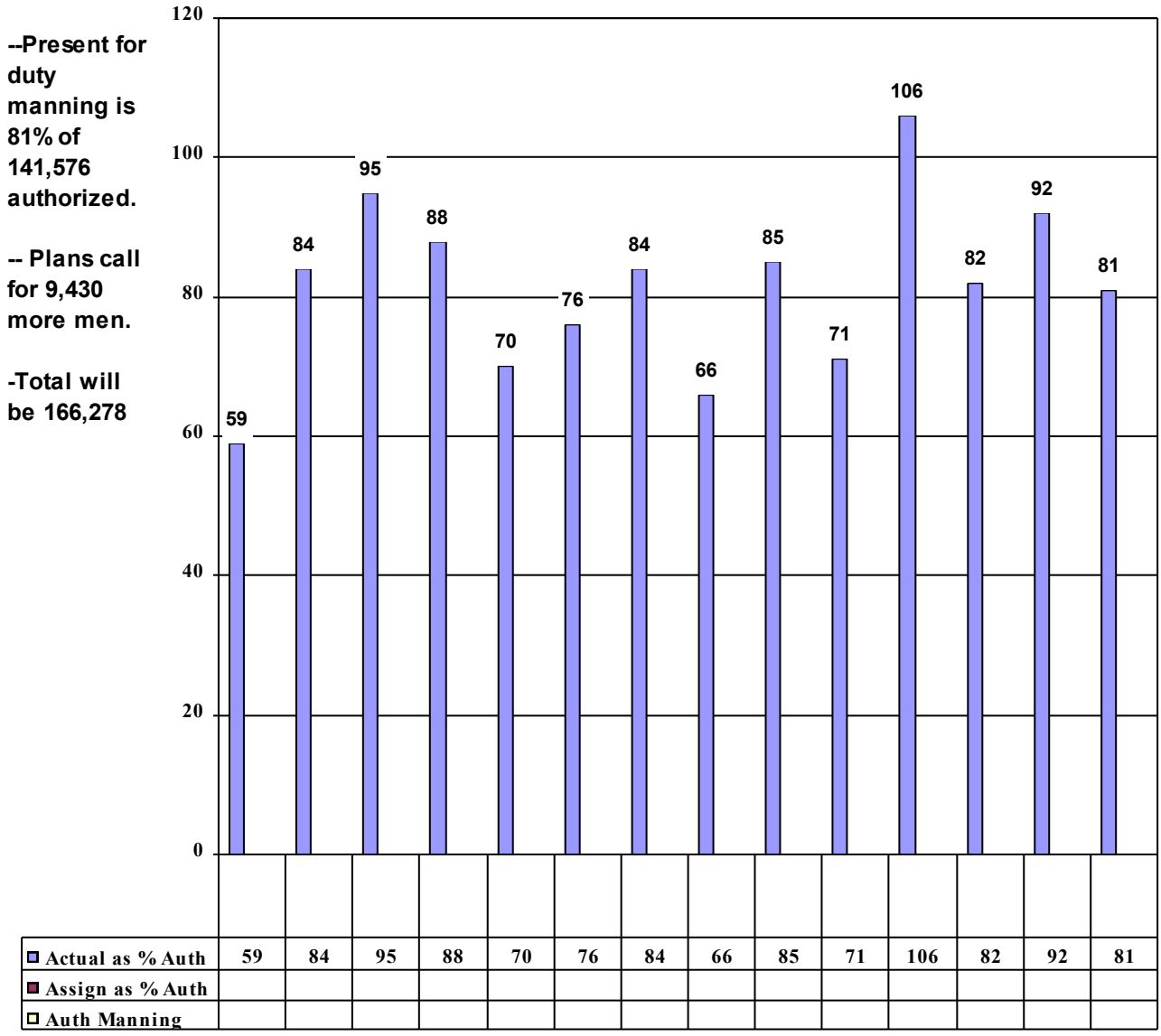
Yet this rapid growth is planned to continue. Prime Minister Maliki's expansion initiative now calls for 5 new divisions. This includes two Peshmerga divisions that are slated to be added to the regular ISF.[clxxii] These Peshmerga divisions, as with all KRG forces, are recruited, trained, and equipped under a completely separate program than the rest of the ISF.

It is not entirely clear what the final end-strength of the ISF will be. According to the *Long War Journal,* the total planned end size of the IA appears to be 15 regular divisions, 65 brigades, and 195 battalions. In addition, the ISOF is planned to expand to at least three brigades, and perhaps as many as six or seven.[clxxiii] This estimation correlates to the comment of a senior US Commander, who stated that the eventual goal of the IA is to have 15-16 divisions.

However, The IA, and IP force is already extremely large, and there is a growing recognition that the ISF, which is projected to grow to around 650,000 personnel, is unsustainable and may have to eventually be downsized. According to a senior US commander, several Iraqi Ministers, including Prime Minister Maliki, would like to eventually shrink the IA. However, until Iraq's private sector can provide jobs for all of the former soldiers and policemen, it is doubtful that the ISF will be significantly downsized.

Figure 9: Iraqi Army Manpower Present versus Authorized

(As of May 30, 2008)

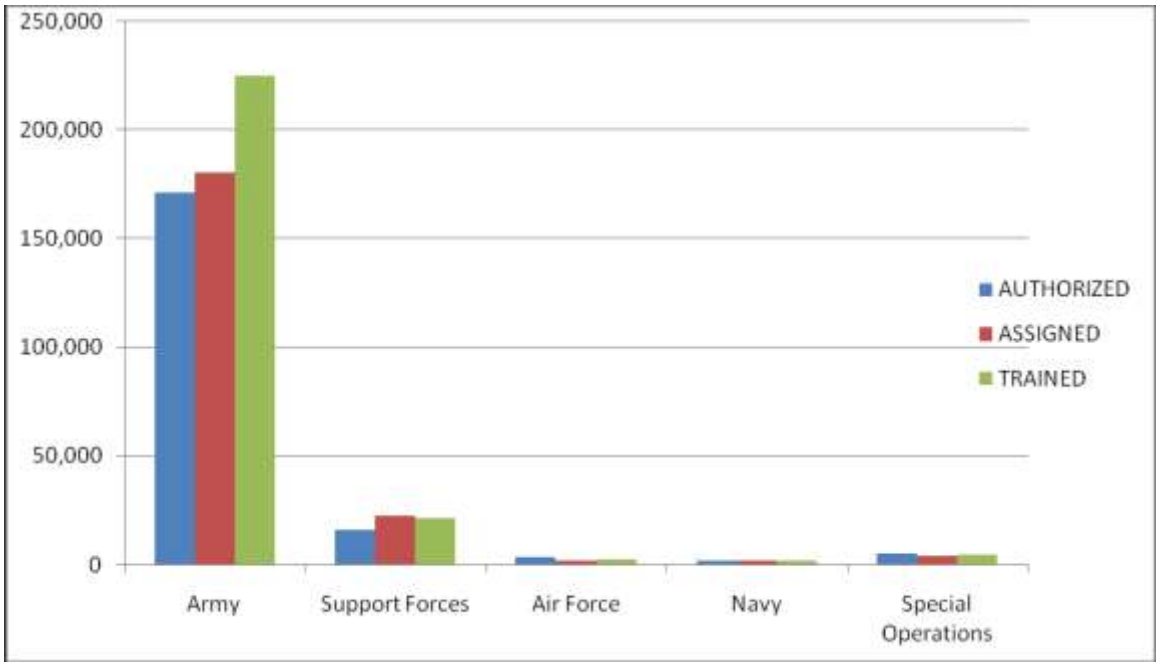


Note: Many Iraqi divisions include additional elements. The 2nd Div has the 6th IAIB. The 4th Div has the 4/4 & 13th IAIB. The 6nd Div has the 16th IAIB. The 8th Div has the 17th IAIB. The 9th Division has the 11th IAIB.

Source: Department of Defense, Quarterly Report on Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2008 pg. 48

Figure 10: Manning of Iraqi Regular Forces

(Number of Personnel)
July 31,2008



	AUTHORIZED	ASSIGNED	TRAINED
Army	**171,262**	**180,296**	**224,970**
Support Forces	**15,583**	**22,069**	**21,144**
Air Force	**3,311**	**1,887**	**2246**
Navy	**1,893**	**1,872**	**1,494**
Special Operations	**4,733**	**3,589**	**4,564**

Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008.

But, Operational Competence is Increasing

In spite of its very real problems, the IA has shown increasing operational competence. In Operation Blackhawk Harvest, the main highway between Baghdad and Diyala was cleared by Iraqi and US troops. 600 Iraqi and 200 US soldiers took part in the operation. US troops, however, "largely protected their flanks," and played a secondary role, stated Col. Marshall Dougherty. According to Dougherty, "The Iraqis could have conducted and been successful in this operation without our help."

Like virtually all MNF-I and Iraqi government reporting, this statement did exaggerate some aspects of Iraqi progress. While the operation did kill 48 insurgents, according to the executive officer of the Iraqi 5th according to Gen. Rasheed Abed al Kareem, most were killed by US air strikes, not Iraqi troops. The Iraqi Air force had virtually no ability to carry out offensive strikes as of early 2008. Nonetheless, the IA did play a major role in the operation, clearing many roadside bombs and suffering only 3 deaths.

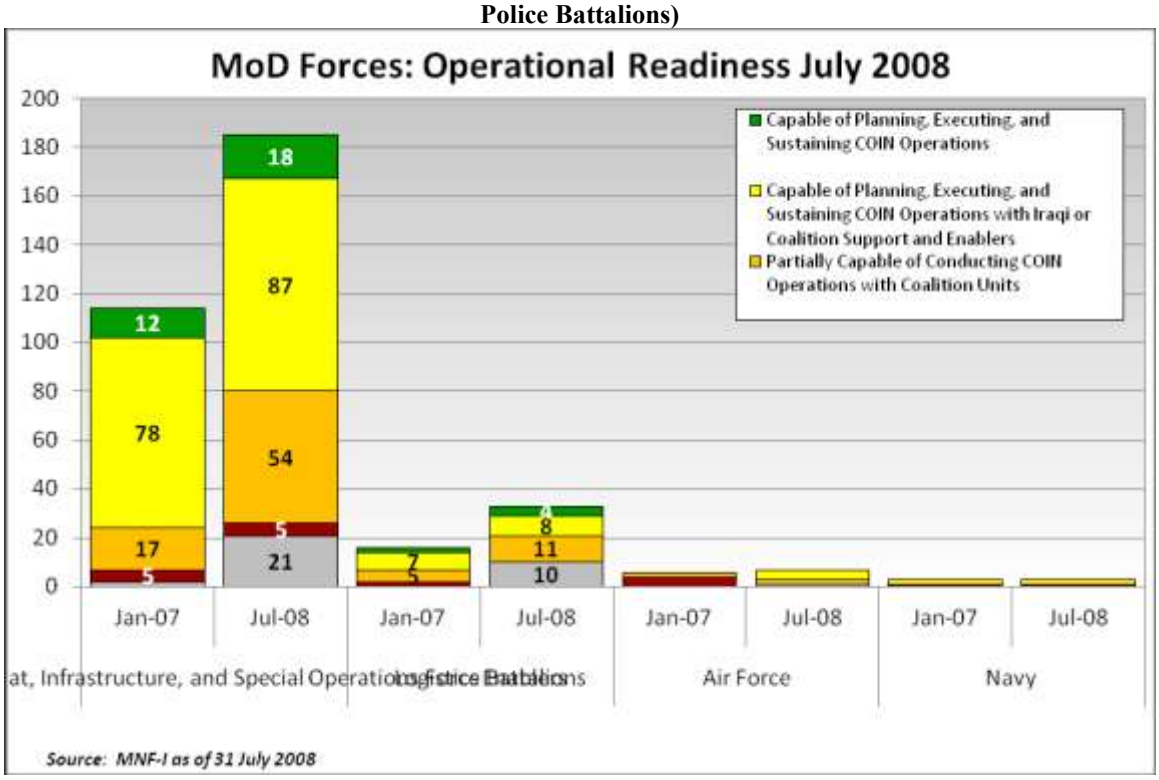
In another example of ISF competence, the ISF played a major role in protecting pilgrims heading to Karbala for the Shiite religious festival of Ashura from attacks by a militant religious millennial cult. The cult, called the Soldiers of Heaven, attacked pilgrims in several cities across southern Iraq, including Basra and Nasiriyah. While dozens of people were killed, compared to the millions of pilgrims taking part in the holiday, casualties were relatively low. Furthermore, while attacks on the pilgrims were not unexpected, the cult members attacked without warning, and the ISF was able to respond. Casualty reports were unclear, but it appeared that many of the casualties were of members of the cult itself. [clxxiv] Clearly, despite its myriad problems, the overall trend within the IA is towards greater operational competency.

The ISF has also increased its logistical and sustainment capabilities, although it will be several more years before these capabilities are fully developed. As already mentioned, despite equipment and provisions shortfalls during operations in Basra, the fact that the ISF was able to field so many soldiers for the operation at all was in itself an achievement. However, the ISF continues to rely heavily on Coalition support for combat operations, particularly in the area of fuel. The Iraqi Ministry of Oil (MoO) continues to allocate far less fuel to the MoD than it needs. While the MoO increased its allocation to the MoD by 80% in December, 2007, this is still not enough to meet MoD needs, particularly as it fields more vehicles. The Coalition continues to supply the MoD with emergency fuel supplements.[clxxv]

As is seen in Figure 11, the number of units achieving ORA level 2 (capable of planning, executing, and sustaining counterinsurgency operations with Iraqi security force or Coalition force assistance) has increased significantly in the last year. However, according to a senior US commander, while the number of units reaching ORA level 2 may continue to increase, few if any units will reach ORA level 1 for quite some time, due to the many problems discussed in this report, and in particular the officer and NCO shortage.

Figure 11: Iraqi Operational Readiness By Battalion, July 2008

(Includes Iraqi Army Combat, Infrastructure, and Special Operating Force Battalions and National Police Battalions)



Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008

Force Development Challenges: Expansion of the Iraqi Air Force and Navy

The Iraqi Air Force and Navy are still very much in the early phases of development, although the Air Force now provides an increasing number of IS&R, support, and mobility missions; and the Navy carries out active patrol missions. They have limited equipment, and manning are 45% and 75% of authorization, respectively. Iraq will, however, need effective forces for both the counterinsurgency and national defense missions.

The Iraqi Air Force.

As of August 2008, only $457 million of the $8.5 billion the US had appropriate to train and equip Iraq's security forces in 2007 and 2008 had gone to the Iraqi air force. The IAF has 76 aircraft, donated by the United States and other nations, largely C-130 transports, small IS&R aircraft, and unarmed helicopters. It was equipped for training, transport and surveillance missions, although it had experienced combat pilots from the force that existed under Saddam Hussein, and there were reports that it was training for air attack missions.[clxxvi]

A report on the force by Ernesto Londono in the August 13, 2008 edition of *Washington Post* noted that,

> U.S. officials say they share Iraqis' long-term vision for a well-equipped air force capable of protecting the country from foreign enemies. But they think Iraq needs to focus on basics before investing in front-line combat aircraft. "They don't have the infrastructure to support it," said Brig. Gen. Brooks L. Bash, the lead Air Force official overseeing the rebirth of the Iraqi air force.
>
> The air force training school opened in September at Taji Air Base, outside Baghdad. It is run by Iraqi and U.S. instructors, and most maintenance work is done by Western contract employees. About 1,000 airmen have completed basic training, and the Iraqi air force expects at least 600 more to graduate by the end of the year. Helicopter pilots are trained in Taji, and airplane pilots are trained at a base in Kirkuk, in northern Iraq.
>
> …Iraqi aircraft were deployed to Basra and Mosul this year to carry out transport, medical evacuation and surveillance missions in support of military operations. They regularly carry out surveillance missions over the country's main oil pipelines.
>
> …All of the Iraqi pilots flying missions worked for the former air force. The first three rookie pilots are expected to start flying missions later this year. Recruiting pilots has been challenging because they must be fluent in English, the global language of aviation. The starting pay, roughly $700 a month, is a deterrent.

The March 2008 quarterly report by the Department of Defense describes the strengths and weakness of the Iraqi Air Force as follows:[clxxvii]

> There are 1,305 personnel assigned to the Iraqi Air Force (IqAF), represent authorized strength. The IqAF currently has 56 assigned aircraft and 146 total pilots. The IqAF flew approximately 120 sorties in January 2007, 1,004 sorties in November 2007, and 1,205 sorties in December 2007. These sorties include intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), transport and training missions.

> The two training institutions in the IqAF are the Flight Training School in Kirkuk and the IqAF Training Wing at Taji. The IqAF Training Wing at Taji Air Base is responsible for four schools (Basic Military Training school, Basic Technical Training school, Air Force Academy and the Air Force Officer Course at the Iraq Military Academy al Rustamiyah), all of which were stood-up in 2007. Flight training takes place at the Flight Training School in Kirkuk.
>
> Training pipeline throughput continues to increase. In December 2007, the IqAF commissioned 74 officers. In January 2008, 116 new IqAF warrant officers—the first since Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)—graduated. The current IqAF annual capacity for technical training is 960, while annual pilot training capacity is 135. There are 14 IqAF training staff members assigned to these schools while CAFTT provides 56 personnel.
>
> The IqAF took delivery of its first of six King Air 350 aircraft in December 2007. This aircraft is critical as it adds training capacity not currently available to the IqAF for the five additional advanced ISR-version King Air 350's to be delivered in 2008. This will increase IqAF ISR fleet size by 38%, with concomitant growth in time-over-target capability.
>
> The IqAF rotary-wing fleet of 35 helicopters is located at Taji Air Base. The Mi- 17 helicopters of 4th Squadron continue to have very limited employment capability due to defensive system limitations. However, modifications are scheduled to begin in March. Fourteen Mi-17's will arrive in 2008. There are 22 counter-terrorism-version Mi-17s that have been purchased; they will begin arriving in March 2009. The 23rd Squadron at New al-Muthanna Air Base has three C-130E aircraft on which IqAF technicians perform routine maintenance with minimal Coalition support.
>
> The IqAF achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC) for non-kinetic COIN in December 2007, providing the GoI with proven mobility and ISR collection and dissemination capability. Exercise First Star demonstrated this capability on November 12-14, 2007. First Star was the first IqAF-planned exercise since OIF. The IqAF also declared IOC of its Air Operation Center in December 2007, providing increased command and control for its forces.
>
> The IqAF continues expanding its ISR coverage across the nation, and, in late- December 2007, four entirely IqAF-manned Mi-17s deployed to Basrah to conduct recon- naissance and "show-the-flag" missions. In January 2008, the IqAF flew surveillance missions in support of the Ashura pilgrimage to Karbala. One IqAF ISR mission identified rogue militia checkpoints in Nasiriyah and coordinated with Iraqi ground forces as the latter made several insurgent arrests. Finally, the IqAF continues to perform surveillance of electric lines and oil pipelines.

The Department of Defense has since notified Congress that that it had approved the sale of 24 attack helicopters to Iraq, valued at as much as $2.4 billion. According to such reports, Iraq has announced plans to purchase at least $10 billion in U.S. tanks and armored vehicles, transport planes and other battlefield equipment and services in 2008 from companies such as General Dynamics, Boeing and Raytheon.[clxxviii]

There were also reports in September 2008 that the Iraqi Air Force was seeking to buy 36 F-16 fighters from the US at a projected cost of some $3 billion, and that this sale request would be notified to Congress. The US now deploys some 300 aircraft in Iraq, however, and a successful sale and transfer of 24 attack helicopters, and 36 fighters to Iraq, would only be the start of the creation of a modern national air force.[clxxix]

The acquisition of F-16s would greatly add to the IAF's capabilities, as well as its prestige (no small matter in Iraq's rough neighborhood). The F-16s could form the core of the IAF's growing ability to defend its airspace. Yet the IAF is years away from being able to effectively fly and maintain the aircraft. Pilot training programs are continuing, though they are still far too small. An air force needs more than just pilots. While a combat pilot may take around 5 years to train, it takes 7 years to learn how to maintain

aircraft at the highest level.[clxxx] Flying the F-16s will require a whole set of transport, maintenance, and storage personnel and facilities. Depending on which version of the F-16 is sold to Iraq, the weapons systems attached to the plane will also require personnel, maintenance, and facilities. At present, 2011 seems a very early date for the IAF to take over all missions and responsibility from US forces.

The Iraqi Navy

The Iraqi Navy is also just beginning to acquire real mission capabilities, although – as Figure 12 shows, its mission areas is limited by Iraq's small coastline and limited port and off sore facilities.[clxxxi]The March 2008 quarterly report by the Department of Defense provides the following description of the strengths and weakness of the Iraqi Navy as follows:[clxxxii]

> The Iraqi Navy has 1,115 assigned officers, sailors and marines. In late January 2008, the Iraqi Navy graduated 223 additional sailors and marines into the force. By third quarter 2008, the Navy will increase by another 300 sailors and 100 marines, taking it to 76% of its projected 2010 manpower requirement. The Navy headquarters element at the MoD continues to improve its effectiveness in the day-to-day management of the Iraqi Navy, its interaction within the MoD and enforcement of the strategy illustrated in the comprehensive Navy Plan. The Iraqi Navy operates out of a single base in Umm Qasr. It consists of an operational headquarters, one squadron afloat, one support squadron and one battalion of marines who provide point defense of the offshore oil platforms.
>
> The Iraqi Navy operates five small Patrol Boats and ten fast insertion craft in support of continual surveillance operations and protection of the Al Basrah and Kwhar al Amaya oil terminals. Additionally, the Iraqi Navy conducts patrols and boardings from their fast craft in the Khwar Abd Allah Waterway approaches to Umm Qasr. Typically, the Iraqi Navy conducts 28 to 32 independent patrols, resulting in 12 boardings, per week. This represents an increase of nearly 80% since the last report.
>
> Future Iraqi Navy planned procurement includes 21 major vessels and 50 fast insertion and interdiction craft necessary by 2011. During this reporting period, Iraqi contracts have been signed and shipbuilding has commenced for two offshore support vessels, with the first due in March 2009; four patrol ships, with the first due in June 2009; three patrol boats, with the first due in February 2009; and 36 fast interdiction craft, which will commence coming on line in late 2008.
>
> The Navy has made further progress with Iraqi-funded FMS projects for major Sea Wall and Pier construction in Umm Qasr to support the new fleet, the next batch of six patrol boats and numerous smaller projects ranging from spare parts to new uniforms. In addition to these efforts, work continues to provide a functioning BSU—with sufficient billeting and dining facilities to meet growing naval manpower needs—by the end of the first quarter of 2008.
>
> Despite these positive steps, the Iraqi Navy still faces challenges in matching its training needs in leadership, operations, navigation, technical skills, and Command and Control (C2) systems to its ambitious acquisition program. Responses to these challenges include the additional 2008 FMS projects that are pending to address C2 requirements and the continued Coalition advising and development of the Iraqi Navy. In order to meet the maritime transition goals set for late 2010, the Navy may conduct some sophisticated training in other countries.

The commander of the Iraqi Navy, Rear Admiral Mohammed Jawad, described the state of the Iraqi Navy as followed in a press briefing on August 10, 2008.[clxxxiii]

The current size of the Iraqi Navy is relatively small. It is consisting of 1,900 personnel. It is expected to reach 3,000 within the end of the year 2010. The Navy capabilities are limited, but the level and the high training that the Navy elements have acquired from office... from the officers and high- ranking officials enabled them to undertake lots of the responsibility in the operational sector.

The marines now are undertaking the focused defense and all the terminals, KAAOT. It is also carrying out independent duties to searching ships. Also daily and ... during the day and during the night patrols in the territorial water of Iraq; also rescuing in the north Arab Gulf area, also defending the oil terminals…, side-by-side with the Coalition Navy, also securing the sailing in the naval canals in the territorial water, the Iraqi's territorial water, and Khor Abdullah Canal, for the ships, the commercial ships that are coming and leaving the Iraqi terminals. The Navy are receiving training in order to receive total responsibility, hopefully, during the coming year, to take the responsibility of protecting oil terminal [unintelligible], also the total sec- … responsibility for the operations section.

This would lead us to talk about the rule of the Navy and building the capacity, the defense capacity, about... and the infrastructure for the oil institutions, which is a strategic rule of the Iraqi Armed Forces. Considering where it's being exported of oil, through the oil platforms, nearly 90 percent of the local products is being produced, which forms the fortune and the resource for building the new Iraq.

To accomplish the mission of the Iraqi Navy, the government has approved to buy number of Navy equipments, new Navy equipments, to secure the accomplishments of the mission precisely. It is true that we have contracted to build four patrol ships, big patrol ships with Italy side and two backup ships and three patrol boats with the Canadian/Malaysian partnership company. The Iraqi marine … the Iraqi Navy is supposed to receive these pieces by the second quarter of the coming year. The Ministry of Defense has contracted with other ... for other parts of the Navy. Hopefully in October, the Iraqi Navy is going to receive 26 combat boats. By the year 2010, we're going to have 47 Navy pieces. Still, we have a lot to accomplish, and the administrative infrastructure, the docks, the accommodation for the fighters, also maintenance workshops, storages, warehouses, all these are going to be ready when the equipments, the needed equipments will be received.
The first stage of building the Iraqi Navy is based on fighting terrorism and the illegitimate operations in the sea; the second phase is going to be concerning the foreign threats for the ... us, naval security.

We have talked about the marines and their role on the sea, but we did not talk about their role on the coast. As you know, the Iraqi Navy is … was a part of the forces that have participated in Charge of the Knights operation in Basrah. The marines have taken the honor of protecting the commercial terminals in al Qasr, Khor al- Zubair, also protecting the electric power stations, and have accomplished the mission successfully. All the armed elements and militias have been eliminated. This would lead to the encourage (sic) the foreign investment and that would gives chances and opportunities for the labor for the Iraqi citizen, and that eventually would raise the economy level. The revenues of Mina ... of Umm Qasr Terminal for February until June have doubled, and July ... have doubled in July only, and what happened in the commercial terminals escalated the trust and confidence for the naval dealing with Iraq.

Looking Beyond 2008

Both services have made progress during the summer of 2008, and the head of MNSTC-I, Lt. General Frank Helmick, the commander of MNSTC-I, noted on September 10th, 2008, that the Iraqi air force was expected to have more than 120 aircraft at its disposal by next year, and has expanded its intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities to support not only military forces, but also other agencies within the Iraqi government, such as the

border enforcement and the oil police. Lt. general Helmick also reported that the Iraqi naval forces operating out of the port of Umm Qasr had one float squadron that currently conducted s more than 40 weekly patrols and provided security for offshore oil terminals. The navy was also accelerating the growth of two Marine battalions to conduct oil-security and search-and-seizure operations.[clxxxiv]

Nevertheless, both the Air Force and Navy remain short of officers and NCOs, and the Air Force is heavily dependent on older officers and pilots that have a limited future time in service. What is most critical, however, is not that both services have made limited progress, but that it is unclear what goals and plans exist for the period after 2008, and there are no unclassified timelines for their development into combat services that can takeover from the US in either the counterinsurgency or national defense missions.

Figure 12

The Mission Areas of the Iraq Navy

Source: Slide 10, OIF briefing, http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21733&Itemid=131

Force Development Challenges: Expansion of the Iraqi Police

The Expansion of the forces under the MoI has been far more haphazard and faltering than the MoD expansion, and there is little evidence of improvement. If anything, the reporting on the growth of the regular police force seems to almost deliberately disguise the failure of past plans for a "year of the police" and an effective force that is vetted, trained and equipped at the national level.

Uncertain Manning in Quantity and Quality

The IP numbered 299, 170 assigned personnel as of July 31, 2008.[clxxxv] However, it is not clear how many additional personnel have been hired by Provincial and local authorities. Furthermore, present-for-duty rates in the IP are highly variable from unit to unit. It is nearly impossible to determine how many IPs are actually operating in Iraq at any given time with much accuracy.

Local and Provincial governments recruit forces on an ad-hoc basis, with little oversight from Baghdad. All official police personnel hires are approved by the MoI in Baghdad. However, these 'extra' officers are given only 80 hours of training before returning to duty. Officers counted by MNSTC-I as "trained" have received more than 300 hours of training. These 'extra' police now number roughly 88,000. While these officers are supposed to receive the full program of 300+ hours of training, a massive backlog in the training pipeline has delayed them.

The rapid pace of hiring has led to a huge backlog of untrained personnel. According to the Director General, Civilian Police Assistance Team, there were 250,000 – 300,000 personnel awaiting training, as of August 2008.[clxxxvi] These personnel include the 88,000 'extra' currently serving police, as well as personnel who have signed up to join the IPs through normal channels but have yet to be trained.

This backlog exists despite the creation of several different training tracks to speed recruits through. In addition to the normal 3 year police officer training program a into a 1 year training program for recruits with a college degree, a 9 month program for recruits with significant previous policing experience, and a 3 week program for Army personnel switching to the IP were added.[clxxxvii]

The DoD reports that that "The MoI has no mechanism that correctly matches funding with valid requirements and growth projections."[clxxxviii] Police training has also suffered, with the SIGIR noting in April 2008 that local police academies have been forced to curtail higher-level training activities in order to concentrate on meeting the basic training need of the huge number of recruits.[clxxxix] Furthermore, the DoD states that, "limited basic recruit training capability at the Baghdad Police College represents a continuing limitation on program execution."[cxc]

DoD reporting states that, "The total number of personnel assigned (excluding ministerial headquarters personnel and the MoI Facilities Protection Service (FPS)) exceeds the number of total trained personnel, the result of rapid hiring over the past two years that outstripped training center capacity. The MoD and MoI do not accurately track which personnel are trained as part of U.S.-funded programs, so this number is not reported."

A Leadership Crisis

There is an even more critical shortage of competent and loyal NCOs and mid-level officers in the forces under the MoI than in the regular Iraqi forces, and there is no short-term solution to this problem, as good officers and NCOs take time to develop and promote. The IP can presently fill only 69% of its officer authorizations, the NP can only fill 42%, and the border police 68%.[cxci] According to the DoD, there is a "leadership shortage within the officer and noncommissioned officer (NCO) ranks." Furthermore, "Tactical leadership within Iraqi units is improving, but numbers of proficient leaders, especially in the field and NCO grades, are not, as the growth in the Iraqi military and police force structure outpaces efforts to identify, recruit and develop leaders."[cxcii]

The MoI, as it does in many areas, faces an even greater problem than the MoD in fielding competent officers. According to the DoD:

> Because the training effort of the past four years has focused on generating policemen, and because of the time it takes to grow professional junior officers, there have been inadequate numbers of officer-rank police entering at junior levels. The resulting low officer manning has affected command and control, planning functions, street-level supervision, morale, retention, and ethical conduct. The Iraqi Police Service (IPS) and the NP use various paths to acquire officers. Both of the police services are actively seeking to increase officers through four methods: a three-year officer course; a nine-month officer course; a six-month police commissioner's course; and a three-week officer transition program (for previously trained police officers). The police services have difficulty attracting officer candidates because they compete with the Iraqi Army for the same pool. The MoI is also considering various incentive programs to attract new recruits.[cxciii]

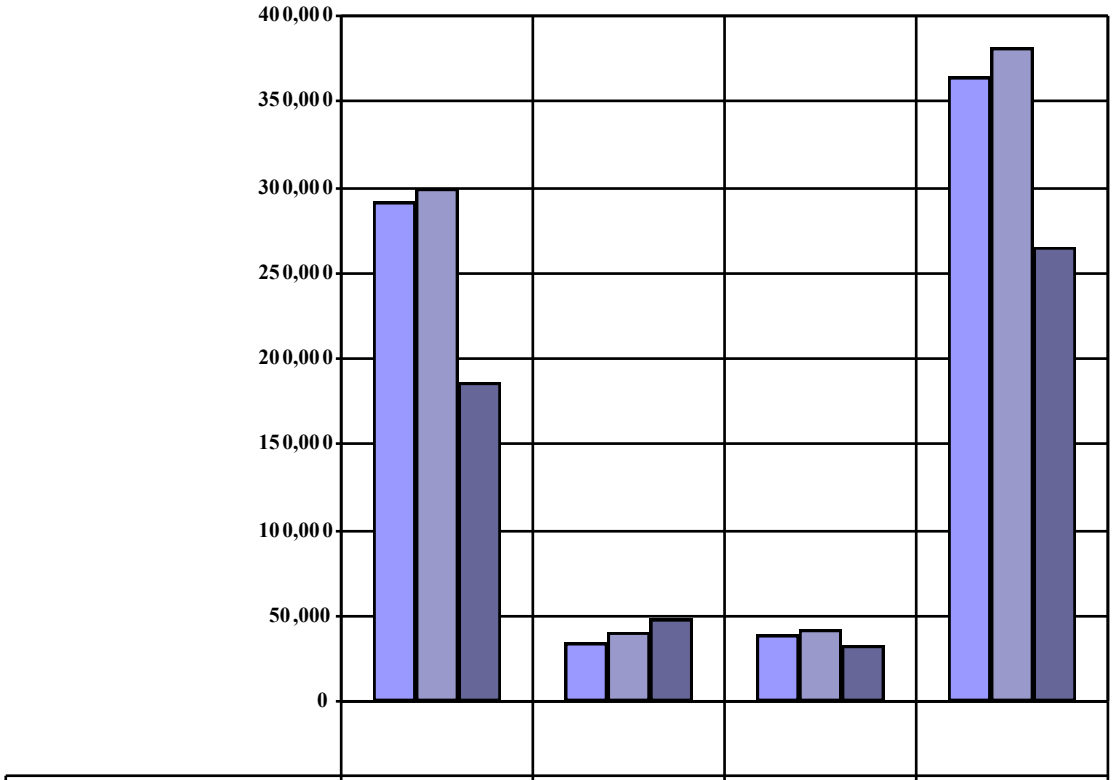
The MoI has made some progress in training, however. Between July 2007 and July 2008 Police academies had graduated 704 classes, totaling 77,684 trained personnel. The National Police graduated 128 classes, with 25,875 trained personnel.[cxciv]

An Experiment or a Plan?

The broader problem is that it simply is not clear what current goals really exist for the development of the IP, how Iraqi government and MNF-I goals coincide, and whether and when such goals can be met. The Iraqi police have become the equivalent of a "black box." Unclassified MNF-I and Iraqi government reports simply do not provide credible status reporting and any clear sense of direction.

In the long term, the IP faces the problem of the nature of the training its personnel have received. The police training effort in Iraq was initially run by the State Department, with much help from contactors. However, due to a host of problems, from a lack of State Department capacity, to the increasing violence in Iraq, the police training mission was switched over to the DoD. Thus the combination of US military personnel training the IP, as well as the war-like conditions in Iraq, shifted the substance of police training towards more military skills. The IP today is now over trained in military skills, but lacking in more traditional police training. Eventually, the bulk of the Iraqi police force is going to have to be re-trained.

Figure 13: Manning of Iraqi Police and Ministry of Interior Forces as of June 30, 2008 a



Current Authorized Personnel (b)	292,001	33,670	38,205	363,876
Assigned Personnel				
Total Trained Personnel to Date (d)				

a Numbers do not include ministry staffs.
b Numbers reflect Government of Iraq (GOI) authorizations.
c Numbers are based upon GOI payroll data and do not reflect present for duty totals.
d Numbers reflect assigned personnel that have received training.
e Numbers reflect total ISF personnel trained to date, some of which are no longer assigned due to casualties, AWOL, and normal separation.
f MoI strength does not reflect investigative and administrative forces, the MoI HQ, MoI Forensics, Dignitary Protection, or contracted guards.
g MoI Police Support Unit, Provincial Security Force, and Emergency Response Unit personnel are part of the Iraqi Police Service and does not include other Ministry
FPS.

Source: Department of State, Iraq: Weekly Status Report, August 13, 2008

National Police Reform

The National Police (NP) had 39,739 assigned personnel as of July 31, 2008.[cxcv] NP personnel, like the rest of the ISF, must periodically return to their families to transfer their pay, thus leaving 10 to 20 percent of the force away from duty at any given time.

The National Police are a force run by the central government, and no additional NP personnel are hired by local or provincial governments. This makes the personnel figures for the National Police more accurate than those for the IP, but these figures also show how much still needs to be done The NP stood at 90% of its authorized force strength as of July 2008.[cxcvi] The NP, like the rest of the ISF, is also severely lacking in officers. As of March, 2008, the NP had only 44% of the officers required.[cxcvii] According to a senior US commander, the NP will eventually have 1 Brigade stationed in every Iraqi province.

Reform of the National Police

The reform of the National Police is a priority effort for MNF-I, but the NP continues to be seen by many Iraqis as a sectarian institution. During the worst violence in 2006-2007, many NP units were implicated in numerous sectarian crimes, and were widely seen as being run by, or heavily influenced by, Shi'ite militia groups. An ongoing reform program has weeded out many of the most sectarian NP members, and has increased the proportion of Sunni in the force.

The NP reform program, known as "Re-Bluing", has resulted in the replacement of all 9 brigade commanders (one of them twice)[cxcviii], 18 of 27 battalion commanders, and the firing of 1,300 lower officers.[cxcix] Of the 1,800 officers who graduated from the Numaniyah Training Academy on January 21, 2008, over 50% were Sunni.[cc] By early 2008, Sunnis made up 40% of the NP officer corps.[cci]

At the brigade level, the NP is about 30 percent Sunni, and 70 percent Shi'ite. The Battalion level is 20/80 percent Sunni /Shi'ite. All National Police Brigades finished the Re-Bluing in Nov 2007 and initiated Carabinieri Training Oct 2007 at Camp Dublin. The Carabinieri Training was under the direction of the Italian led NATO Training Mission. The NP, like much of the ISF, also continues to face a shortage of junior officers, although it has witnessed and increase in junior officer strength by 53% in late 2007-early 2008. [ccii]

Progress in reforming the NP has also been mixed. While some "re-blued" units have certainly improved, and the numbers of Sunnis in the NP has increased, problem units remain. The notorious "Wolf Brigade," which operates near Doura, has continued to face allegations of aiding the Shiite militias in driving out Sunnis. In response to continuing problems in the unit, NP chief Maj. Gen Hussein Awadi fired the brigade commander, re-assigned roughly half its members, and brought in Sunni officers.[cciii] As of early 2008, however, it remained unclear whether this unit, or the NP as a whole, would successfully make the transition to a legitimate and nonsectarian organization.

The Uncertain Future

Current plans call for one National Police unit per province, and for the National Police to become a central government force that can take on both paramilitary missions and fight more demanding counterinsurgency missions. The National Police would remain part of the MoI, and not be converted into army units or placed under the MoD as some have suggested.

The key question is whether this expansion is realistic and whether reform will succeed in creating a national force and not a Shi'ite one. While the NP has made real progress in becoming a more honest and effective force, many Iraqis still view it as sectarian. The MoI' has acknowledged this and the importance of public opinion, and the NP has started running commercials on Iraqi TV promoting its new, reformed image.

Other Security Forces in the Ministry of the Interior

The Army, National Police, and regular police may be the core of Iraq's capability to "win, hold, and build," but there other paramilitary and security forces that also need further development, and which will present important challenges in Iraq is to be fully ready to takeover the counterinsurgency mission and provide security and stability.

Border Police

MNSTC-I reported in September 2008 that the Directorate of Border Enforcement (DBE) commanded 43,073 assigned personnel, in 12 brigades and 44 battalions.[cciv] These forces are divided into 5 regional commands, each responsible for border control and control of the Ports of Entry in its zone. The director general of the DBE released a 3-year plan in January 2008. The plan calls for an increase to 46,000 personnel, several improvements in the force, and the construction of additional border forts.[ccv]

Unfortunately, the DBE faces many of the same problems as the IP. It is under funded and under manned. It also faces severe officer and NCO shortages, equipment shortages, fuel shortages, poor logistical support, inadequate maintenance capability, and poor facilities. The DBE also faces problems with the loyalty of its personnel, as many are locally recruited and loyal to, or complicit with, smugglers.

Even if many of these problems could be overcome, Iraq's borders will always be porous. Smuggling routes have crossed in and out of Iraq for thousands of years. Even if, as some US analysts have suggested, Coalition troops were sent to secure the borders, smuggling would continue. Iraq's borders are too long, too remote, too rugged, and have too many long established smuggling routes and tribes dependant on smuggling to ever truly be secure. Smuggling into and out of Iraq is a problem that can be managed, but never eliminated.

Facilities Protection Services

The Facilities Protection Services (FPS) are still a largely unsupervised, untrained, motley group of units controlled by various ministries. The Facilities Protection Services Reform Law provides GOI authority to consolidate the FPS under MoI authority. It will likely take years for the MoI to fully absorb the FPS, although 18,968 FPS personnel have already been absorbed into the MoI. How the MoI will handle the training, equipping, funding, and deployment of FPS units is an open question. The DoD anticipates the strength of the FPS, once absorbed by the MoI, to stand at 107,970.[ccvi]

Oil Protection Force

Iraq's oil infrastructure is vital to the country's future, but protection of this infrastructure has been haphazard at best. Over 90% of the GOI's revenue is derived from oil, and one US estimate projected Iraq's oil income for 2007 – 2008 at 100 billion.[ccvii] The forces protecting this infrastructure have, however, been one of the most unstable aspects of ISF development. The oil infrastructure protection forces have been changed several times since 2003, and recently yet another change has been made with–necessarily with unpredictable consequences.

Iraq's Oil Ministry had previously been charged with protecting this infrastructure, employing the Oil Protection Force. At the end of 2007, this force was abolished, and responsibility for oil infrastructure protection was shifted to the MoI under a new force dubbed the Oil Police.[ccviii]

The Criminal Justice System

The creation of an effective criminal justice system, and courts and prison/detention systems, is an underreported, but crucial part of the development of the ISF. This is particularly true of the forces under the MoI. Iraqis can have little confidence in the IP if the criminal justice system does not support them. Yet official reporting on this topic is scant. It is not clear what progress is being made in the conditions of Iraq's jails. Whether or not defendants receive counsel, or if there is any due process, is an open question. It is also extremely difficult to discern how the various elements of the criminal justice system will interact in the future, and how the system will react to the changing power dynamics between the central government and the Provinces.

Despite statements from US Attorney General Michael Mukasey that "significant progress" was being made in strengthening law enforcement in Iraq, development in this area has been slow and uneven. [ccix] There has clearly been progress at the top, in national-level courts. Yet progress on a local level has been much slower. As of February 2008, more than half of the 26,000 prisoners in Iraqi custody were still awaiting trial. Many of these prisoners have waited for years.[ccx]

In many areas, the criminal justice system is thoroughly dominated by local, tribal, religious or sectarian interests, and in some areas criminal justice is effectively nonexistent. According to Justice Department lawyer Reid Pixler, in Mosul "No terrorists were being tried. It was a catch-and-release program."[ccxi] Judges and witnesses feared assassination, with 35 judges, lawyers, and judicial employees being assassinated in the past 3 years. In response, most provincial judges sent major terrorists cases to the main criminal court in Baghdad. The Rusafa criminal court in Baghdad is located in a secure 'Rule of Law Complex,' wherein court facilities, and employees, are protected from attacks and intimidation. 6 other secure complexes are either proposed or being built, in Ramadi, Hillah, Basrah, Baqubah, Tikrit, and Mosul.[ccxii]

Some progress has been achieved, however, as a result of the decrease in violence in 2007. The number of judges steadily increased in 2006 and 2007, from 500 to 1,200.[ccxiii] According to the chief investigative judge of the Central Criminal Court in Baghdad, "People trust the judicial system more than before. For the first time, a judge can order the arrest of a minister. All the judges believe the same as I do in the new Iraq."[ccxiv]

US efforts have focused on the Major Crimes Task Force, a joint US-Iraqi unit meant to eventually become a professional investigative agency.[ccxv] The unit investigates high-profile cases, many of them referrals from the Iraqi government involving sectarianism. The contentious nature of the cases it investigates has led to many of the Iraqi investigators, as well as the investigative judge who works with the units, receiving death

threats. Yet according to James H. Davis, until recently the FBI's legal attaché in Baghdad "I think there is a feeling within the Iraqi government, the State Department and our military that when something happens, the task force is a group you can turn to and know that the investigative work is going to be done properly and fairly, free of sectarian influences."[ccxvi]

Despite these sentiments, the Iraqi judicial system has made little progress in trying corrupt government ministers or individuals connected to the major militias. Long delays in awaiting trial are common. One major problem is Rule 136-B, which allows cabinet members to halt an investigation if it implicates a ministry employee.[ccxvii] The acquittal of two Shi'ite health ministers (widely seen as connected to the JAM) on charges of orchestrating the kidnapping and killings of Sunni officials who worked at the health ministry is another glaring example of how far the judicial system, like much of the rest of the ISF, still has to go.

The Sons of Iraq (Awakening or Sahwa Councils)

The regular Iraqi security forces have assumed most of the burden of dealing with security in Iraq. However, the Sons of Iraq (SOI), which were originally known as the Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) groups, continue to play a critical role in fighting the insurgency, and in providing local stability in parts of Iraq. At the same time, they present important potential political and security problems for the future.

The Impact of the Sons of Iraq

The various groups that make up the Sons of Iraq continued to grow rapidly after the first groups were formed in Anbar in September 2006, to meet the threat that AQI posed to tribal leaders and members. As Figure 14 shows, they grew to some 90,000 men, and spread to 10 provinces, by the spring of 2008.[ccxviii] They were reported to be between 100,000 and 130,000 by late July 2008, although these numbers were uncertain, and sometimes seem to have reflected funding levels rather than actual strength. In most areas, they proved to be effective fighters against Al Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) and other hard-line insurgents in spite of the fact that many had fought for the insurgency before AQI had largely alienated the Sunni tribes.

Many of the member and tribal groupings recruited into the Sons of Iraq were former insurgents, or had little or no loyalty to the central government. Nevertheless, most have fought well within the limits imposed by their status as a tribal militia. There have been few cases where members have been discovered to be loyal to AQI or its supporting groups, and most elements of the SOI have cooperated with both US and Iraqi Army and police forces. All SOI members have also been ID'ed, background checked, and finger printed. Neither the Coalition nor the Iraqi government has reported extensive cases of any large-scale infiltration of these forces, during these checks, or cases where members of the SOI were found to be supporting the insurgency. [ccxix]

If anything, problems have arisen in the other direction. US troops have occasionally mistaken SOI members for insurgents.[ccxx] In one tragic case of mistaken identity, a US helicopter attacked a building on February 4, 2008 where a group of the SOI were hiding. 9 civilians were killed, including at least 1 child.[ccxxi] In another incident just 2 days later, US soldiers accidentally killed 2 civilians and one SOI member in Dour.[ccxxii] Five inadvertent killings of SOI members by US forces occurred in the last three weeks of February alone.[ccxxiii] These incidents continued into September 2008, and have sometimes strained the fragile underpinnings of the alliance between tribal leaders and the US that underpins the SOI system.[ccxxiv]

Members of the SOI and their leaders also took heavy losses in fighting AQI. In what appeared to be a targeted assassination campaign, at least 100 SOI members were killed in January 2008, mostly in and around Baghdad and Baqubah. At least six of the casualties were senior Awakening leaders. Osama Bin Laden called the Awakening members "traitors" and "infidels," and they have been targeted by AQI in an attempt to break the shaky alliances that underpin the movement. There have also been persistent

accusations that Shiite militias, including JAM and the Badr organization, were involved in some of the attacks on the SOI.

One deadly example of the trend in attacks on Awakening leaders was a double car bomb attack on February 11th apparently aimed at Sheik Ali Hatem Ali Suleiman, a major Awakening leader. At lease eleven people were killed in the blasts, although Hatem was only slightly injured.[ccxxv] Suleiman voiced displeasure at the US inability to protect the Awakening "Where is the support of the Americans for us? They put us in this dilemma and now they are doing nothing for us. If they don't do something about this, then we may withdraw our forces from the streets."[ccxxvi] US officials are not unaware of this problem. One US official stated "There's a recognition that sustained attacks [on the Awakening] cannot continue."[ccxxvii]

The Challenges Posed by the Sons of Iraq

The very success of the Sons of Iraq has, however, presented a number of challenges. The Sons were formed with US support, but no support from the central government, and their anger at AQI did not mean they were loyal to the government or they cooperated with US forces out of any motive other than expediency. They also differed as to their reliability and effectiveness, and their willingness to cooperate with the local authorities, Iraqi Army, and Iraqi police – particularly in mixed areas where the local authorities and ISF were dominated by Shi'ite leaders and the Sons of the Iraq were largely or all Sunni. Their main loyalty was to the tribal leader(s) that recruited them, and not to the US, the central government, or Iraq's weak Sunni political parties.

Some 80% or more were Sunni, and had no clear loyalty to a Shi'ite-dominated government, meant the central government was very reluctant to give them places in the ISF or even provide some other form of employment. While the US sought to place roughly 20% in various elements of the ISF, and create the equivalent of a civilian development corps or jobs for most of the rest – the Maliki government was slow to react and clearly had grave reservations about the program. Moreover, the leaders of the Sunni parties that were in the government, and many local authorities, saw the emerging leaders of the Sons of Iraq as rivals who might well dominate the local and provincial elections to come.

Tensions between the SOI, US forces, and existing ISF forces have also risen in some areas because of problems with local authorities. In Diyala, 300 SOI members staged a walkout, abandoning their posts en-mass on February 9th, 2008. The walkout was held to demand the ouster of the Shiite provincial police chief, whom the SOI members accused of being a member of JAM and of ordering the torture of a Sunni officer.[ccxxviii] Complaints of delayed pay were also common amongst SOI members. Their protests continued through the rest of February. According to Haider Mustafa al-Kaisy, a SOI commander in Baqubah, "We have stopped fighting Al Qa'ida."[ccxxix]

There were growing reports in the summer of 2008 that the Iraqi government was targeting Sunni elements of the Sons, and arresting or killing them.[ccxxx] There were also reports in late August 2008 that the Anbar Provincial Council had asked US forces to

delay the transfer of Anbar Province to the Iraqi central government by a year because Iraqi forces were not ready to keep order, and because of friction between the Awakening Councils that the Sons helped create and Sunni parties in the central government like the Iraqi Islamic Party.[ccxxxi] These same reports claimed that some 650 leaders and members of the Sons of Iraq were in hiding because the Iraqi military were seeking to arrest them.

There also have been cases where the Awakening movement has spread beyond the groups sanctioned by the Coalition, although most groups that formed on their own, most of them come under some form of Coalition control, and most were paid by the Coalition. More than a dozen armed Sunni neighborhood groups began forming outside of the formal SOI program in late March and April 2008. This was seen as a response to the poor performance of the regular ISF in the battle against the JAM in Basra. Ahmed Sattar Jamil, a Sunni leader in Baghdad, stated "Right now, the Sahwa [or Awakening] is trying to spread and take control over more areas, because they are afraid of the Shiite militias, especially after the events in Basra and Baghdad, when many of the security forces handed over their weapons to the Mahdi Army."[ccxxxii]

Economics are also an issue. The Sons of Iraq are a temporary force that have been paid high salaries by Iraqi standards – some $300 a month – and paid by the US, rather than the Iraqi government. While such payments proved to be far more cost-effective than trying to deploy more US troops -- even had this been possible – there usually are no alternative jobs unless the Iraqi government creates them. Virtually all job creation in Iraq is still in the state sector, and massive unemployment and underemployment is often well over 30%. It is sometimes 40-60% at local levels -- particularly among younger Iraqi males.

Transferring the Sons of Iraq to the ISF, or….

These issues take on special urgency because of the projected transfer of the Sons of Iraq to Iraqi government funding and control on October 1st, 2008. It was clear from the outset that it would be necessary for the US to persuade the Iraqi central government to create programs that would transition the Sons of Iraq from acting as a militia to either the ISF or some civilian program supported by the Iraqi government. It was equally clear that this would be difficult. DoD reports stated that 19,000 SOI members had expressed a desire to join the ISF in March, 2008, but it is far from clear that the Sons of Iraq or their leaders were ever polled on the subject.

Since that time, Coalition officials have given conflicting reports as to how many SOIs have transitioned to the ISF, with the numbers of SOIs successfully transitioned in to the ISF seemingly shrinking every day. According to Gen. Petraeus, nearly 20,000 SOI members had been transitioned to the regular ISF as of late February 2008.[ccxxxiii] However, Brig. Gen. David Perkins stated in August 2008 that only 5,200 had been recruited into the ISF.[ccxxxiv] Another report indicated that fewer than 600 of the Iraqis active in the Sons of Iraq had been absorbed into the ISF as of August 2008.[ccxxxv] A report by Captain Charles G. Calio, and US spokesman in Iraq, put the number at 936 – although an additional 2,300 had been vetted for possible positions. At best, this was a

small percentage of the 24,000 permanent jobs that Captain Calio said that members of the Sons had found over the last two years.[ccxxxvi]

Regardless of the actual number, it is not clear how many of the SOI members incorporated into the ISF are Sunni or Shi'a, where they transitioned to, or how such transitioning either meets the expectations of the young men involved or is contributing to the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of the ISF. Many of the men in the Sons of Iraq lack the education to be effective members of the regular Iraqi military, have trouble in qualifying for the police, and do have suspect backgrounds.

At the same time, many observers have stated that the Shiite-dominated GOI has purposefully blocked SOI members, who are overwhelmingly Sunni, from entrance into the ISF. Prime Minister Maliki formed Iraq's Implementation and Follow-Up Committee for National Reconciliation (IFCNR) on June 22, 2007 to deal with this type of issue, but it is far from clear that it is operating with anything like the required speed and effectiveness.[ccxxxvii] It is also likely that those Sunni members of the SOI who are incorporated into the ISF will be brought in at low ranks, and may be purposefully kept at those lower ranks to prevent Sunni influence on the ISF.

In spite of these problems, current plans call for the Iraqi government to take control over the Sons/Awakening Councils on October 1, 2008.[ccxxxviii] Agene France Presse reports that the government of Iraq and MNF-I are reported to have agreed in principle to transfer all of "Sons of Iraq," according to Major John Hall, a US military spokesman. Hall stated that the transfer would begin in Baghdad province, and be phased to occur in other provinces following at a later date. He stated that their were some 54,000 members of the SOI in Baghdad, and that, "The first payment by the government of Iraq will be November 1, 2008. The current average monthly cost of these 54,000 SOIs is 15 million dollars" [ccxxxix] He did not provide any schedule for the transfer of the other SOI groups in central, western and north-central Iraq.

The same report quoted Iraqi Ministry of Defense spokesman, Major General Mohammed al-Askari. As saying that the Iraqi government would not tolerate Sunni irregulars any more than it would tolerate Shiite militias like the Mahdi Army: "We are not going to allow new armies. There are opportunities for them to join the army, police or civilian jobs. Otherwise it can be a new militia and we are fighting militias." [ccxl]

A Kurdish MP, Mahmud Othman, was quoted as saying that said that the future of the was a "challenging" problem: "The Shiite government looks at them as a political enemy. It sees them as Arab Sunni fighters who were former Al-Qaeda or insurgents fighting the government and they have to be punished…Sahwas also will not be very satisfied... maybe some will go back against the government…It has been arguing (for the last year) that once the Americans leave the Sahwas could turn into militias. It wants to handle them from right now." [ccxli]

Even the first phase of such transfers could present special problems in a mixed area like Baghdad. Baghdad remains a divided city where US-constructed barriers and forward

positions play a critical role in dividing the city into relative secure Shi'ite, Sunni, and mixed neighborhoods. There is still considerable sectarian tension in many neighborhoods, and a continuing level of low-level violence and bombings. The various elements of the Sons of Iraq are largely Sunni, and there has been continuing tension between some groups of the SOI and the Awakening Councils, and the Iraqi Army and police. There have been SOI strikes and demonstrations over police attempts to arrest Sunni leaders, and some Sunni leaders have fled the city.[ccxlii] There already has been serious tension in districts like Adhamiya, and much will depend on how well the Iraqi Army and police handle the transition. Political accommodation, like all other elements of politics, is ultimately local.

Phasing Them Out?

According to some reports, Prime Minister Maliki has actively sought to eliminate the US role in supporting the Sons of Iraq since the beginning of August 2008. At the same time, the US was reported to have concluded that security in Iraq had improved to the point where it was seeking to reduce, and then eliminate, the force. Press reports quoted US officers involved in the training mission, such as Lt. Colonel Jeffrey Kulmayer, as saying the US wanted to reduce the Sons to 60,000 by the end of 2008 and to eliminate the program in 2009.[ccxliii]

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Friedenberg, the Multinational Forces-Iraq Liaison to the IFCNR, recognized the problems in any such transfer, stating that, ". . . there is some pushback from GOI on how to move the SOI to government control. It is arguable whether this comes from active resistance or just disorganized management and lack of capacity. Hiring the SOI into the Iraqi Police is a slow process, and we have to work each time a list is ready for hiring to get the government to agree to hire the volunteers."[ccxliv]

It is far from clear that the Sons of Iraq can be quickly eliminated unless far more are incorporated into some local element of the ISF. They still play an important role in areas like Anbar, and some form of local security forces may be needed until local elections and better spending and services come from the central Iraqi government. Much does depend, however, on creating civilian jobs as well as keeping elements of the Sons of Iraq active until they clearly are no longer needed. This explains why US commanders, as well as the IFCNR[ccxlv] are increasingly looking to expand SOI duties into more civilian-like jobs. While many SOI members do want to join the ISF, others have no desire to become full-time ISF members. These men must still be given jobs. The creation of a Civilian Conservation Force, modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps that built infrastructure in the US during the 1930s, aimed to give SOI members more permanent civilian jobs. This program, however, was still in its embryonic stages in early 2008.[ccxlvi]

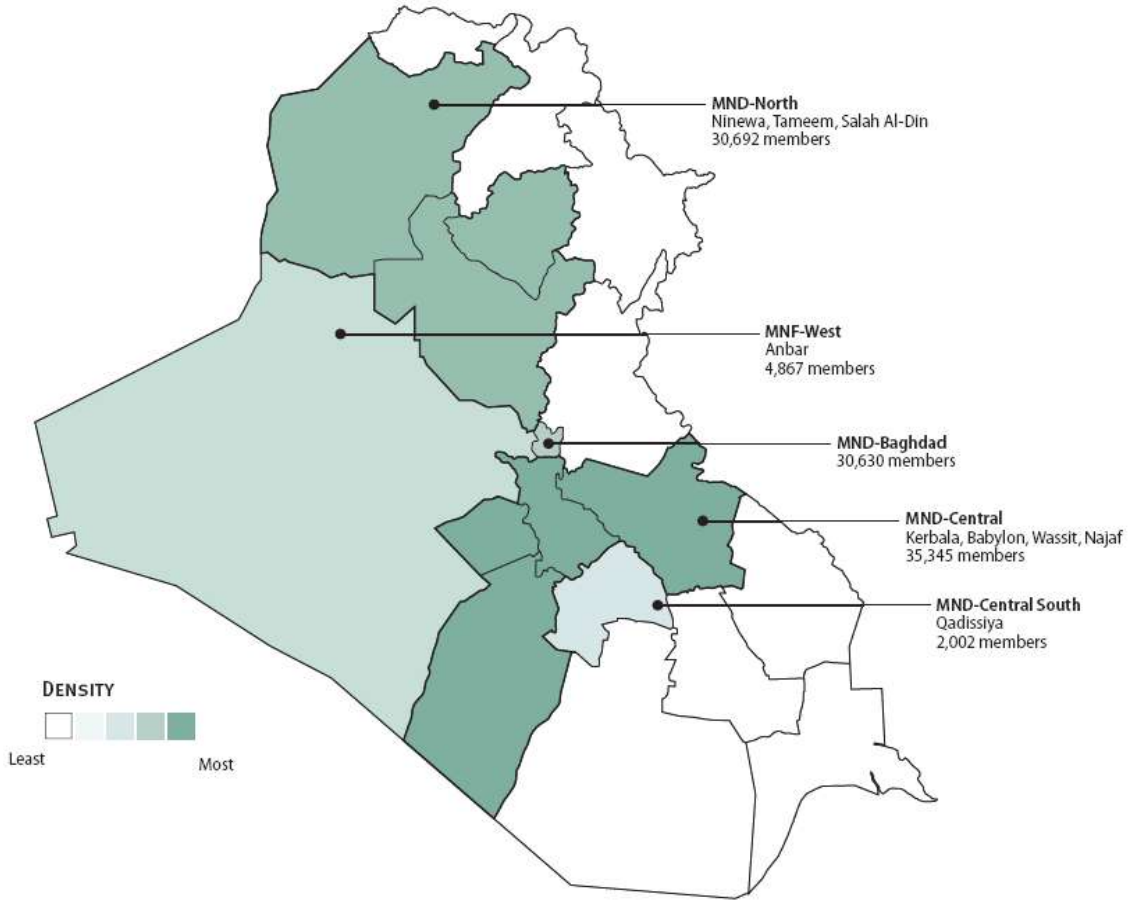
In short, eliminating the Sons of Iraq presents some of the problems in dismounting from a tiger. It is hard enough to ride a tiger in the first place, and the tiger may be anything but grateful once the ride is over. The Sons of Iraq also are only part of the problem. As is the case throughout Iraq, defeating AQI and the insurgency will not create a stable and effective ISF unless the end result of the local/provincial elections and the national elections that follow provides a government that can win both popular support and the

support of the various elements that make up the ISF. The Sons of Iraq are only the visible tip of the iceberg. Political accommodation, sharing oil revenues, and more effective government services are as critical to the successful development of the ISF, and their ability to replace US forces, as any element of training and equipment.

The Broader Challenge Posed by Iraq's Young Men

The ISF also cannot compensate for a failure to offer employment and a future to Iraq's young men and other unemployed or underemployed Iraqis. It cannot compensate for a failure to deal with refugees and the displaced; and effective local government and police forces in mixed or troubled areas. The 120,000 young men in the Sons of Iraq are only a small part of the more than 7.4 million Iraq's in the labor force of a country of some 28 million. Even if one only counts the 18%-30% of the labor force that the CIA reported as directly unemployed in the summer of 2008, this amounts to 1.3 to 2.2 million Iraqis.[ccxlvii] Estimates by the US census bureau also indicate that the number of young Iraqis between 18 and 30 totals well over 4.2 million and that this includes well over 2.4 million young men.[ccxlviii] The interaction between Iraq force development, nation-wide demographics, and Iraq's stability and security goes far beyond the sons of Iraq.

Figure 14: Sons Of Iraq Distribution and Manning Levels



Note: MND is Multi-National Division; MNF is Multi-National Force.

Source: MNF-I, Response to SIGIR Data Call (7/7/2008)

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 95

Province	SOI Members	SOI groups	SOI members per 100,000 population	Sunni groups	Shi'a groups	Mixed groups
Anbar	Over 7,000	7	5.6	7	0	0
Salah ad-Din	Over 4,000	54	3.6	54	0	0
Diyala	Over 10,000	30	7.2	~20	~10	0
Ninewa	Over 1,500	10	0.6	10	0	0
At-Tamim	Over 8,000	11	5.9	11	0	0
Baghdad	Over 35,000	43	5.2	NA	NA	20
Babil	Over 5,000	23	3.4	10	12	1
Wasit	1,500 to 3,000	NA	1.5	NA	NA	NA
Qadisiyyah	Over 1,500	6	1.6	0	6	0
Dhi Qar	Over 2,000	2	1.4	0	2	0

Source: *Long War Journal.* Accessed May 1, 2008. http://www.longwarjournal.org/clcmap.php

Conclusions

No one can be certain that setting a timeframe for US withdrawals that ends in 2011 will lead to instability in Iraq, or will hand over responsibility to Iraqi Security Forces that are unable to do the job. There also is nothing wrong with setting broad goals for withdrawing US forces from Iraq. The US wants to leave as soon as this is feasible, and Iraqis have long wanted us to leave. At least since 2004, Iraq's Kurds have been the only group in Iraq that showed a consistent desire for the US to stay.

It also is impossible to be certain that the risks of early withdrawal will really be greater than the risks of trying to stay longer than Iraqi politics permit. There are good reasons to extend the US military and advisory presence at steadily diminishing levels until Iraq has developed security forces that are fully ready to take over key missions without US support, and Iraq has achieved a greater degree of stability.

It is at least possible, that setting on early timelines will force Iraqis to move towards political accommodation, to take hard decisions, and to develop security forces that are more effective. In fact, if all goes well in Iraq, deadlines like 2011 may prove practical – particularly if such deadlines do not preclude a large number of US military advisors. Moreover, the US "occupation" is so controversial and unpopular that the cost of staying long enough to do every job right could be far higher in terms of Iraqi resentment and political backlash than the security benefits would be worth.

At the same time, it is not a good idea to bet a country -- and the outcome of a war -- on the strategic equivalent of filling an inside straight. Political rhetoric often makes such "bets on the come;" it also often loses the bet. Iraq still faces a large number of risks and problems where a US military presence does more to stabilize the situation than destabilize it, and where both Iraqi and US leaders will need to be careful and realistic about how quickly they can move.

The US now plays a critical role in developing effective Iraqi forces, providing stability in areas with deep sectarian and ethnic tensions, and in helping Iraq achieve political accommodation and more effective governance. If at all possible, US withdrawals need to be "conditions-based," not tied to political timelines.

Secretary Gate's Warning of the Need for Caution

As Secretary of Defense Robert Gases noted in his testimony to the House Armed Services Committee on September 10, 2008,[ccxlix]

> Even with fewer U.S. troops in Iraq, the positive trends of the last year have thus far held – and in some cases steadily continued in the right direction. U.S. troop casualties have been greatly reduced – though even one is still too many, and overall violence is down 80 percent. The recent turnover of Anbar province to Iraqi provincial control – the 11th of 18 provinces to be turned over – highlights how much the situation has improved.
>
> There are other positive indicators:

- The Iraqi Army has planned and executed operations in Amarah, Baghdad, Basrah, Diyala, and Mosul – with encouraging results. Seventy percent of the 150 Iraqi battalions are now in the lead. Their confidence level has grown with each passing month, as has ours in their ability to get the job done.

…Despite all this, very serious challenges remain:

- Political progress remains too slow – as seen recently by the inability of the parliament to pass an election law. This means that provincial elections, which we believe will continue and enhance the process of reconciliation, will in all likelihood be pushed back until at least December. Elections also mean the possibility of increased violence.

- There have been some worrisome reports about sectarian efforts to either disrupt or slow the process of assimilation of the Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi Security Forces. It is a reminder that sectarian tensions still exist and have the potential to undo recent progress at the local and national level.

- Despite Iran's pledges last year to stop providing weapons, training, and funding to armed militias, evidence suggests that this support continues.

- Iraqi security forces still lack many key capabilities. Many of their operations would simply not have been possible without Coalition enablers. That will remain the case for some time to come.

- The threat from Al Qaeda and other militant groups has receded, but is still very real. In the last few months, we have seen a number of suicide attacks – as well as tactical shifts, such as the increased use of women. This is a reminder that Al Qaeda still retains the ability to inflict mass casualties, the operational capacity to assess and change strategies, and is still trying to sow chaos and reassert itself.

- Similarly, there is the possibility that Jaish al-Mahdi could return.

…When I entered office, the main concern was to halt and reverse the spiraling violence in order to prevent a strategic calamity for the United States and allow the Iraqis to make progress on the political, economic, and security fronts. Although we all have criticisms of the Iraqi government, there can be no doubt that the situation is much different – and far better – than it was in early 2007. The situation, however, remains fragile.

Disagreements in our country still exist over the speed of the drawdowns and whether we should adhere to hard-and-fast timelines or more flexible time horizons.

I worry that the great progress our troops and the Iraqis have made has the potential to over-ride a measure of caution born of uncertainty. Our military commanders do not yet believe our gains are necessarily enduring – and they believe that there are still many challenges and the potential for reversals in the future. The continuing but carefully modulated reductions the President has ordered represent, I believe, not only the right direction but also the right course of action – especially considering planned and unplanned redeployments by some of our coalition partners. The planned reductions are an acceptable risk today, but also provide for unforeseen circumstances in the future. The reductions also preserve a broad range of options for the next commander in chief, who will make his own assessment after taking office in January.

As we proceed deeper into the endgame, I would urge our nation's leaders to implement strategies that, while steadily reducing our presence in Iraq, are cautious and flexible and take into account the advice of our senior commanders and military leaders. I would also urge our leaders to keep in

mind that we should expect to be involved in Iraq for many years to come, although in changing and increasingly limited ways.

The Need for Realism and Transparency

Iraqi and US leaders need to be very careful about exaggerating Iraqi capabilities and the speed with which the US can safely withdraw its forces and advisory teams from Iraq. Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are very much a work in progress, and there are good reasons that both the Iraqi minister of Defense and General Dubik, the head of the MNF-I advisory effort from July 2007-July 2008, have said the Army is unlikely to be able to take over the counterinsurgency mission before 2012, and why even the basic goals for shaping the police force remain uncertain.

This does not mean that the US cannot make steady force reductions over the next few years if conditions permit. If all goes well, the US should be able to phase out its combat forces by 2011 to 2014. Iraq will, however, need a stabilizing US military presence for at least several years to come, and need a substantial US military advisory effort for several years longer. Iraq's forces are not yet ready to provide the security and stability Iraq needs, and US withdrawals need to be tailored to the progress they actually make and not to politically correct deadlines that are decoupled from conditions on the ground.

Correcting the Problems in Iraqi Security Forces

The growing numbers of Iraqi security forces are impressive, and Iraqi forces really are performing with growing effectiveness. However, there are still serious ethnic and sectarian divisions and tensions in the Army and National Police. For example, there are two Army divisions that are effectively Kurdish, Kurdish forces have recently failed to follow central government orders in Diyala, and the entire Kurdish police force operates totally independently of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and MNSTC-I advisory effort. Similarly,

Sunni-Shi'ite tensions are another serious issue, compounded by the uncertain future of the Sons of Iraq and efforts to increase the Sunni share of the ISF, and eliminate the sectarian character of some elements like the National Police. Shi'ite units have recently conducted rogue operations against Iraqi Sunnis in Diyala, the future of the Sons of Iraq remains extreme uncertain, and there are still problems eliminating the sectarian character of some elements like the National Police.

There are many severe qualitative problems in Iraqi Army forces. There are major shortages of qualified officers and NCOs, and Iraqi Army forces (180,296) are still in the process of a major expansion. The bulk of the army is still more a group of battalions than a force that is yet ready to operate as full brigades and divisions without US partner units, embedded advisors, help in logistics and support, artillery and armor support, air combat and helicopter support, and a support in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR).

For all of the reports of Iraqi battalions being in the lead, the fact is that almost all of these battalions are still "Category II" units that need US aid and support. Only 10% or less of the units "in the lead" are really ready to operate on their own. This is why both

the Iraqi Minister of Defense and the most senior US military advisors have talked about timelines like 2012 for the Iraqi Army to take over the counterinsurgency mission. This mission also is not is scarcely the same as being able to defend and deter against foreign pressure or military action. In fact, there still is no clear plan to rebuild Iraqi Army forces as a true national army as distinguished from a counterinsurgency force.

Such problems are even more critical in the case of the Iraqi Air Force (1,886), Navy, (1,872) and National Police. The Air Force and Navy still do not have clear procurement plans to acquire the combat systems they need. They are making real progress, but they remain cadres that are years away from becoming mature forces. How many years? Once again, there still is no agreed plan to make them into the kind of forces Iraq needs to deter and defend.

In fact, Iraqi and US leaders seem to have agreed on possible timelines for US withdrawal without any clear plan or even examination of what it will take to ensure that Iraqi forces can and will be ready to operate without US support and security guarantees. This will be a critical priority for action in 2009 if a 2011 deadline is to involve minimal risk. It also will mean eliminate most of the 6 month delay in US process of arms sales and deliveries – and the 12 month Iraqi delay in planning and executing them – that now places basic limits on force expansion.

What is equally serious, is that Iraq needs effective police forces and a local rule of law to go from "win" to "hold," and government services and local development and economic activity to go from "Win and hold" to "win, hold, and build." This is not happening. There was no "year of the police" in 2007 and there is no year of the police in 2008. The US is still experimenting with how to train and equip the police and other security forces, and there are major shortfalls in police and other Ministry of Interior advisors, Iraqi leader, equipment, and facilities.

The National Police (39,544) do seem to be making progress, but only have around 40% of the officers and NCOs they need. The regular Iraq police –the core of local security – generally have only token training and token capability. The most recent public State Department reports show that total strength is 299,757, and only 62% are "trained" -- even if all trained Iraqi police were still in service. The reality is that desertions and departures probably have reduced the number of trained forces actually in service to around 40%.

Worse, progress in creating effective mix of local courts, legal representation, and jails lags or is negligible in much of the country, and this helps create further sectarian and ethnic problems as well as helps lead to high levels of crime and corruption. It is still more dangerous to be a policeman than a soldier, and police facilities are inadequate. Even where sectarian and ethnic issues are not a major factor, the police still tend to be passive unless paid to act, and to force confessions rather than investigate and gather evidence.

Once again, Iraqi and US leaders seem to have agreed on possible timelines for US withdrawal without any clear plan, or examination of what it will take to ensure that Iraqi police forces and a local rule of law effective. This too will be a critical priority for action in 2009 if a 2011 deadline is to involve minimal risk. It also will mean eliminate most of the 6 month delay in US process of arms sales and deliveries – and the 12 month Iraqi delay in planning and executing them – that now places basic limits on force expansion

The Interaction Between Iraqi Force Development and Solving the Broader Problems in Stability

Security forces are only part of the issues involved in shaping conditions-based US withdrawals. The timing and nature of Iraq's elections – both local/provincial and national – remains uncertain. What is certain, they will again lead to new tensions between Iraq's sectarian and ethnic groups, and there will be new intra-Shi'ite and intra-Sunni power struggles as well. Neither Iraq's exile party dominated central government nor its national Sunni parties have ever face true competitive elections where Iraq's people get to vote for more than closed lists and largely unknown politicians.

Three key elements could turn violent: The Sadr movement and JAM, the Sunni "Sons of Iraq," and the Kurdish, Arab and minority factions along the ethnic fault line in the north. There also are still major problems in mixed areas, particularly Baghdad, Diyala, and the greater Kirkuk and Mosul areas. Moreover, Al Qa'ida in Iraq has shown that it can sustain its past levels of potentially destabilizing suicide bombings in spite of its defeats and the reductions in virtually every other kind of attack.

US forces may not be popular, but they do have a stabilizing effect that helps damp down the risk these power struggles will turn violent. This stabilizing effect is also likely to increase during the critical transition period for elections and political accommodation if it is clear to Iraqis that the US is leaving, and their own forces and government are taking over. On the one hand, setting broad targets for US withdrawal can help. On the other hand, enforcing the wrong targets could push US forces and influence out too quickly if things do not go extraordinarily smoothly. If things go wrong, or there are delays, a year or two more with a limited US presence might make all the difference.

Both Iraqi and US leaders also need to be more realistic about the real glue that can bind Iraqis together into some form of stable political accommodation. Elections are important, but money and oil revenues are at least equally important and are the prize in Iraqi politics. Iraq is making slow progress in using its money, but it has no oil law, no accepted plan to develop its resources, and no ability as yet to spend on the overall development petroleum and electricity sectors. Iraq also has vast numbers of unemployed and underemployed young men and virtually all job creation comes from government spending on either the security forces or civil service and government-dominated industries.

At present, the Iraqi central government only seems to have spend about 18% of its development funds for FY2008, in spite of accounting tricks the Iraqi Ministry of Finance

has used to claim that the Iraqi central government has brought the total up to 57%. The limited data available indicate that the flow of money has left key provinces like Anbar with little real spending, and that the critical oil and electricity ministries are counting "advances" that may not actually be spend until 2009 or longer after as actual expenditures.

US troops are scarcely the answer to the lack of, or mismanagement, of government spending -- although US advisors are still critical to the reform and effectiveness of the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. A combination of US help in enforcing stability, and civilian US advisors is, however, potentially critical to helping and encouraging Iraq to spend its money. US influence has so far proved critical to push Iraq's leaders to spend in ways that show all factions they can get a fair share, and buy time for the post-election mix of central, provincial, and local government officials to work a practical way to spend.

Here, it is critical to remember that money, governance, and government services are the critical "build" element in "win, hold, and build." Until Iraq is successful here, Iraq and the US need to be as cautious about eliminating a stabilizing US presence as they need to be about eliminating US forces before Iraqi security forces and the rule of law are ready. Joint, real world US and Iraqi planning and cooperation to achieve these goals will be just as high a priority for the next Administration(s) as creating effective Iraqi forces.

Iraqi Force Development and Conditions-Based Withdrawals

None of these points mean that the US should not agree to Iraqi efforts to set potential goals for withdrawal or that 2011 is a bad goal. Neither the US or Iraq have reason to want US forces to stay any longer than necessary, and creating a joint set of pressures for the US to leave as soon as possible is likely to be more constructive than destructive. *At the same time, both Iraq and the US now need to develop far clearer plans for such a transition, determine what goals are really feasible, and be prepared for problems and delays.*

They also need to make most of the details of such plans unclassified and actively communicate them to the legislatures, political leaders, media, and people of Iraq and the United States. It is particularly important that Iraqis understand how fact the ISF can develop and that the US has no intention of maintaining even an advisory or support presence that is not a response to the desires of the Iraqi government. “Conditions-based withdrawals cannot simply be based on Iraqi security needs, they also must consider how strongly Iraqis want the US and other Coalition forces to leave and the negative impact of a US presence on Iraqi politics and public opinion.

Americans need to understand just how sensitive Iraqis are to what many see as an occupation, and that many Iraqis still see the US-led invasion as unjustified and feel that the US intends to stay in Iraq and/or seize control of Iraqi oil. Iraqi sensitivity to these issued is shown in the polling data reflected in Figure 15. These results, however, tell only part of the story. As ABC reported in issuing its most recent poll in February 2008 –

before the full impact of the defeat of AQI and action against the Sadr forces had influenced Iraqi views of the US,[ccl]

> … Views of the United States, while still broadly negative, have moderated in some respects. Just shy of half, 49 percent, now say it was right for the U.S.-led coalition to have invaded, up by 12 points from August; the previous high was 48 percent in the first ABC News poll in Iraq in February 2004. Similarly, the number of Iraqis who call it "acceptable" to attack U.S. forces has declined for the first time in these polls, down to 42 percent after peaking at 57 percent in August. Even with a 15-point drop, however, that's still a lot of Iraqis to endorse such violence. (Just 4 percent, by contrast, call it acceptable to attack Iraqi government forces.)
>
> Sunni Arabs, dispossessed by the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, are a good example. In August 93 percent of Sunnis called it acceptable to attack U.S. forces. Today, that's down to 62 percent – a dramatic decline, but one that still leaves six in 10 Sunnis on the side of anti-U.S. attacks.
>
> Other measures are a little better, if not good. Just 20 percent of Iraqis express confidence in U.S. forces, up slightly from 14 percent last summer. Just 29 percent say U.S. forces have done a good job in Iraq, up 10 points. Only 27 percent say the presence of U.S. forces is making overall security better in Iraq, up 9 points; 61 percent say it's making things worse.
>
> Indeed, on a basic level, the presence of foreign forces remains unwelcome: Just 26 percent of Iraqis support having U.S. and coalition troops in their country, up a scant 5 points. But this doesn't mean most favor immediate withdrawal. Well under half, 38 percent, say the United States should leave now, down from a peak 47 percent in August.
>
> One reason is that Iraqis are divided on what might follow U.S. withdrawal; 46 percent think it would make security better, but the rest say it would make security worse or leave it as it is now. Those who think immediate withdrawal would improve security are twice as likely to support it.
>
> Moreover, despite their antipathy, big majorities see a continued role for the United States. From two-thirds to 80 percent of Iraqis support future U.S. efforts conducting security operations against al Qaeda or foreign jihadis in Iraq; providing military training, weapons and reconstruction aid; and assisting in security vis-à-vis Iran and Turkey. The most popular of these is a U.S. role confronting al Qaeda.

Future role for U.S.	% support
Security vs. al Qaeda in Iraq	80%
Training/weapons for Iraqi army	76
Reconstruction aid	73
Security vs. Iran	68
Security vs. Turkey	66

The same ABC polls have, however, shown that Iraqis see their military as the most respected single institution in the country, and sharply exaggerate the current capabilities of the Iraqi Army and police. In the ABC poll held in February 2008, 57% of Iraq's polled felt the Iraqi Army and police were responsible for the improvement in security since late 2006, and only 4% gave credit to US and other MNF-I forces. This compares with another 8% who gave primary credit to the Sons of Iraq, 5% who gave credit to Sadr and the Mahdi Army, and 4% who gave credit to ordinary citizens.[ccli]

They also show that Iraqis often take a highly negative view US-led security operations, US barriers and checkpoints, and the day-to-day interference US forces in their lives. Many Iraqis see the US forces as a "threat" that is roughly equivalent to that of local

militias. This has included well over 40% of all the Iraqis polled during 2007 and 2008, and over 55% of all Sunni Arab Iraqis.[cclii] The fact these perceptions are often unfair, or reflect operational needs that has help improve their security, does not change their desire to see US forces leave.

Iraqis need to understand that the US is committed to helping Iraq achieve full sovereignty and fully end its security dependence on the US, and that the US really is willing to totally withdraw all of its forces. They need to see that progress is occurring as rapidly as is feasible given the security situation and speed with which the ISF can be made effective, and that the US is not favoring any sect or ethnic group and is steadily letting Iraq take charge of the force development effort. Americans need to see that there is a clear end game that can result in success and in an end to a US combat presence and the spending of US resources.

The resulting mix of real-world planning and real-world conditions in Iraq may well lead to pauses in US withdrawals. It may well prove harder to go below the level of 4-6 US combat brigades in a strategic overwatch role than either Iraq or the US desires, or the goals set in a document like a Status of Forces Agreement call for. Iraq may need US air, naval, and IS&R support well beyond 2011, as well as large teams of US advisors.

If so, it will scarcely hurt Iraqi sovereignty to wait a few years for total US withdrawal. If the US presence continues to be stabilizing, a slower pace of withdrawals might lead to more Iraqi political accommodation, allow the pace of development to increase, and give Iraqi forces time to become fully capable of defending the country without US support. This may not prove necessary, and every month should see the Iraqi take more control and the US carefully assess what troop cuts it can make. The history of states facing a predicament similar to Iraq's present position, however, shows that time and patience is critical. Stability takes as long as it takes to build, and no one can win if the result of rushing forward is sectarian and ethnic violence, and/or politics that exacerbate conflict rather than produce lasting stability.

Figure 15: Iraqi views of the US and Coalition Military Presence in Iraq: 2004-2008

From today's perspective and all things considered, was it absolutely right, somewhat right, somewhat wrong or absolutely wrong that U.S.-led coalition forces invaded Iraq in spring 2003?

	---------- Right ----------			---------- Wrong ---------			No
	NET	Absolutely	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Absolutely	opinion
Total							
2/20/08	49	21	28	50	23	27	*
8/24/07	37	12	25	63	28	35	*
3/5/07	48	22	25	52	19	34	*
11/22/05*	46	19	28	50	17	33	4
6/14/04	38	12	26	56	24	32	6
2/28/04	48	20	29	39	13	26	13
Sunni							
2/20/08	5	1	4	95	32	63	*
8/24/07	4	2	2	96	27	70	0
3/5/07	2	1	1	98	20	78	*
Shiite							
2/20/08	65	27	38	35	21	13	*
8/24/07	49	14	34	51	31	21	*
3/5/07	70	34	36	29	20	10	*
Kurdish							
2/20/08	87	43	44	13	11	3	0
8/24/07	71	26	45	28	21	8	*
3/5/07	83	36	47	17	9	8	*

*05 and previous, Oxford Research International, on all questions

Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the presence of coalition forces in Iraq?

	---------- Right ----------			**---------- Wrong ---------**			**No**
	NET	**Absolutely**	**Somewhat**	**NET**	**Somewhat**	**Absolutely**	**opinion**
2/20/08	26	7	19	73	31	41	1
8/24/07	21	5	16	79	26	53	*
3/5/07	22	6	16	78	32	46	*
11/22/05	32	13	19	65	21	44	3
2/28/04	39	13	26	51	20	31	10
Sunni							
2/20/08	5	*	5	95	36	59	*
8/24/07	2	*	1	98	25	73	0
3/5/07	3	*	3	97	29	68	0
Shiite							
2/20/08	23	2	21	77	33	44	*
8/24/07	16	2	15	84	30	54	0
3/5/07	17	2	15	83	39	44	0
Kurdish							
2/20/08	77	34	42	21	15	6	2
8/24/07	70	21	48	29	20	9	1
3/5/07	75	28	47	25	21	4	*

How long do you think U.S. and other coalition forces should remain in Iraq? Should they leave now, remain until security is restored, remain until the Iraqi government is stronger, remain until Iraqi security forces can operate independently, remain longer but leave eventually, or never leave?

		--------- Remain until ----------					
	Leave now	**Security restored**	**Gov't stronger**	**Operate independently**	**Remain/leave eventually**	**Never leave**	**No opinion**
Total							
2/20/08	38	35	14	10	3	1	*
8/24/07	47	34	10	7	2	*	*
3/5/07	35	38	14	11	2	1	*
11/22/05*	26	31	19	16	3	1	4
Sunni							
2/20/08	61	33	4	2	*	0	*
8/24/07	72	27	*	1	0	0	*
3/5/07	55	41	3	1	*	0	0
Shiite							
2/20/08	33	37	17	11	1	*	*
8/24/07	44	38	10	6	1	*	*
3/5/07	28	39	18	13	2	*	*
Kurdish							
2/20/08	10	33	23	19	12	2	*
8/24/07	8	36	28	18	8	2	1
3/5/07	11	28	28	24	7	2	*

*In 2005, "Remain until the Iraqi government elected in December is in place"

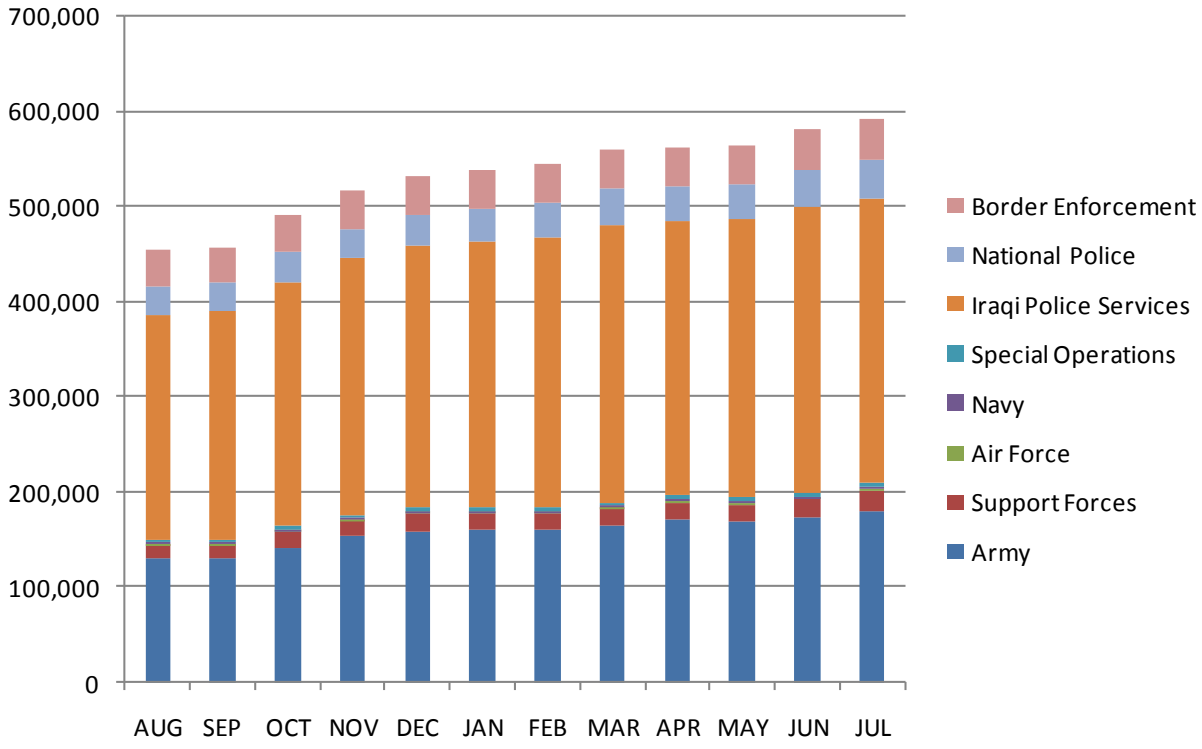
Thinking about the political actions of other people, do you find attacks on coalition forces to be acceptable or not acceptable?

	Acceptable	**Not acceptable**	**No opinion**
Total			
2/20/08	42	57	1
8/24/07	57	43	*
3/5/07	51	49	*
2/28/04	17	78	5
Sunni			
2/20/08	62	37	1
8/24/07	93	7	*
3/5/07	94	6	0
Shiite			
2/20/08	43	57	*
8/24/07	50	50	0
3/5/07	35	65	*
Kurdish			
2/20/08	2	96	3
8/24/07	5	94	1
3/5/07	7	93	0

Source: Gary Langer, ABC Polling Unit, ABC News, September 5, 2008

Annex: ISF Graphics, Graphs, and Charts

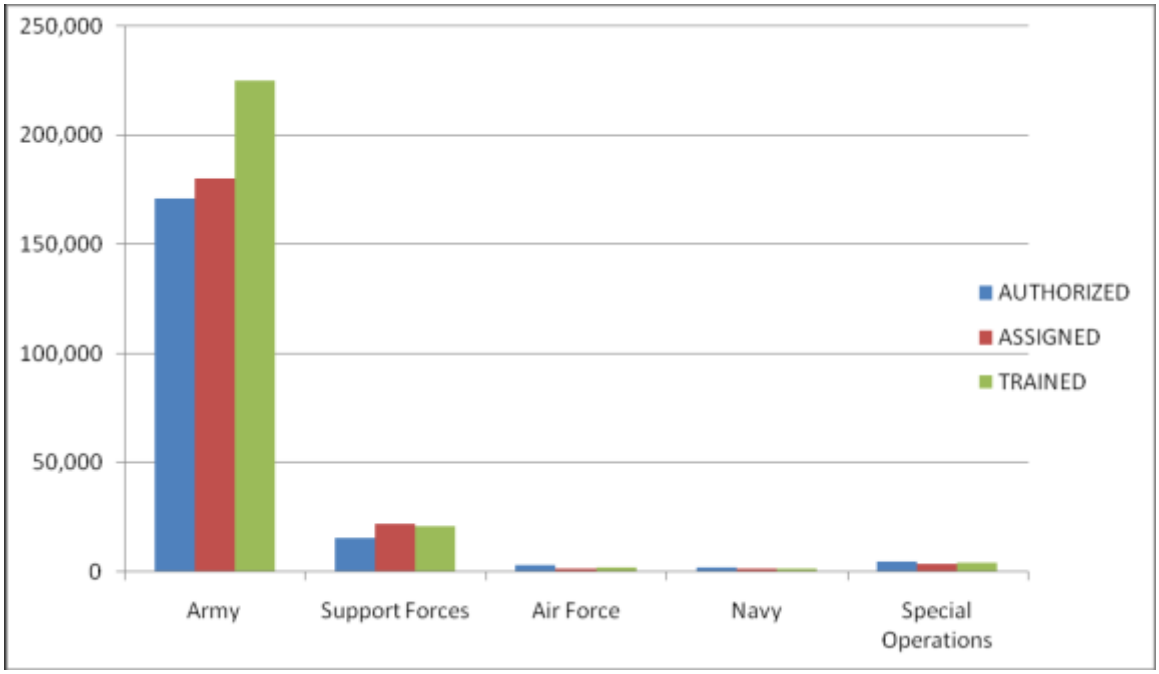
Total Size of the ISF (number of personnel): Aug 07-July 08



Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008

Manning of MOD Forces

As of July 31, 2008

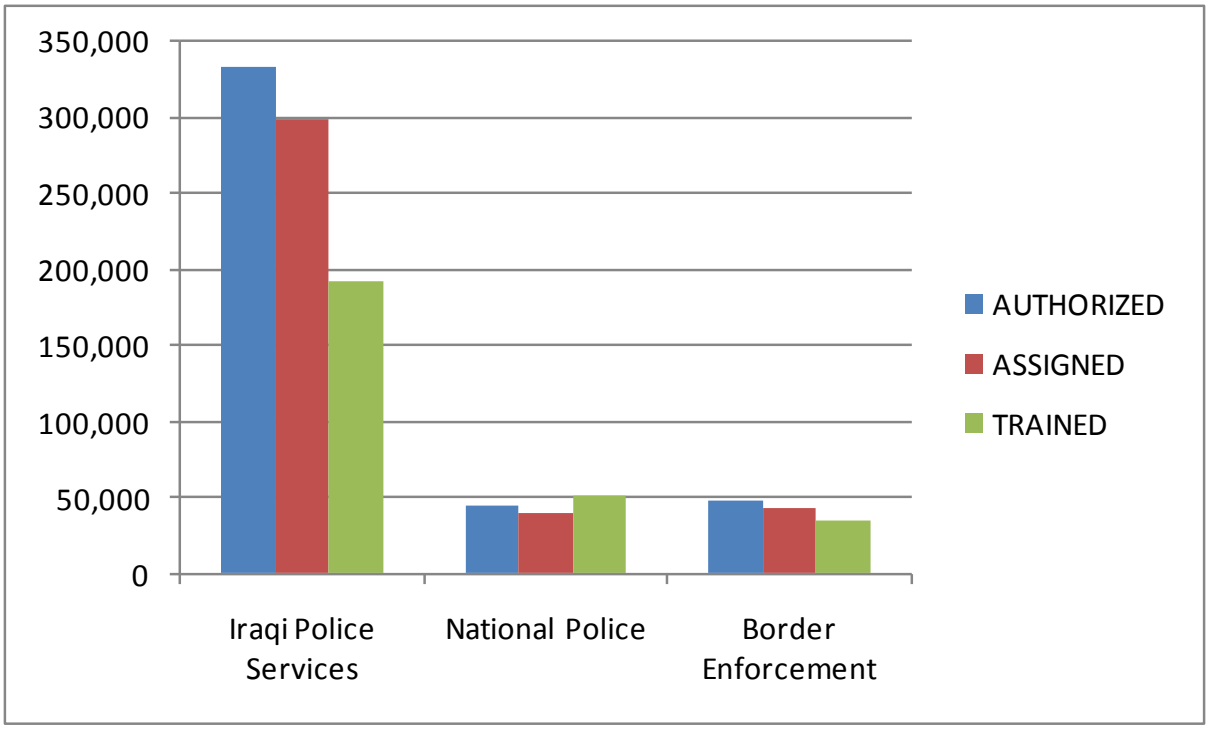


	AUTHORIZED	ASSIGNED	TRAINED
Army	**171,262**	**180,296**	**224,970**
Support Forces	**15,583**	**22,069**	**21,144**
Air Force	**3,311**	**1,887**	**2246**
Navy	**1,893**	**1,872**	**1,494**
Special Operations	**4,733**	**3,589**	**4,564**

Source: MNSTC-I, September, 2008

Manning of MOI Forces

As of July 31, 2008



	AUTHORIZED	ASSIGNED	TRAINED
Iraqi Police Services	**333,324**	**299,170**	**192,028**
National Police	**44,263**	**39,739**	**50,184**
Border Enforcement	**47,750**	**43,073**	**34,370**

Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008

MoD Trained and Authorized Military Personnel

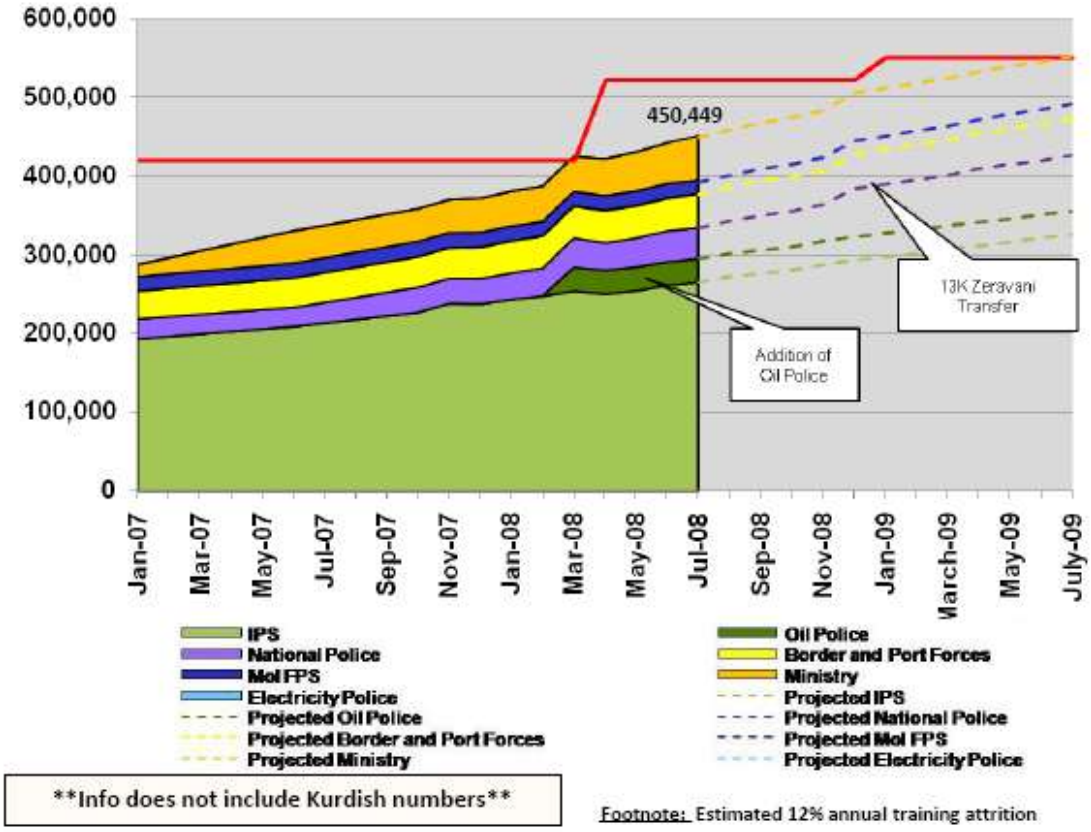
ISF Service	May 2008 Trained	July 2008 Trained	Authorized Force Strength
Iraqi Army	**211,826**	**224,970**	**171,262**
Support Forces	**21,048**	**21,144**	**15,583**
Iraqi Air Force	**1,595**	**2,246**	**3,311**
Iraqi Navy	**1,494**	**1,494**	**1,893**
Total	**235,963**	**249,854**	**192,049**

MoI Trained and Authorized Security Force

ISF Service	May 2008 Trained	July 2008 Trained	Authorized Force Strength
Iraqi Army	**211,826**	**224,970**	**171,262**
Support Forces	**21,048**	**21,144**	**15,583**
Iraqi Air Force	**1,595**	**2,246**	**3,311**
Iraqi Navy	**1,494**	**1,494**	**1,893**
Total	**235,963**	**249,854**	**192,049**

Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008

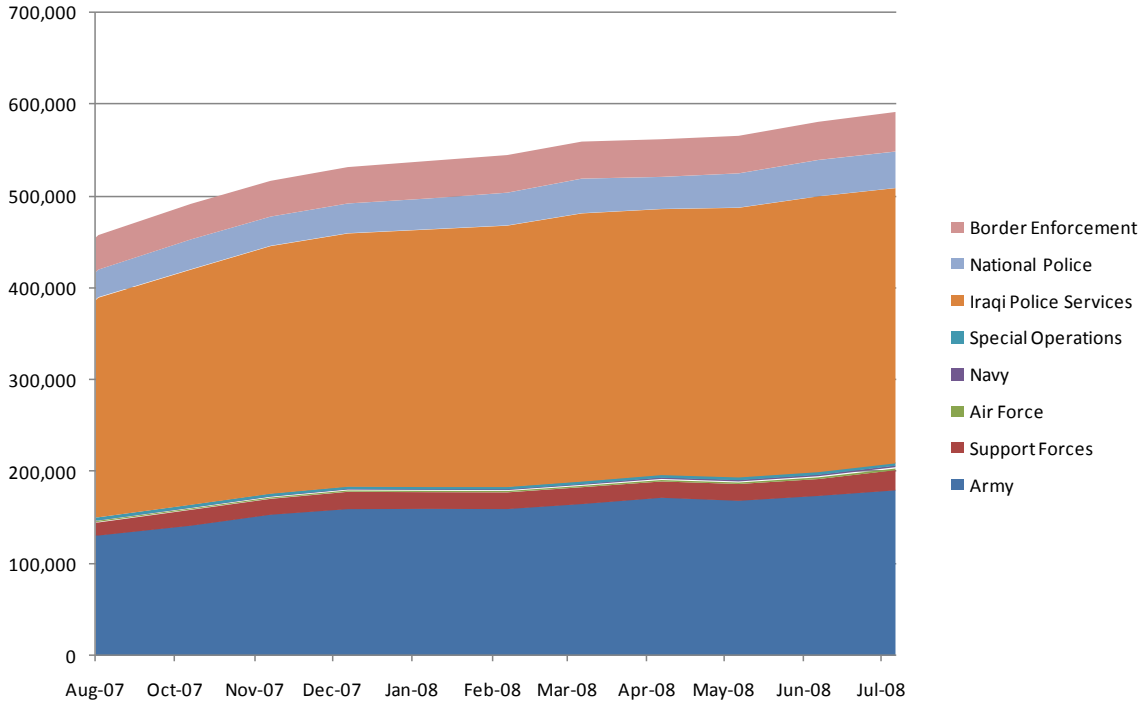
Projected Growth of Iraqi Security Forces



Source: MNSTC-I. September, 2008.

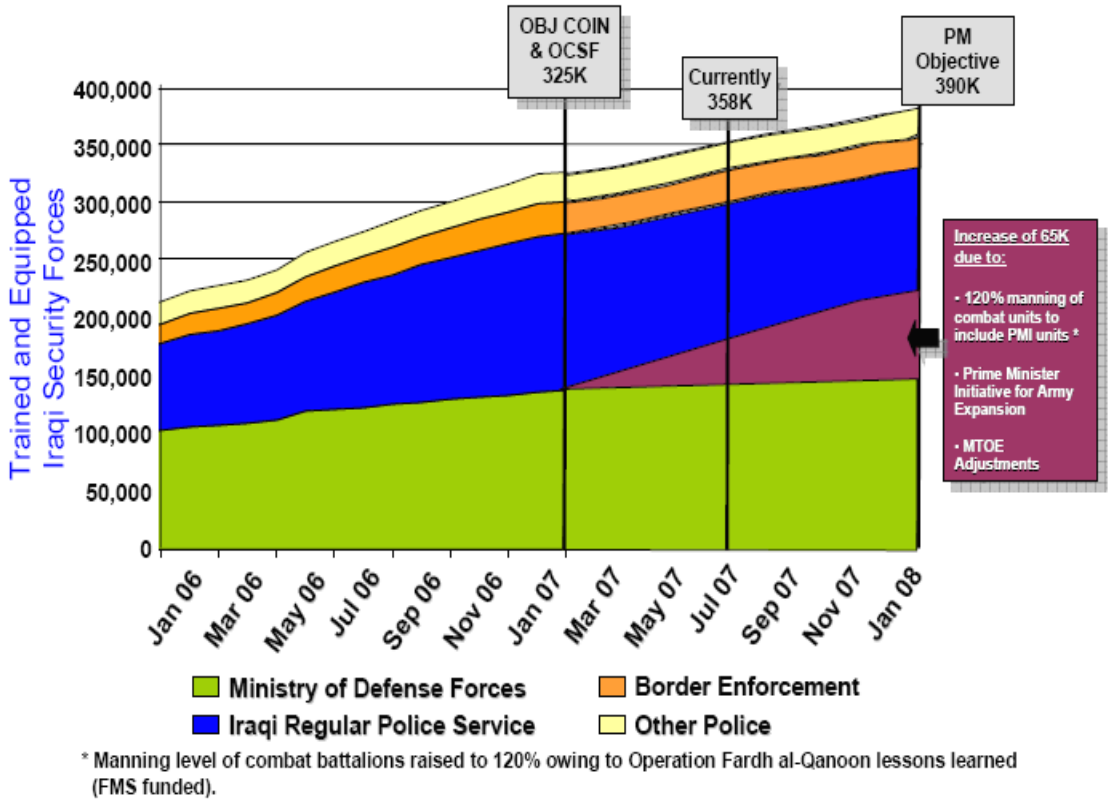
Growth of Iraqi Security Forces

As of July 2008



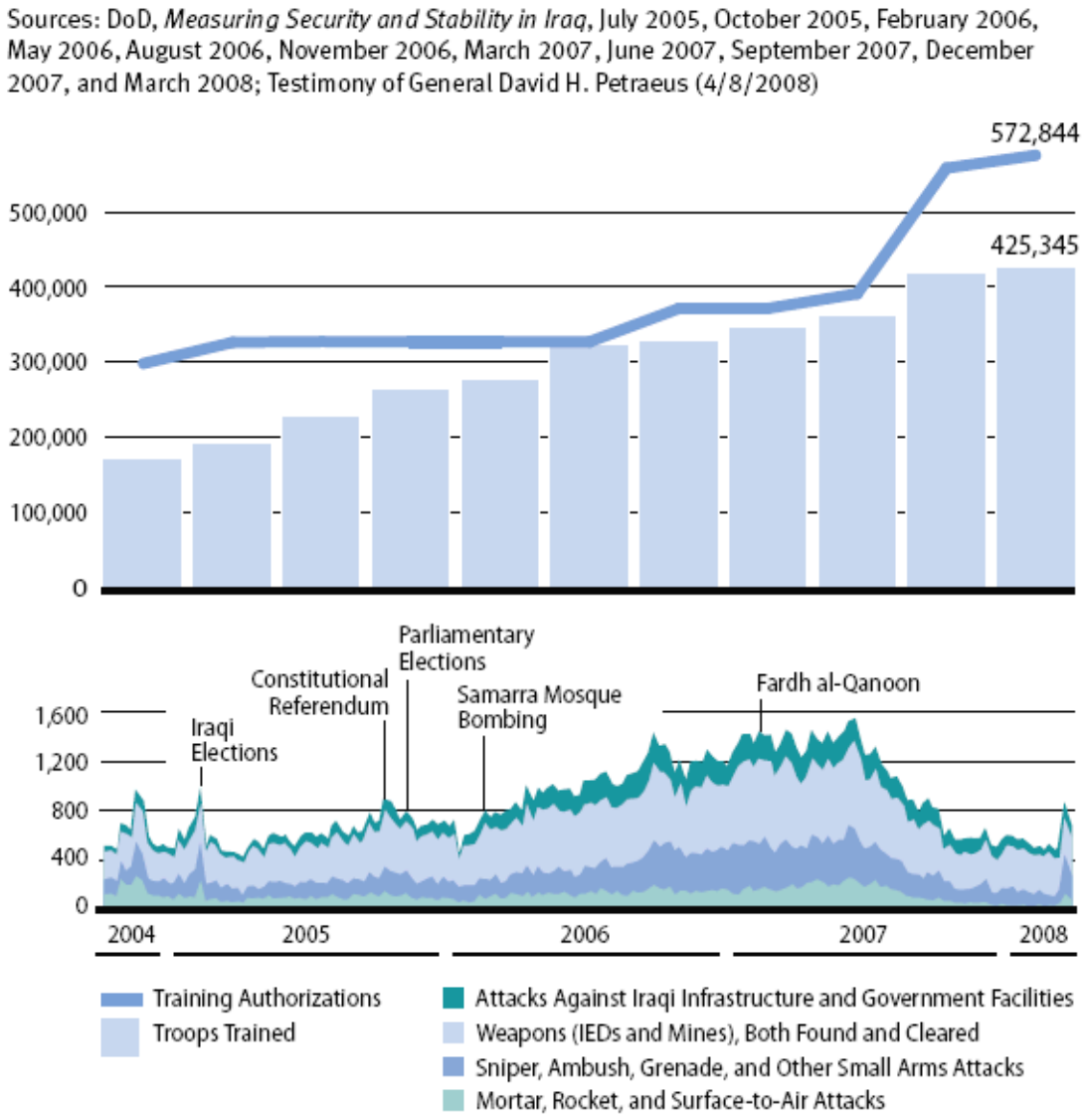
Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008

Growth of Iraqi Security Forces



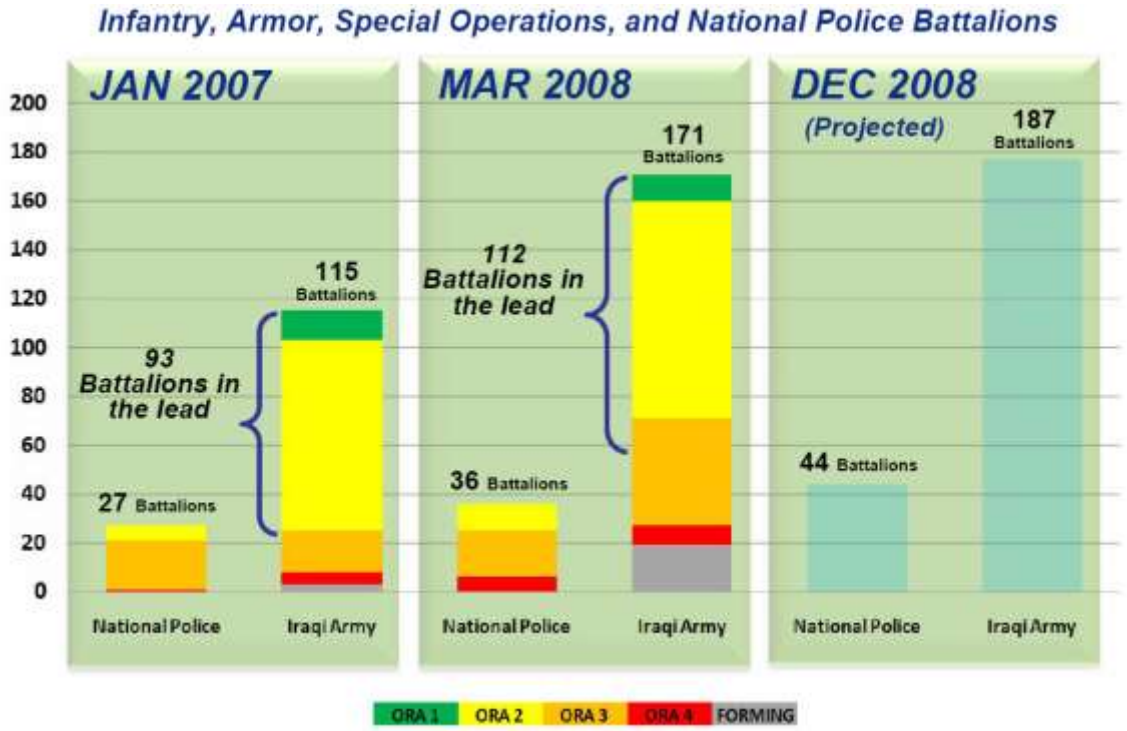
Source: Independent Commission on The Security Forces of Iraq. "Report to Congress." September 6, 2007. Pg. 35.

Iraqi Troop Training and Authorizations



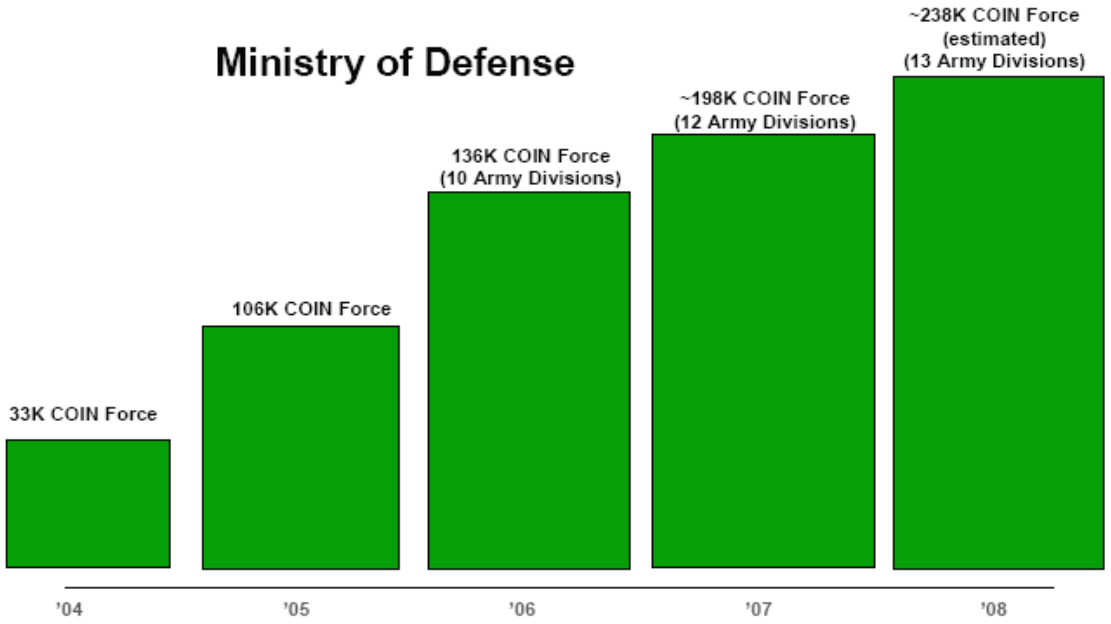
Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." April 30, 2008. Pg. 7

Iraqi Combat Battalion Generation



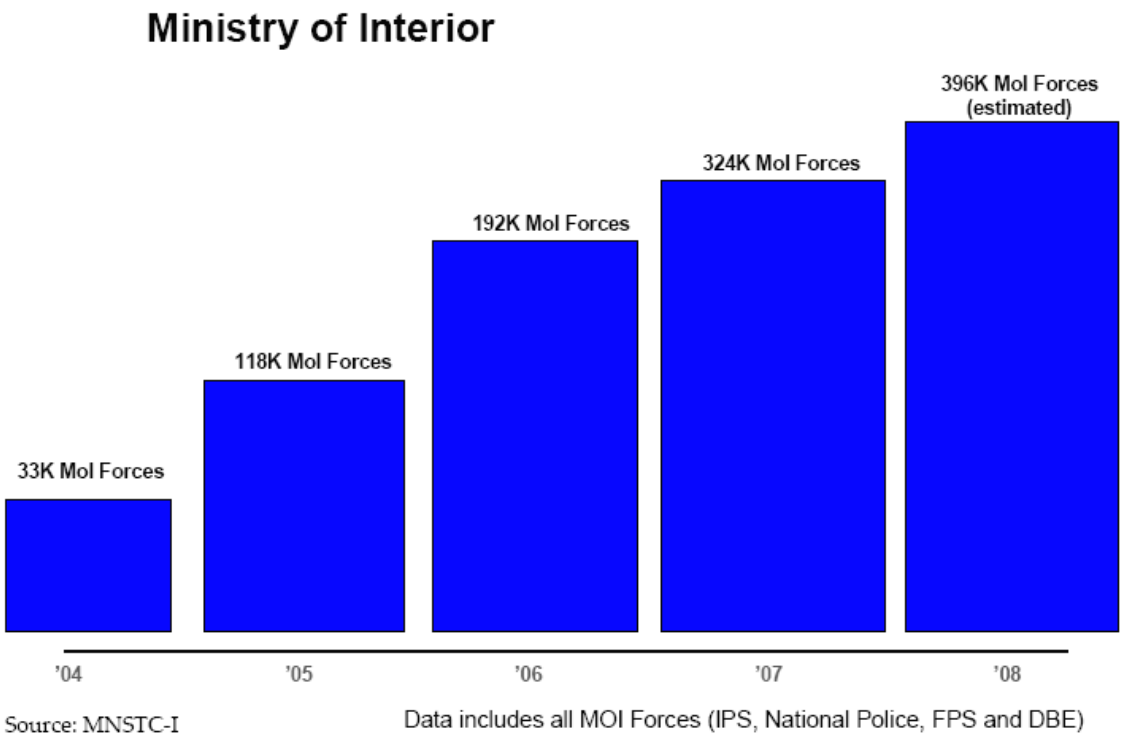
Source: MNF-I "Charts to accompany the testimony of GEN David H. Petraeus" April 9, 2008. Pg 10

Growth of MoD Forces



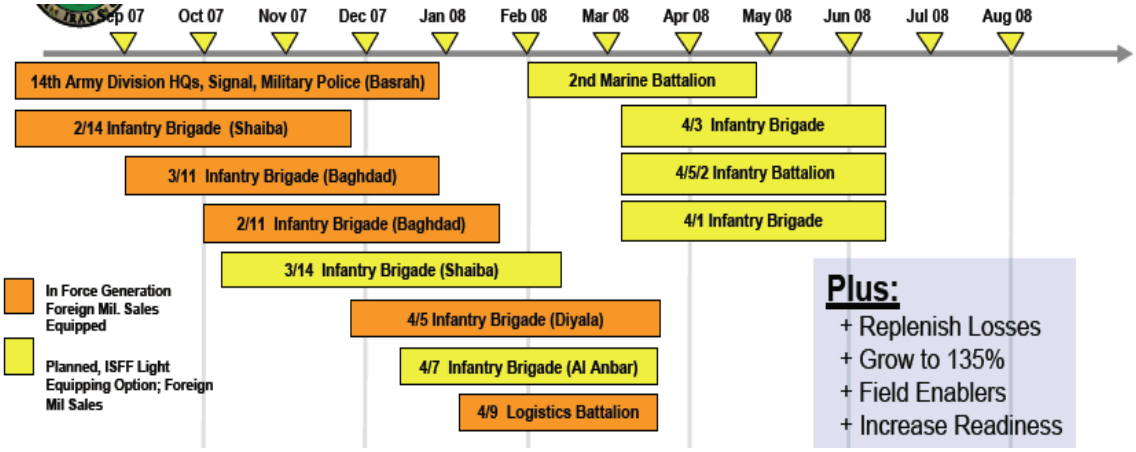
Source: Independent Commission on The Security Forces of Iraq. "Report to Congress." September 6, 2007. Pg. 57.

Growth of MoI Forces

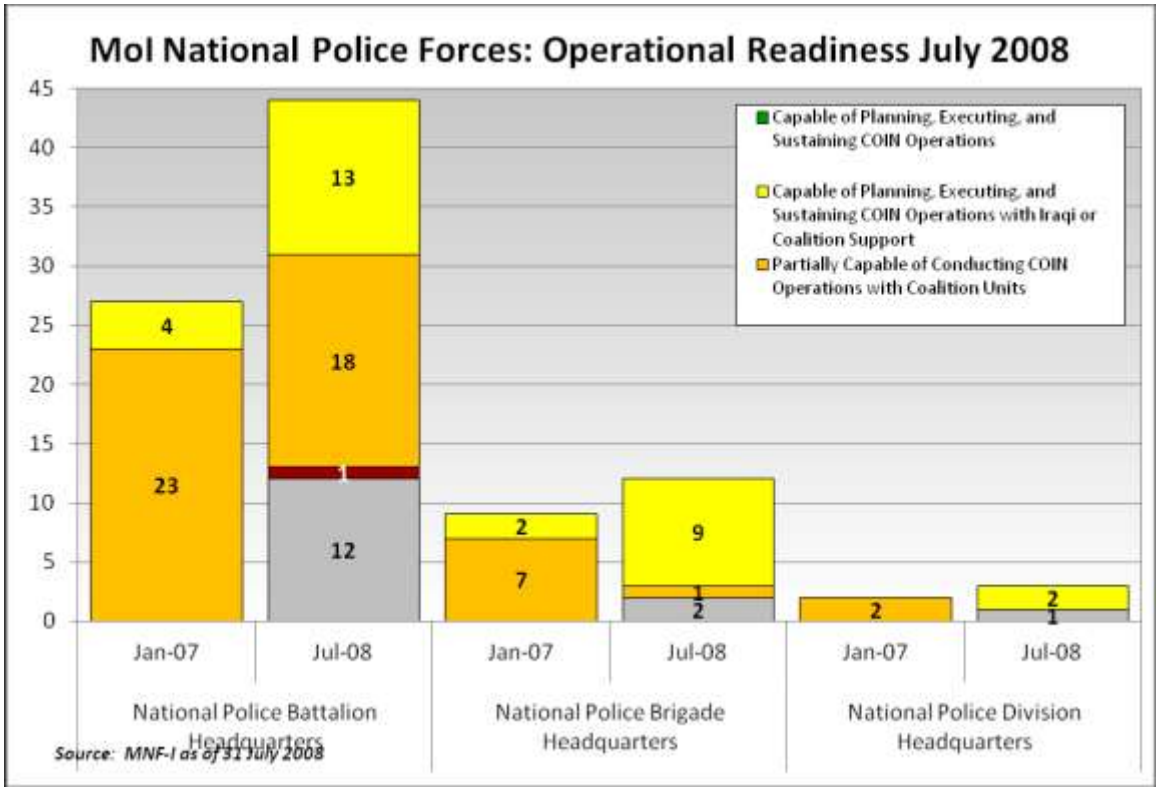


Source: Independent Commission on The Security Forces of Iraq. "Report to Congress." September 6, 2007. Pg. 87.

ISF Growth: September 2007 to August 2008

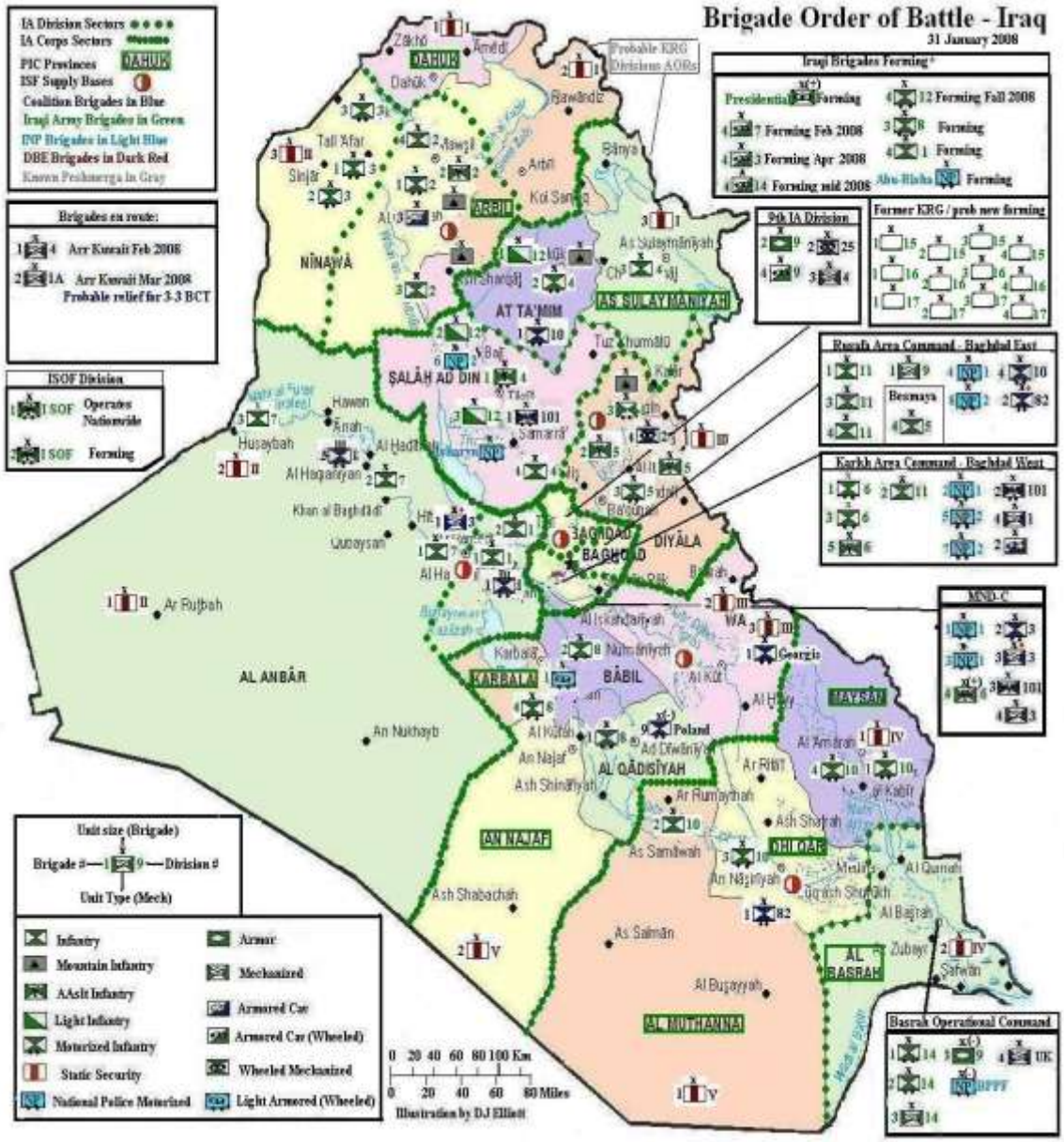


Source: LTG Dubik, Traveling Brief. August, 2008.



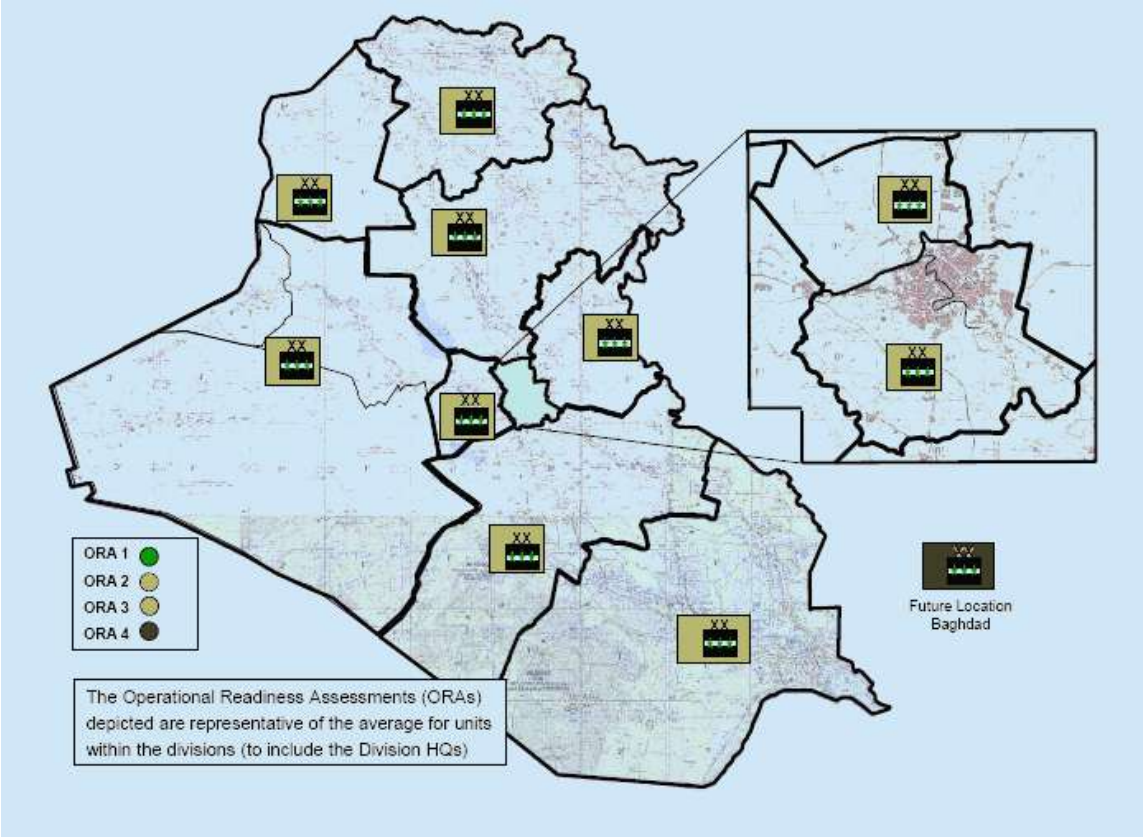
Source: MNSTC-I, September, 2008

Iraqi Army Division Sectors and Brigade Locations



Source: http://www.longwarjournal.org/oob/index.php accessed May 01, 2008.

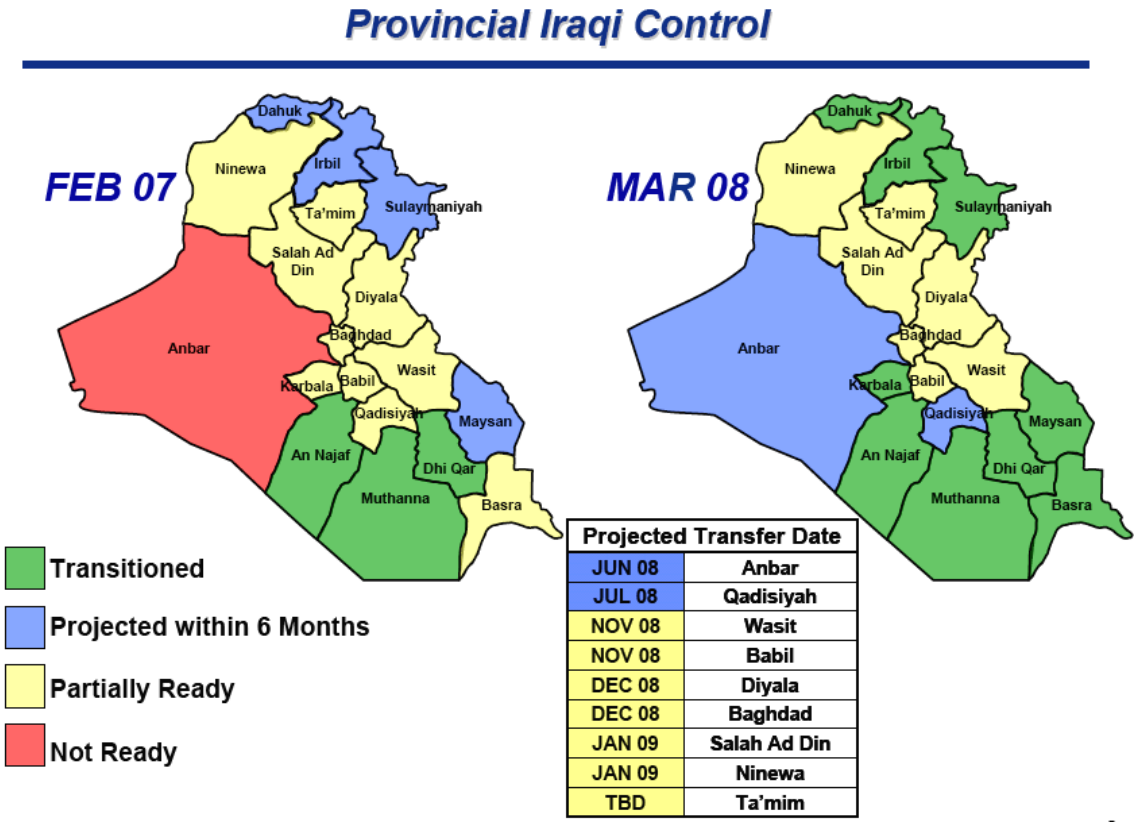
Iraqi Army Division Disposition



Source: Independent Commission on The Security Forces of Iraq. "Report to Congress." September 6, 2007. Pg. 61.

Transfer of Provinces to Provincial Iraqi Control

(Note: As of 1 Sept 08, Anbar and Qadisiyah are under PIC)



Projected Transfer Date	
JUN 08	Anbar
JUL 08	Qadisiyah
NOV 08	Wasit
NOV 08	Babil
DEC 08	Diyala
DEC 08	Baghdad
JAN 09	Salah Ad Din
JAN 09	Ninewa
TBD	Ta'mim

Source: MNF-I "Charts to accompany the testimony of GEN David H. Petraeus" April 9, 2008. Pg 9

Transfer of Forward Operating Bases

TRANSFER OF FORWARD OPERATING BASES

DATE	FOBs	# TRANSFERRED	% TRANSFERRED
October 2006	110	52	47.3%
June 2007	122	61	50.0%
September 2007	125	61	48.8%
November 2007	125	61	48.8%
January 2008	125	63	50.4%

Source: DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, November 2006, June 2007, September 2007, December 2007, and March 2008.

Note: DoD did not report on FOBs in March 2007.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." April 30, 2008. Pg. 105

Ministry of Justice Detention Facilities

Facility	Standard Capacity	Emergency Capacity	Number of Detainees	Province
Al Harithiya	100	120	179	Baghdad
Al Hillah	275	330	342	Babylon
Baladiyat	860	1,008	990	Baghdad
Rusafa	6,807	7,244	6,970	Baghdad
Diyala	202	242	478	Diyala
Al Minah	400	480	535	Basrah

Source: U.S. Embassy, response to SIGIR data call, June 29, 2008.

U.S.-funded Prison Construction

Location	Value	Estimated Completion Date	Status	Change from April 2008
Basrah Central	$11.2 million	TBD	Soliciting bids	Value increased by $1.34 million; no change in construction progress
Chamchamal	$32.0 million	February 2009	40% complete	Completion date extended by 23 days due to weather; construction progressed by 33%
Fort Suse: Phase I	$6.5 million	March 2009	25% complete	Completion date extended by 80 days; value increased by $0.47 million; construction progressed by 18%
Fort Suse: Phase III	$11.5 million	TBD	Contract awarded on June 8, 2008	Contract awarded
Nassriya: Phase II	$7.3 million	December 2008	32% complete	Construction progressed by 12%
Ramadi	$22.8 million	TBD	N/A	N/A

Source: INL, response to SIGIR data call, July 3, 2008.

TABLE 2.36

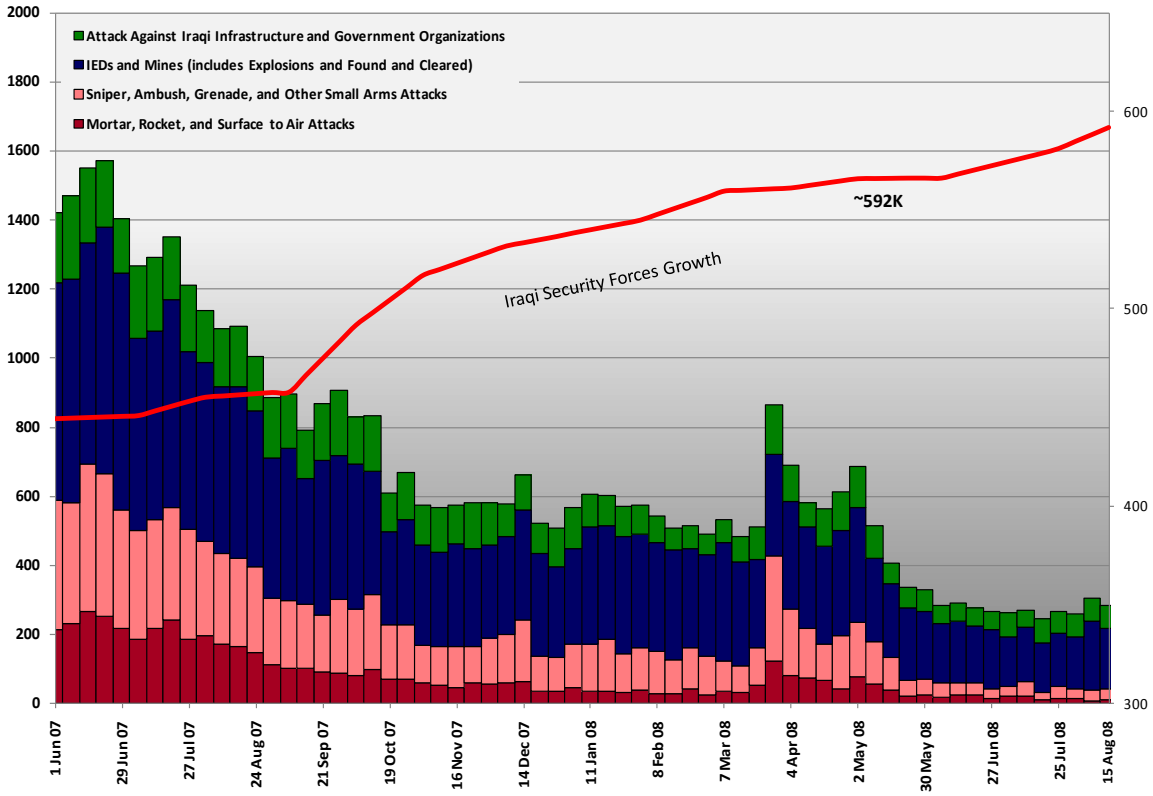
Witness Protection Facilities

Location	Cost to Date	Cost to Complete	Anticipated End-Date	Completion Progress	Change from April 2008
Basrah	$1.9 million	$0.1 million	7/30/2008 (date pushed back from 4/15/2008)	96%	No change
Rusafa	$1.7 million	$0.3 million	6/30/2008 (date pushed back from 5/31/2008)	87%	23%
Al-Karkh	$2.0 million	$0	Completed	100%	No change

Source: INL, response to SIGIR data call, July 3, 2008.

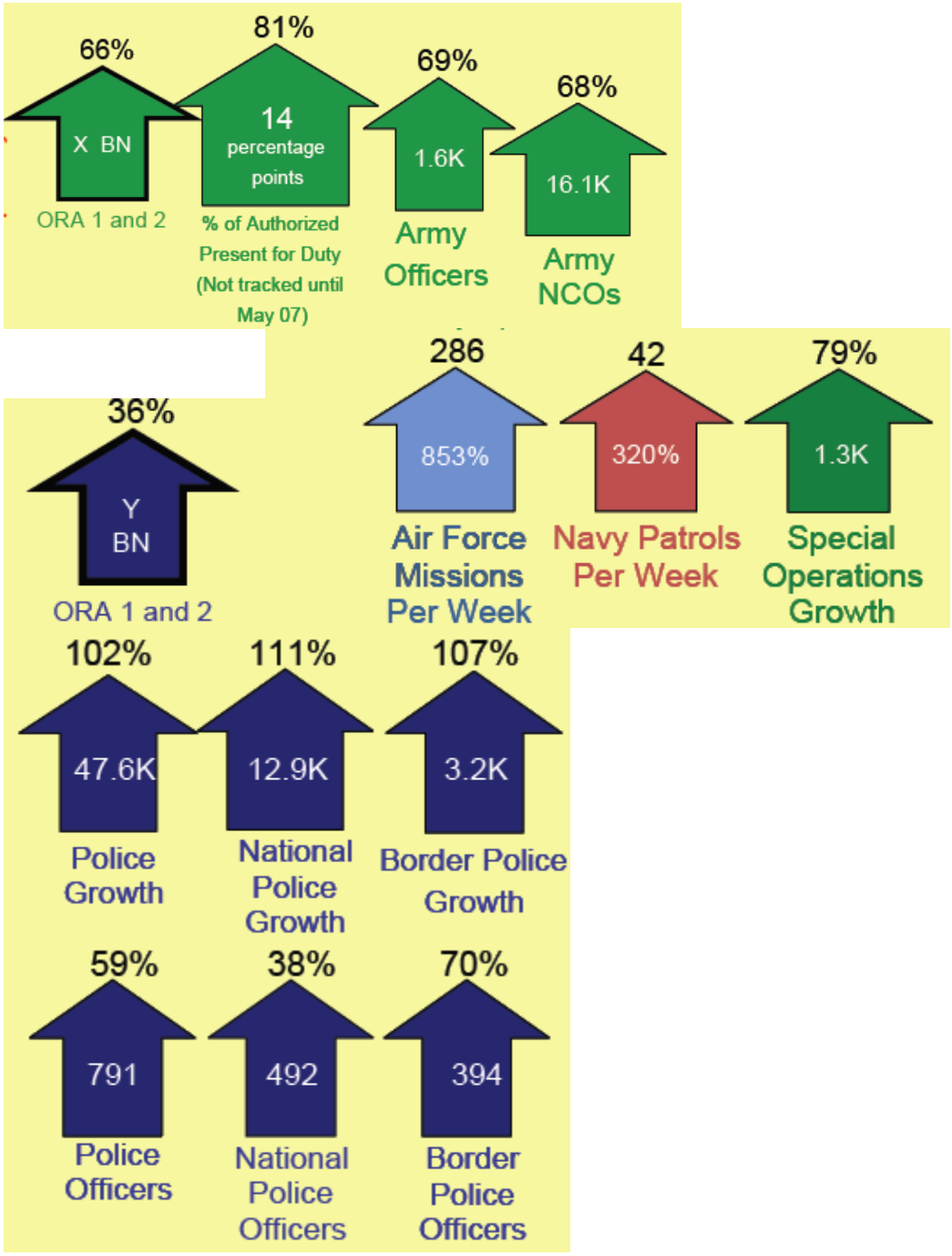
Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 86, 90

Improvement since June 2007



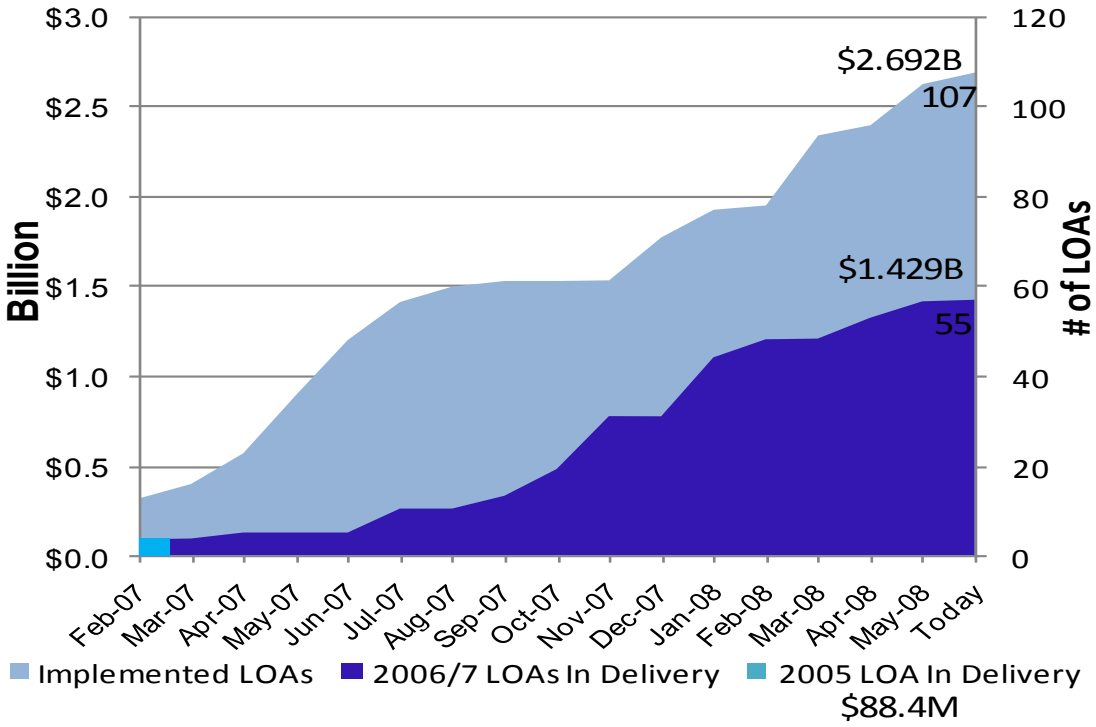
Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008

Improvement since June 2007



Source: LTG Dubik, Traveling Brief. August, 2008.

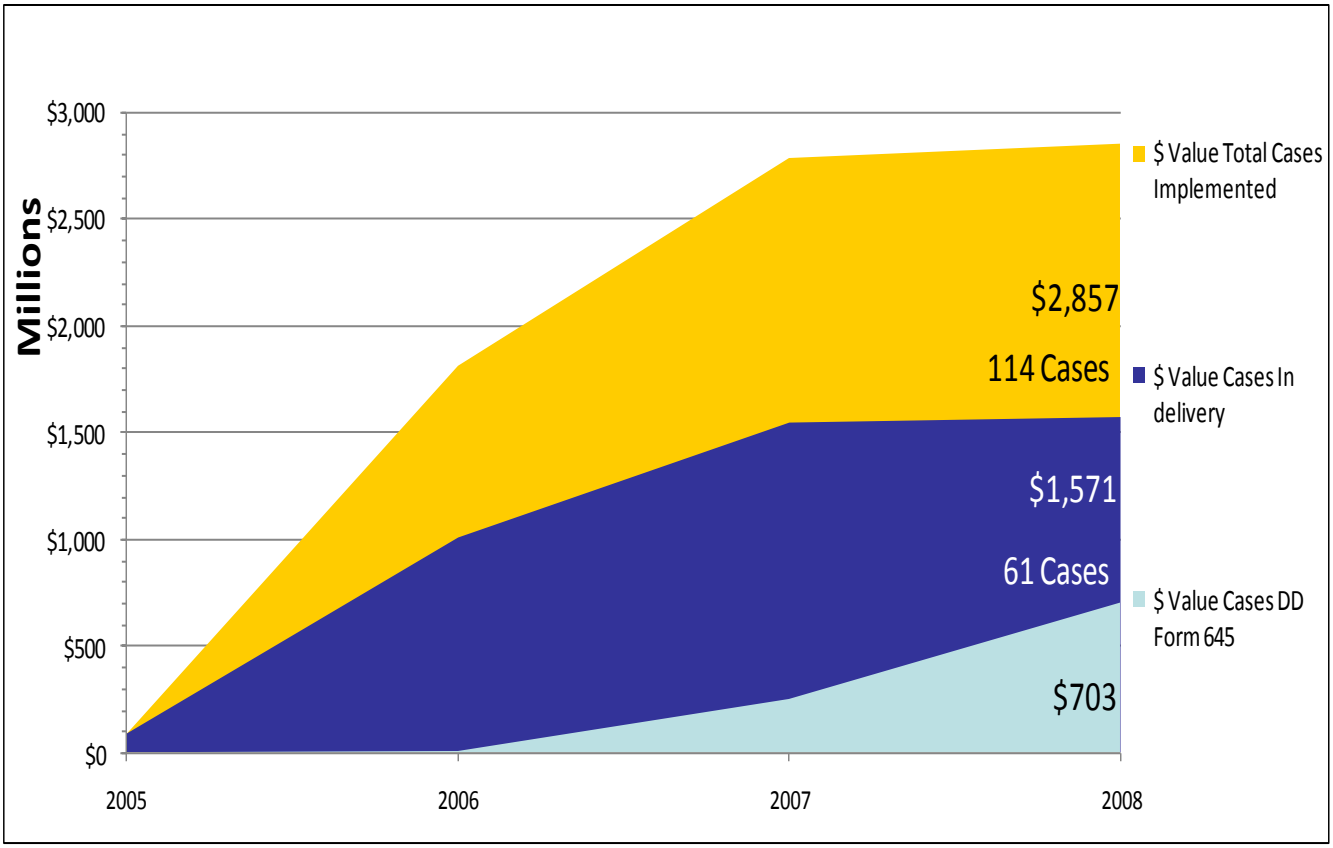
FMS: Implemented Vs Delivered Orders



Source: LTG Dubik, Traveling Brief. August, 2008. ISF Funding: 2004-2008

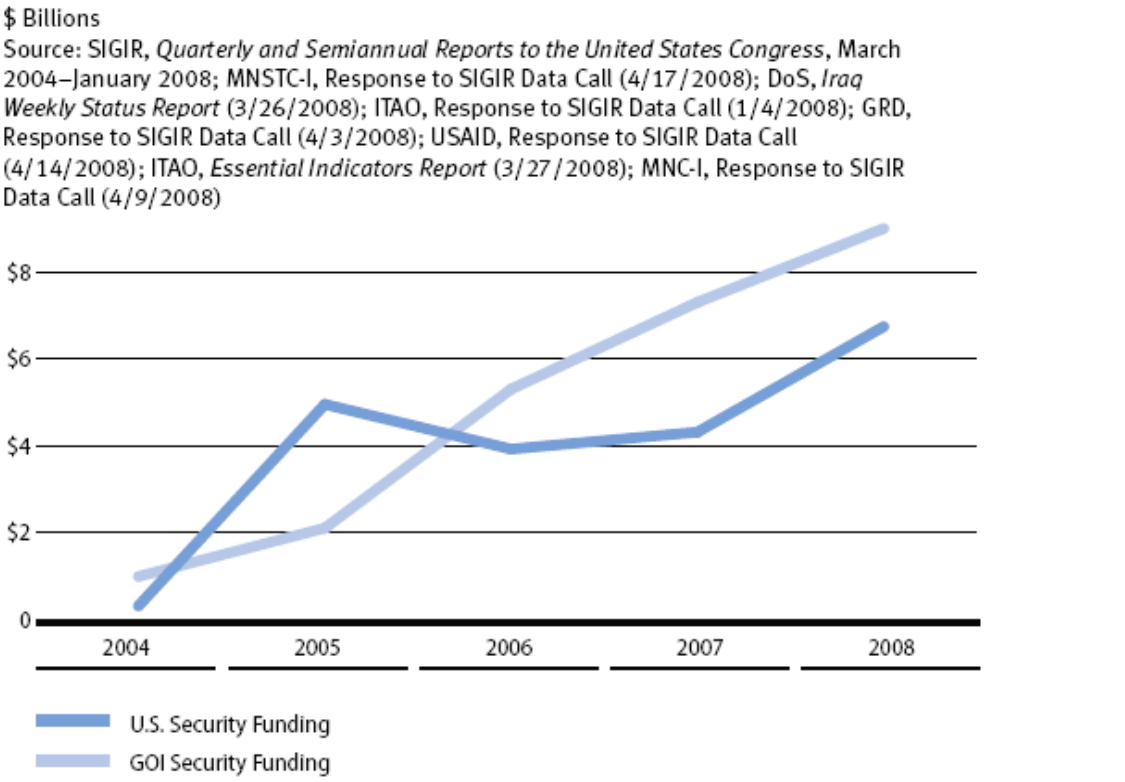
IRAQ FMS CASE VALUES

As of August 27, 2008



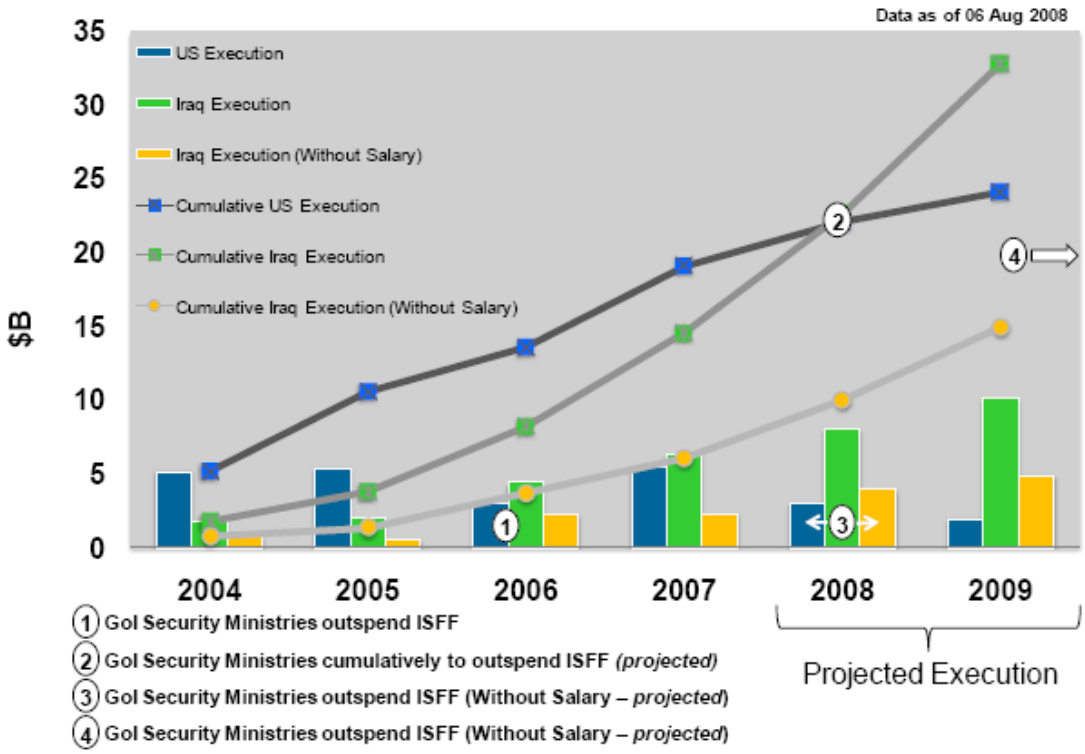
Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008

Iraqi Security Force Expenditures



Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." April 30, 2008. Pg. 4

Iraqi Security Force Expenditures

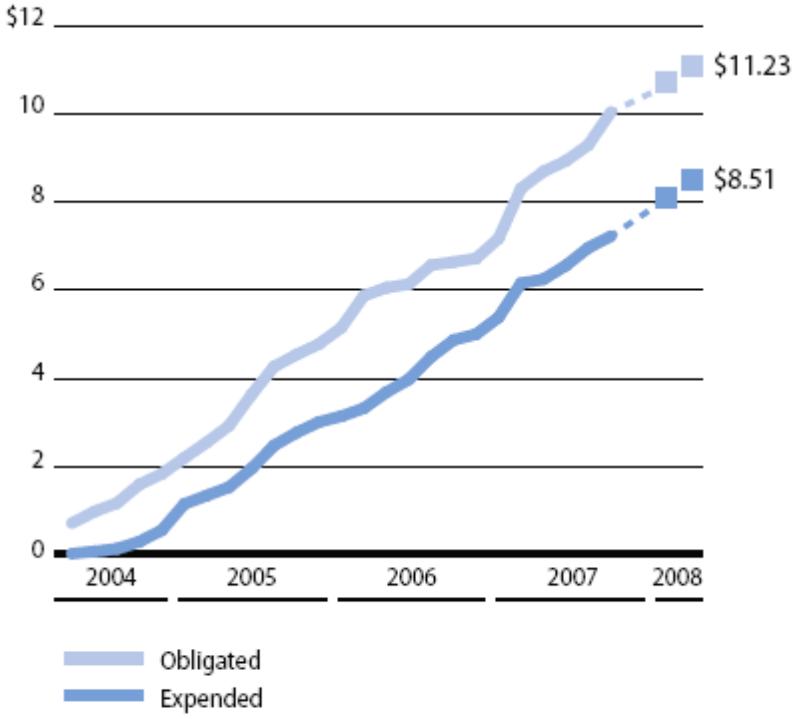


Source: MNSTC-I, September 2008

Timeline of ISF Obligations and Expenditures

(In $ Billions)

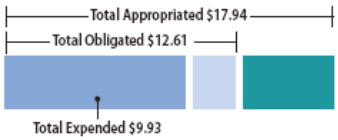
Sources: DoD, *Secretary of the Army Updates* (8/31/2005-9/30/2007); GRD, *2207 Finance Report* (6/3/2007); Corps of Engineers Financial Management System, *ISFF Funds Execution Report* (1/8/2008); MNSTC-I, Responses to SIGIR Data Call (4/12/2008) and (4/17/2008)



Note: Numbers are affected by rounding. Data for October–December 2007 and February–March 2008 was not available.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." April 30, 2008. Pg. 49

Overview of U.S. Reconstruction Funds ($ Billions)

Fund	Fund Objective	Fund Status, as of 6/30/2008	Obligated % Change Since Last Quarter	Expended % Change Since Last Quarter
ISFF[b]	Supports the reconstruction needs of the Iraqi Security Forces by providing equipment, supplies, services, training, and facility and infrastructure repair through the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior.		12%	17%

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 23

ISFF Spending, FY 2007

	Original Spend Plan	Actual Plan	Cumulative Obligations
MOD	$3.61	$3.56	$2.21
MOI	$1.57	$1.57	$0.80
Related Activities	$0.36	$0.41	$.18
Total	**$5.54**	**$5.54**	**$3.19**

Source: OMB, *Section 3303 Report*, March 19, 2008 and MNSTC-I, response to SIGIR data call, April 17, 2008.

Note: Numbers are affected by rounding.

Five Largest ISFF Spending Categories - MoD

Fiscal Year	Sub-activity Group	Category	Total Obligations ($ Millions)
2005	Equipment and Transportation	Vehicles, Generators, and Repair Parts	$949.50
2007	Infrastructure	Infrastructure Requirements	$360.30
2007	Sustainment	Logistical Sustainment Concept	$333.80
2005	Infrastructure	Iraqi Army	$309.53
2006	Infrastructure	Infrastructure Requirements	$282.86

Source: MNSTC-I, response to SIGIR data call, April 17, 2008.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." April 30, 2008. Pg. 50, 52

ISFF Obligations to MoD

(in $ Millions)

SUB-ACTIVITY GROUP	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	TOTAL
Equipment & Transportation	$1,315.28	$599.17	$960.00	$2,874.45
Infrastructure	$1,065.35	$684.19	$523.55	$2,273.09
Sustainment	$552.53	$179.80	$688.40	$1,420.73
Training and Operations	$85.65	$19.65	$37.50	$142.80
Total	**$3,018.81**	**$1,482.81**	**$2,209.45**	**$6,711.07**

Source: MNSTC-I, response to SIGIR data call, April 17, 2008.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." April 30, 2008. Pg. 50, 52

Five Largest ISFF Spending Categories - MoI

Fiscal Year	Sub-Activity Group	Category	Total Obligations ($ millions)
2005	Training and Operations	Contracted Instructor Support	$766.41
2007	Training and Operations	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement	$454.00
2006	Equipment and Transportation	Replenishment and Spare Stock Levels	$332.43
2005	Infrastructure	Iraqi Police	$220.70
2006	Infrastructure	Infrastructure Supporting IPS, NP and DBE	$177.79

Source: MNSTC-I, response to SIGIR data call, April 17, 2008.

ISFF Obligations to MoI

(in $ Millions)

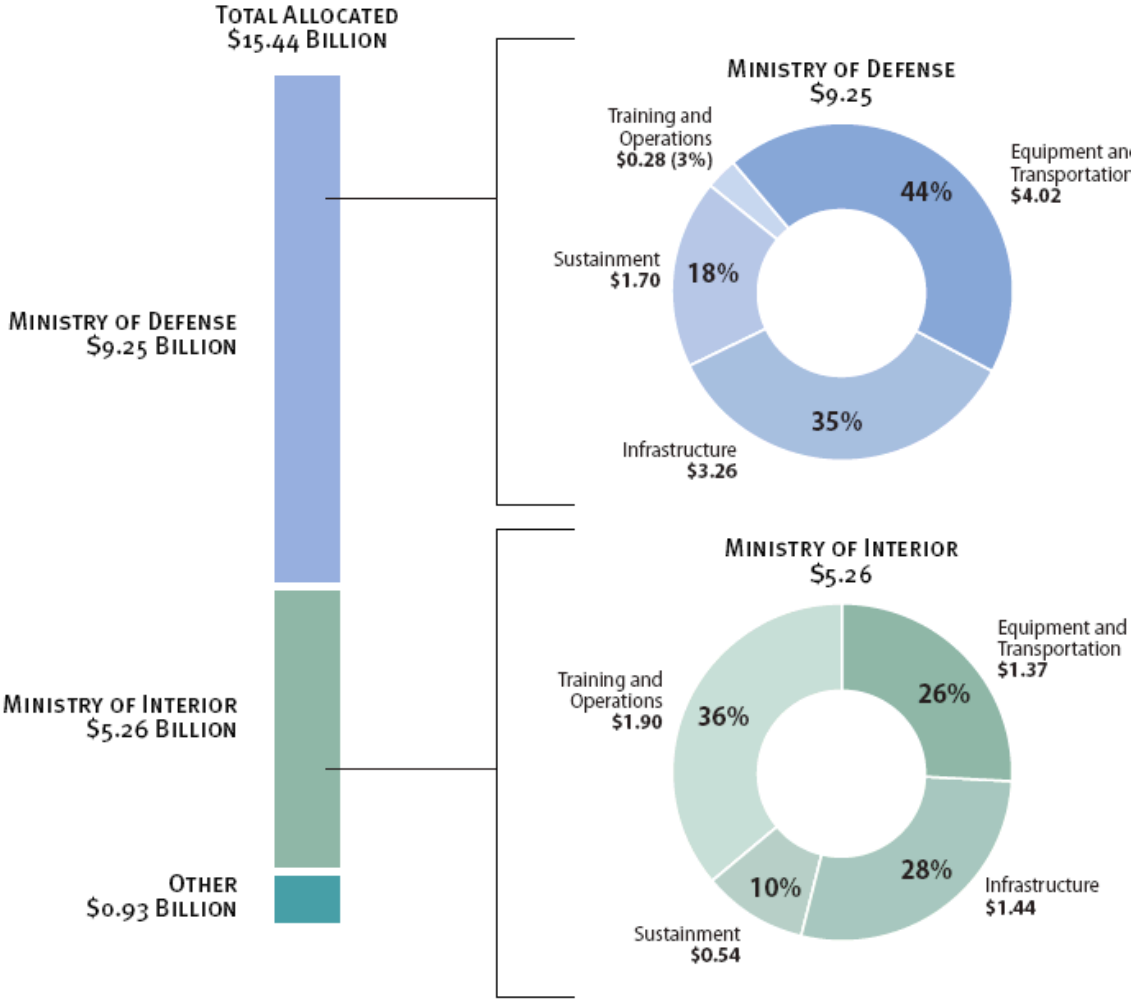
Sub-Activity Group	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	Total
Equipment & Transportation	$379.79	$494.60	$107.30	$981.69
Infrastructure	$405.50	$475.75	$107.34	$988.59
Sustainment	$242.64	$149.52	$62.40	$454.56
Training and Operations	$938.19	$208.12	$520.00	$1,666.31
Total	**$1,966.12**	**$1,327.99**	**$797.04**	**$4,091.15**

Source: MNSTC-I, response to SIGIR data call, April 17, 2008.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." April 30, 2008. Pg. 53

ISFF Allocations, by Sub-activity Group

($ Billions)



Note: Numbers are affected by rounding. Allocations do not include funds passed in the FY 2008 supplemental appropriation.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 32

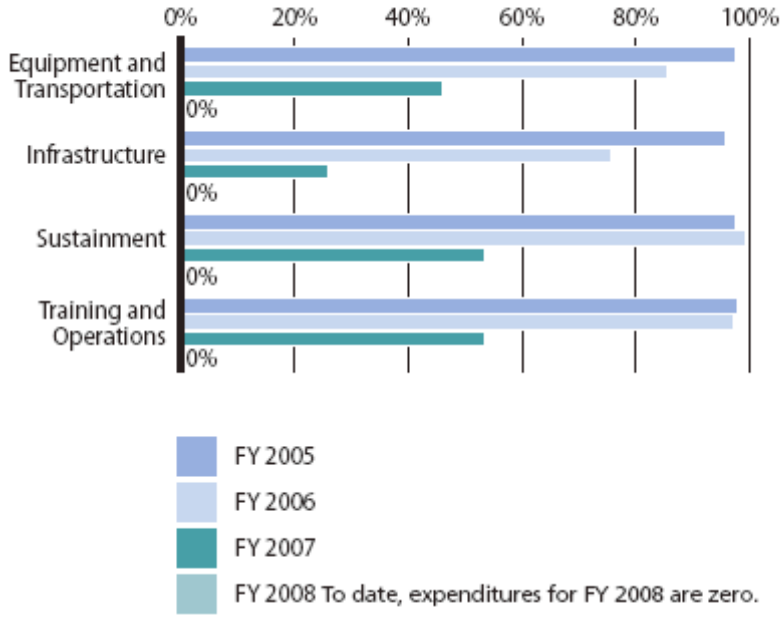
Shifts in ISFF Allocations, by Sub-activity Group

$ Millions

Source: OSD, Response to SIGIR Data Call (7/9/2008)

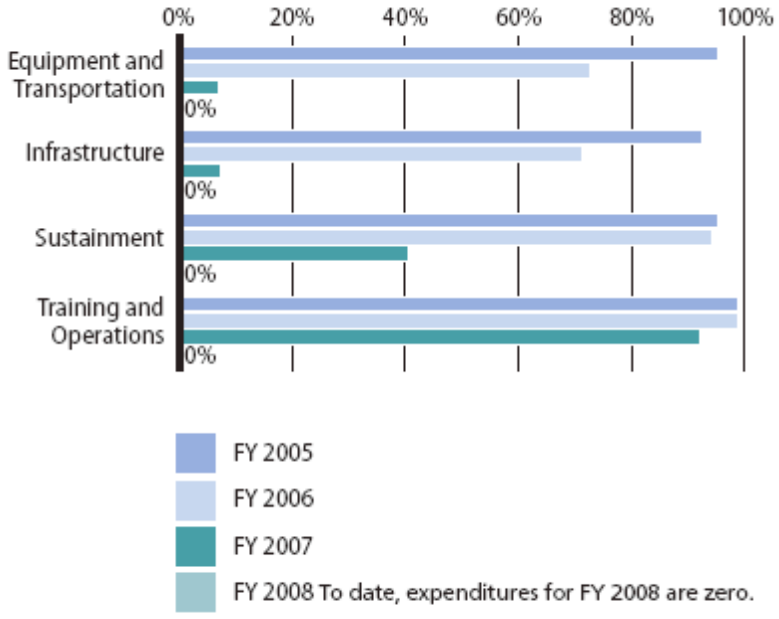
Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 33

ISFF % Expended, by Sub-activity Group—MoD



Source: OSD, Response to SIGIR Data Call (7/9/2008)

ISFF % Expended, by Sub-activity Group—MoI

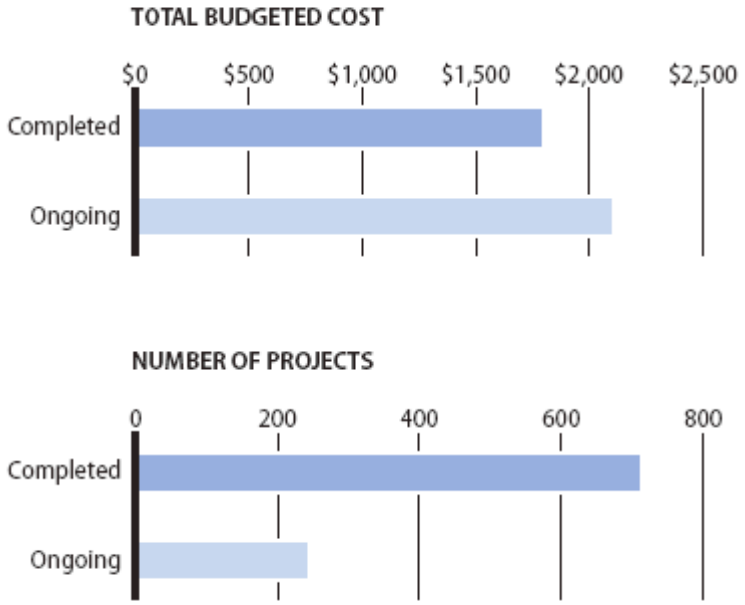


Source: OSD, Response to SIGIR Data Call (7/9/2008)

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 34

ISFF Project Completion Status

$ Millions, # Projects



Major ISFF Reconstruction Projects

($ millions)

Project Name	Total Budgeted Cost	Status	Forecast/Actual Completion	Province
Construct 6th Div. Units at Old Muthanna Airfield	$57.66	Completed	3/2/2007	Baghdad
Renovate North Depot at Taji	$44.33	Completed	1/31/2007	Baghdad
Construct 3rd BDE HQ and 1st BN, 3rd BDE, 7th Div, at Al Qaim	$42.38	Ongoing	5/15/2008	Anbar
5/6 Div FOB Honor Building Renovations	$39.62	Ongoing	1/15/2008	Baghdad
Shaiba Location Command	$37.28	Ongoing	9/27/2009	Thi-Qar
Police Station - Diyala Operations Center	$37.00	Completed	8/29/2007	Diyala
Construct/Renovate Tadji IA Schools	$36.26	Ongoing	3/31/2008	Baghdad
7th DIV HQ MTR and DTB at Camp Mejed	$35.33	Ongoing	7/15/2008	Anbar

Source: IRMS, *ITAO Rollup*, July 7, 2008.

Source: IRMS, *ITAO Rollup* (7/7/2008)

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 35

ISFF Project Budgets per Capita

PROVINCE	BUDGET	POPULATION	BUDGET PER CAPITA
Anbar	$1,458,135,284	1,280,000	$1,139
Baghdad	$4,290,258,314	6,386,100	$672
Ninewa	$807,698,141	2,473,700	$327
Diyala	$414,957,461	1,373,900	$302
Tameem	$242,449,646	839,100	$289
Thi-Qar*	$285,752,954	1,427,200	$200
Salah Al-Din	$203,162,176	1,077,800	$188
Wassit	$139,706,251	941,800	$148
Missan*	$75,926,504	743,400	$102
Basrah*	$172,934,082	1,761,000	$98
Qadissiya*	$73,573,736	866,700	$85
Najaf*	$59,390,143	946,300	$63
Babylon	$33,982,813	1,444,400	$24
Erbil*	$26,798,996	1,845,200	$15
Dahuk*	$7,341,002	616,600	$12
Sulaymaniyah*	$25,343,740	2,159,800	$12
Muthanna*	$2,674,864	536,300	$5
Kerbala*	$982,680	756,000	$1

Source: IRMS, *ITAO Rollup*, July 7, 2008; Population figures: UNOCHA, "Iraq-Population by Governorate," November 19, 2007.

Note: This table does not account for values for projects not tied to a province in IRMS.
* Indicates provinces that have achieved Provincial Iraqi Control.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 36

Overview of MoD, MoI, MoJ

Ministry	Responsibilities	Minister	Capital Budget Expenditures	Operational Budget Expenditures	International Compact Indicative Actions
Ministry of Defense	Responsible for Iraq's armed forces, including policies and activities related to recruiting, training, and equipping.	Abdul Qadir Muhammed Jasmin al-Mufraji	0% Total Budget: $241.67	13% Total Budget: $4,831.25	New ministerial structure approved, military improving to the point where 10 provinces have come under Provincial Iraqi Control, and a security clearance bureau has been established for applicants.
Ministry of Interior	Charged with overseeing Iraq's police, border, port, and emergency personnel.	Jawad al-Bulani	.3% Total Budget: $115.93	18% Total Budget: $3,806.26	Five-year plan and new ministerial structure approved. MOI is working on strengthening anticorruption, weapons and equipment tracking, and establishing legislation for a National Intelligence Agency.
Ministry of Justice	Operates prisons and some jails.	Acting Minister: Safa al Safi	1% Total Budget: $7.09	21% Total Budget: $188.40	Achieved separation of Higher Juridical Council from the Ministry, provided monetary compensation to those working in the judiciary, and provided additional funding for judicial security.

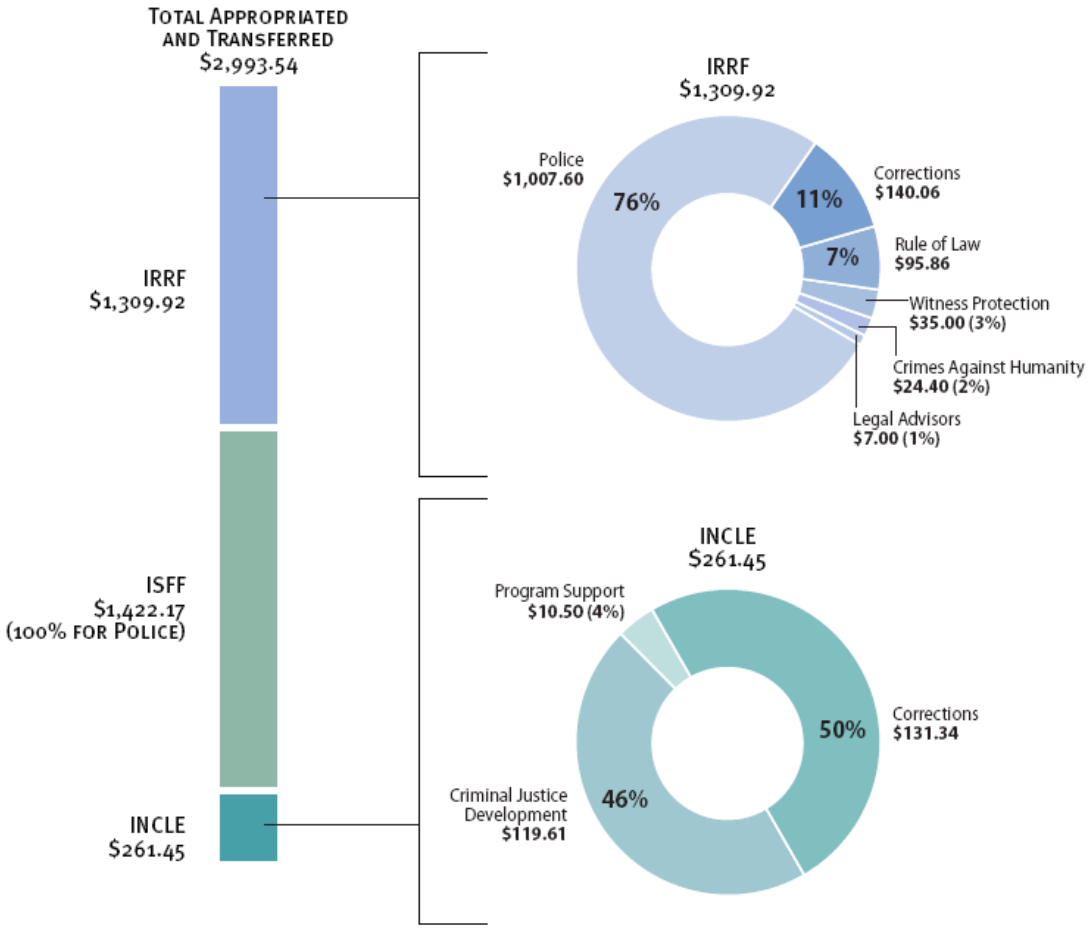
Sources: DoS, *Iraq Weekly Status Report*, July 16, 2008, p. 5; U.S. Treasury, response to SIGIR data call, May 29, 2008; *International Compact with Iraq*, "A New Beginning, Annual Review," May 2007–April 2008, www.iraqcompact.org; DoS, "About the Iraqi Ministries," www.state.gov.

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

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 50

INL Appropriations and Transfers

($ Millions)



Note: Numbers are affected by rounding.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 25

Top Ten ISFF Contractors ($ millions)

#	CONTRACTOR	OBLIGATED	EXPENDED
1	AECOM, Government Services, Inc.	$733	$474
2	Contract to DoS for INL Support	$696	$696
3	Environmental Chemical Corporation	$674	$593
4	Contract to DoS for INL Support	$386	$386
5	American Equipment Company	$342	$234
6	Innovative Technical Solutions, Inc.	$270	$227
7	Tetra International, LLC	$269	$227
8	Iraqi Contractor	$253	$227
9	Toltest, Inc.	$240	$204
10	Contract to DoD for DSCA	$224	$224

Source: Corps of Engineers Financial Management System, June 30, 2008.

Note: Numbers affected by rounding.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 27

Top INCLE Contractors

($ millions)

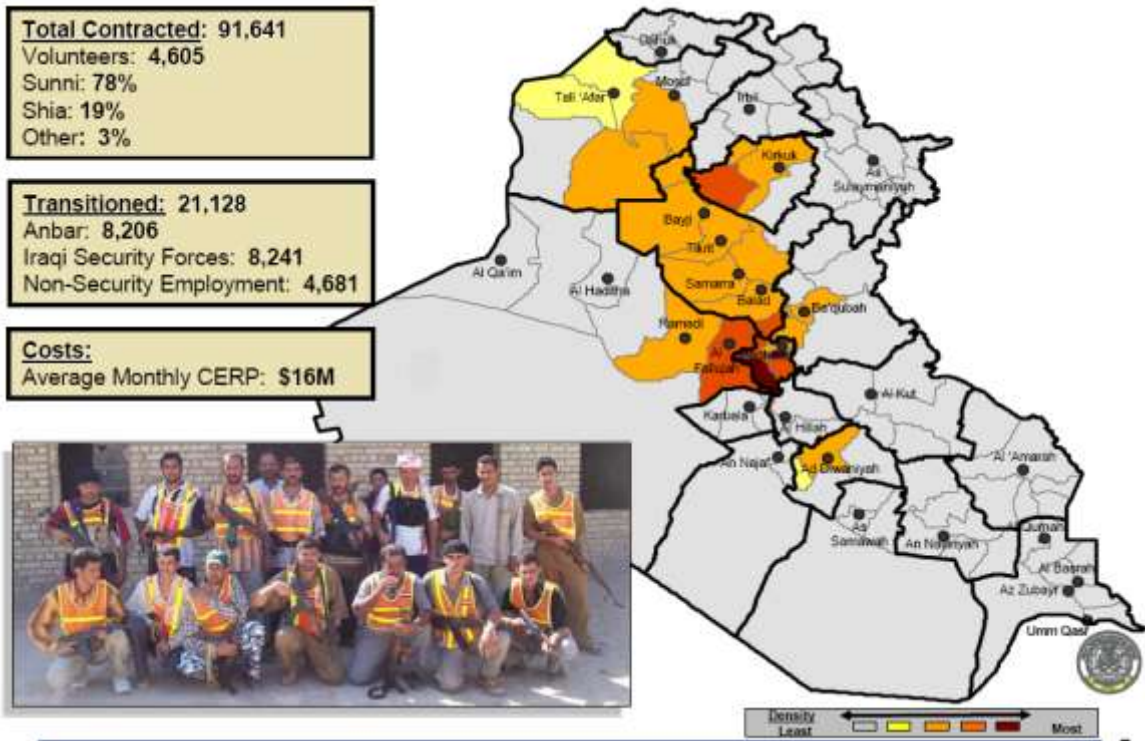
CONTRACTOR	OBLIGATED	EXPENDED
DynCorp	$1,424	$1,328
Bearing Point	$16	$13
BEA Systems	$9	$9
CPI	$6	-
LENCO	$2.5	$2.5
PAE	$1.3	$0.0

Source: INL, response to SIGIR data call, July 3, 2008.

Note: Numbers are affected by rounding.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 28

Disposition of Sons Of Iraq Groups



Source: MNF-I "Charts to accompany the testimony of GEN David H. Petraeus" April 9, 2008. Pg 5

Bi-monthly CERP Funding to Sons of Iraq

($ millions)

DATE	TOTAL
June–July 2007	$1.46
August–September 2007	$25.30
October–November 2007	$36.36
December 2007–January 2008	$61.82
February–March 2008	$63.55
April–May 2008	$64.76
Total	$253.25

Source: MNC-I, response to SIGIR data call, July 7, 2008.

Note: Numbers are affected by rounding.

Status of the SoI, by Location

LOCATION	MEMBER TOTAL	AVERAGE MONTHLY PAY	GROWTH RATES (3/1/2008–7/1/2008)
MND-Baghdad	30,630	$236	-161
MND-North	30,692	$368	3121
MNF-West	4,867	$181	190
MND-Central	35,345	$299	-86
MND-Central South	2,002	$171	0

Source: MNF-I, response to SIGIR data call, July 7, 2008.

Note: MND is Multi-National Division; MNF is Multi-National Force.

Source: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2008. Pg. 94

[i] Cannon, Jerry. "Conference Call With Major General Jerry Cannon" August 6, 2008.

[ii] Agence France-Presse. "Kurds Fear Iraqi Arms Purchases." September 8, 2008.

[iii] Dubick, James. "DoD News Briefing with Lt. Gen. Dubik from the Pentagon Briefing Room, Arlington, VA." U.S. Department of Defense, March 4, 2008.

[iv] Petraeus David H. "Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq" *New York Times*, September 10, 2007. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/world/20070911_POLICY/Petraeus_Testimony.pdf

[v] Experts do disagree. One US officers who worked with the Kurds commented that,

Sectarian Imbalance in the ISF: In my opinion, sectarian imbalance is not inherently a problem. My Kurdish Brigade did very well in Baghdad and were liked and respected by the populace. The reason for this is that they were perceived as not having a hand in either side of the strife in Baghdad and not under militia influence. This last is the real problem. ISF forces heavy in one ethnic or sectarian group is not automatically a problem – ISF units heavily influenced by sectarian militias like JAM (a nasty mix of the worst aspects of the KKK and the mafia) is the problem. Where a sectarian imbalance in a unit has been an inherent problem, though, has been the contested areas in MND-North, namely around Kirkuk and Mosul. Here the presence of heavily Kurdish forces has been a source of friction and irritation to the local Arabs, because unlike in my IA brigade's Baghdad mission, the Arabs in the north do NOT perceive Kurdish units as impartial, however impartially such units may or may not act.

You mention in the executive summary the dispute over withdrawal of the Kurdish 34th Garmiyan Peshmerga brigade from Diyala. According to a report I picked up on Nexus from the BBC World Monitoring service, the dispute was resolved and the brigade withdrawn. However, the KRG security services (Peshmerga and Asayish) acted extraterritorially frequently when I was in northern Iraq. It will be interesting to see whether they can be induced to end this practice.

As far as Kurdish security services go, I believe that the biggest factor driving KRG decisions is money. The KRG desperately wants to reduce its payroll so as to free up money for other functions, but does not want to incur the political liability of laying Soldiers off. For this reason I expect to see the new 15th and 16th Divisions of the Iraqi Army fully organized and stood up in the KRG area (this will take 30,000 Peshmerga Soldiers off the KRG payroll while giving the Soldiers themselves a pay raise). I also would expect the KRG to continue to be receptive to converting their security elements to federal entities – I think they will be content to rely upon the party and ethnic loyalty of those personnel to offset any perceived risk in having more federal troops on their turf."

[vi] The media summary by the Regional Reconstruction Team, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, for August 26, 2008, provided considerable insight into the kind of tensions involved: "During a meeting yesterday, Kurdish politicians, government officials and the MNFI representative in Khanaqin at Branch 15 of the KDP discussed the entrance of the Iraqi Army into the city. Local Kurds held a demonstration against the Iraqi Army's entrance into the city. A source from the PUK branch in Khanaqin told Sbeiy.com that the PUK condemns the Iraqi Army's interference and that the Kurdistan Flag will be raised at the Kurdish political parties' buildings and most of the houses. The Chief of Staff of the President of Kurdistan Region Fuad Hussein stated that the President of the Kurdistan Region is closely following the situation and Barzani sent the PUK Political Bureau Member Mullah Bakhtiyar to Khanaqin. Sbeiy.com cited Radio Sawa that the Kurdistan Regional Presidency condemned the Iraqi Army's request for the Kurdish political parties to leave their buildings in Qaratapa.

According to Geli Kurdistan TV, before the demonstration, Mullah Bakhtiyar discussed the Khanaqin situation with the Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki through a phone call. According to Kurdish media outlets, tens of people of Khanaqin held a demonstration against the entrance of the Iraqi Army into Khanaqin and calling for freedom and implementation of Article 140 of the constitution. PUK Political Bureau member Mullah Bakhtiyar, in his role as the Special Representative of the President of the Kurdistan Region, told the protestors that "if Article 140 of Iraqi constitution had been implemented, this

conflict would never have happened in these areas. Therefore, we have to work according to the constitution." Bakhtiyar remarked that the Peshmerga is part of the Iraqi Army and whenever the Government of Iraq gave it a task, the Peshmerga had accomplished that task. He asked "if the Peshmerga was protecting the security of the Kurdistan Region and collaborating in the security in Baghdad , what is the need of sending troops to replace them?" He further added "we as the PUK and KDP political bureaus did not come here fight. We assure you that we will do our best through meetings and negotiations, but if the negotiations was not successful, we will answer troops with troops." Bakhtiyar said that the Iraqi Army fortunately decided to leave today. Bakhtiyar thanked the MNFI and the US Army.

During the demonstration and right after Bakhtiyar, an Imam from Khanaqin made a speech on behalf of the people of Khanaqin which included a four-point message to Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki: first: There is no need for the Iraqi Army to enter Khanaqin which contains no terrorists and is a model of peaceful coexistence in Iraq; second: Do not evict the Kurdistan political parties from buildings and offices because they have protected our security and families when there was no government and Prime Minister in Iraq; third: do not establish check points because they provoke people by asking whether they are Kurds, Arabs or Turkmen, while the Kurds never ask those questions; and fourth: there's no alternative to implementing Article 140.

…Imad Ahmed the KRG Minister of Reconstruction and member of the PUK Political Bureau stated that the President of Iraq Jalal Talabani and the President of the Kurdistan Region Massoud Barzani had talked and both agreed that sending the Iraqi Army into Khanaqin is not acceptable."

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xxiv "Iraqi forces battle Basra militias," BBC News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7312078.stm, March 26, 2008.

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[xxix] MICHAEL R. GORDON, ERIC SCHMITT and STEPHEN FARRELL, "U.S. Cites Planning Gaps in Iraqi Assault on Basra" *New York Times*, April 3, 2008

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[xxxi] One US officer involved stated that, "The Basra operation, together with the move into Sadr City, Operation Lion's Roar in Rightful Assault (gotta love the Iraqis – they pick some great names for their ops) in Mosul, and other operations looked to me like a watershed in the development of the Iraqi forces. I would have found such accomplishments by the Iraqis unimaginable as recently as November or December 2006 when my Kurdish IA brigade received its warning order to deploy to Baghdad. Moving that one brigade was a major effort. The level of resistance at all levels of command from Battalion through the 4th Division commander was astounding. It took significant cajoling and pressure to keep the planning on track and to ensure that the deployment was executed – and that for one brigade (it should be noted that once they actually got to Baghdad, the brigade did well – nobody's fears were realized). Furthermore, during my year in Iraq the IA was capable of little more than check point operations. Anything more assertive was invariably done in the company of US troops, with the Americans on the objective and the Iraqis on a security cordon outside (except when the target was a mosque). My Kurds displayed better ability on the Baiji-Kirkuk pipeline and at Tuz, but still it was a problem. An operation on the scale of Basra; an operation on such short notice as Basra; and an operation like that with as little US support as was given at Basra, was simply unthinkable a year ago. The US assistance given at Basra was microscopic compared to what would have been required in 2006. When I was in Baghdad with my Kurds, Sadr City was a JAM sanctuary. Again, a column of IA troops rolling in would have been unthinkable when we were there. So, problems notwithstanding, I am inclined to see the recent operations at Basra and elsewhere as a decidedly glass half-full situation.

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