INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE

COMMISSION REPORT EMBARGOED

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INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE SECURITY FORCES OF IRAQ

REPORT TO CONGRESS

SEPTEMBER 6, 2007

THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE SECURITY FORCES OF IRAQ

General James L. Jones, USMC (Ret.), Chairman

SEPTEMBER 6, 2007

THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION
ON THE SECURITY FORCES OF IRAQ

SEPTEMBER 6, 2007

Public Law 110-28 directed the entity created by §1314 (e) (2) of that Act to make its report to the following committees of Congress:

Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate
Committee on Armed Services, United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate
Committee on Foreign Affairs, United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives
Select Committee on Intelligence, United States Senate
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As you know, Public Law 110-28, enacted on May 25, 2007, commissioned an independent private entity made up of individuals with credentials and expertise in military and law enforcement matters to conduct an independent assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). This report is to be submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services, Appropriations, Intelligence, and Foreign Relations/Affairs within 120 days of enactment. As members of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq we are pleased to submit, within the statutory timeline, our findings and recommendations in the attached report.

As required by the legislation, our report addresses the readiness of the Iraqi Security Forces to assume responsibility for maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq, their ability to deny international terrorists safe haven, their ability to bring greater security to Iraq's 18 provinces in the next 12 to 18 months, and their ability to bring an end to sectarian violence to achieve national reconciliation. In addition, the Commission was tasked with an assessment of ISF capabilities in the areas of training, equipment, command, control, intelligence, and logistics.

Finally, we were asked to consider whether, after several years of training, equipping, and mentoring by Coalition forces, continued support would contribute to the readiness of the ISF to defend its territorial integrity, prevent Iraq from becoming a safe haven for terrorists, increase security throughout the nation, and end sectarian violence.

The Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq is made up of 20 Commissioners whose cumulative service exceeds 500 years of military and more than 150 years of law enforcement experience. In pursuit of the facts bearing on the legislative mandate contained in Public Law 110-28, the Commission spent three weeks on the ground in Iraq and conducted extensive briefings and research. We visited more than 70 sites and interviewed more than 150 individuals. The Commission put its collective "boots on the ground" and visited troops and experts

in the field. Additionally, the Commission conducted extensive meetings with senior military and civilian leaders from Iraq, the U.S. Mission, the NATO Training Mission-Iraq, and Coalition forces. We have been given the highest quality of support by the Defense Department, the State Department, and our national military and civilian representatives in Iraq.

The Commission is confident in its report to Congress and wishes to express its appreciation for having been given the opportunity to make a contribution to this important issue at this critical time. Our report and its conclusions and findings represent the unanimous opinions of the Commissioners. Finally, our report is submitted as an unclassified document. There is no classified annex.

Sincerely,

James L. Jones, General USMC (Ret.)
Chairman
Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq
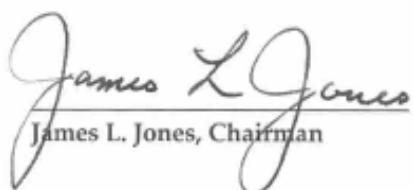
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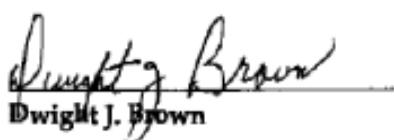
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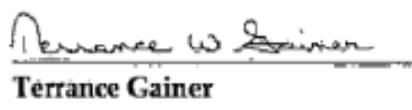
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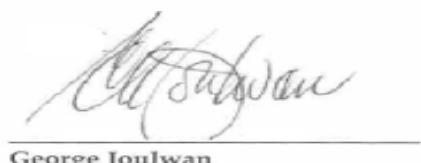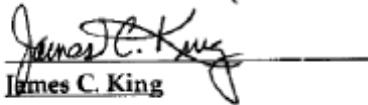
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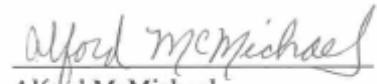
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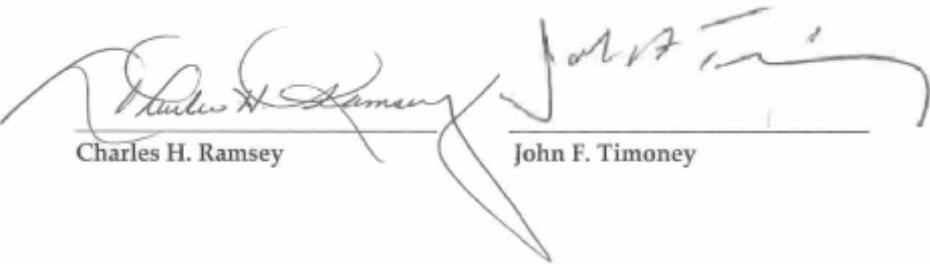
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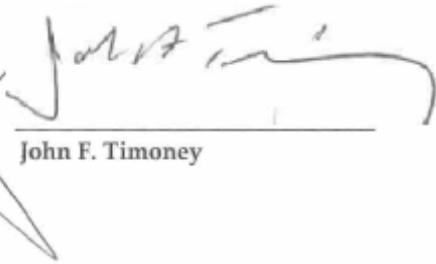
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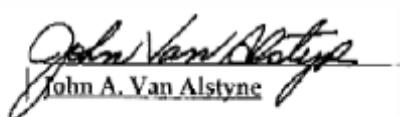
John A. Van Alstyne

Charles Wilhelm

THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE SECURITY FORCES OF IRAQ

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Statutory Mandate. The Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq was chartered by the United States Congress in Public Law 110-28, signed into law by President George W. Bush on May 25, 2007, to assess the readiness of Iraq's military and police forces to fulfill four major responsibilities: maintain the territorial integrity of Iraq, deny safe haven to international terrorists, bring greater security to the country's 18 provinces in the next 12 to 18 months, and bring an end to sectarian violence to achieve national reconciliation.

Further, the Commission was tasked to evaluate the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces (military and police) in key functional areas, including training, equipping, command and control, intelligence, and logistics, and to consider the likelihood that continued U.S. support would contribute to the ISF's readiness. Finally, the law directed the Commission to report its full findings to Congress.

At the request of Congress, the Commission is submitting its report in advance of its statutory deadline so that policymakers can consider its findings concurrently with other progress reports on Iraqi security that will soon be submitted to the executive and legislative branches.

Organization. To carry out this important assignment, the Commission, chaired by General James L. Jones, former Commandant of the United States Marine Corps and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, assembled a highly qualified team of 20 prominent senior retired military officers, chiefs of police, and a former deputy secretary of defense. This independent team, supported by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, brought to bear more than 600 cumulative years of military, defense, and law enforcement experience and expertise in the professional disciplines that it was chartered to examine.

To properly address the broad range of topics assigned by Congress, the Commission was organized into 10 syndicates. Each syndicate was led by a senior Commissioner and focused on either a discrete component of the ISF or a crosscutting functional area. Syndicate inputs were subject to review and integration by all Commission members (see Table 1).

Activities. During the course of its study members of the Commission traveled widely throughout Iraq on three separate occasions for a total of 20 days to gather facts and impressions firsthand. Commissioners conducted site visits to Iraqi military and ministerial headquarters and to various command centers, training facilities, and operating bases. They also visited Iraqi police stations, joint security stations, and law enforcement academies; and Commissioners traveled to border, port, and internal security installations, as well as to Coalition facilities designed to assist with Iraqi security training and transition (see Figures 1 and 2). The Commission met with more than 100 Iraqi officials, more than 100 U.S. current and former government officials, and more than a dozen leading nongovernmental experts on the Iraqi Security Forces.

Commissioners met with the Coalition and Iraqi authorities, both military and civilian, who oversee the manning, training, equipping, and operational effectiveness of the Iraqi Security Forces, and spoke to the personnel responsible for transitioning security functions from the Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) to the Iraqi government. Commissioners spent time with trainers, transition

teams, operational units, and trainees, as well as Iraqi citizens. They consulted with current and former senior U.S. government officials. Finally, the Commission examined key official data and documents with information relevant to the performance and status of the ISF, their rate of progress, and their prospects for fulfilling the responsibilities of a professional and effective security force.

ISF Defined. The Iraqi Security Forces are composed of two major components: the Iraqi military (Army, Special Forces, Navy, and Air Force), which MNF-I estimated in a June report to encompass more than 152,000 service members and which operates under the authority of the country's Ministry of Defense, and the Iraqi police (local Iraqi Police Service and National Police), along with the Department of Border Enforcement, which the command estimates to number 194,000 civilian security personnel administered by the Ministry of Interior.[1]

This study examines both components. Each is integral to the country's ability to protect its territorial integrity, deny safe haven to international terrorists, and bring security and stability to Iraq's 18 provinces. Though not specifically tasked to assess Iraqi ministerial capacity, the Commission addresses this issue because ministries are integral to the development, readiness, and capability of the country's security forces.

Context. The development of the Iraqi military and police into an effective total force capable of providing security and enforcing the rule of law has been a major focus of the Government of Iraq and the multinational Coalition.

The task of building the forces while they simultaneously engage in security operations, both in partnership with the Coalition and independently, presents the Government of Iraq with many difficulties and challenges. Senior Coalition military commanders characterize this process as "building an airplane while you're flying"—and, in this case, while getting shot at. Similarly, the challenge to Iraq's leaders of developing a loyal, professional, and cohesive military and police under battle conditions, while working to form a national government able to reconcile bitter historic tribal, ethnic, and religious differences, is a daunting one.

Security Environment. Iraq's security environment is exceedingly diverse and complex. It is characterized by a multitude of threats arising from the struggle for power among sectarian rivals, radical Islamic terrorist groups (including al Qaeda), Sunni insurgents, Shi'a militia, and criminal elements. The various factions possess a diverse range of aims, agendas, and capabilities.

These combatants, and the level of violence and instability they incite, manifest themselves differently throughout the country. Security conditions vary significantly among the provinces and localities, and they are influenced heavily by an area's geography and demographic composition, the intensity of sectarian tension, the quality of political leadership, and available resources.

In the north, Kurds, Sunni Arabs, and other groups vie for control of land and natural resources, particularly in the areas of Kirkuk and Mosul. In the south, where Iranian interference is

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[1] Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Report to Congress, June 2007, p. 30. The ISF also consists of a Coast Guard, under the Ministry of Interior, and the Facilities Protection Service. Officially under the authority of the Ministry of Interior, at present the Facilities Protection Service operates under the direction of multiple ministries.

acute, Shi'a groups fight one another for political and economic domination. In the west, Sunni insurgents continue to fight the Shi'a-dominated government and the Coalition for the purpose of restoring Sunni political power and prestige. Terrorist groups including al Qaeda are at war to achieve their goal of establishing an Islamic caliphate in Iraq. In Baghdad, the political, cultural, and economic epicenter of Iraq, the security situation is characterized by ethno-sectarian struggle and rampant criminal activity. The situation is complicated by the violence incited by terrorists, militias, and religious extremists who seek to inflame sectarian tensions, destabilize the government, and influence public opinion, particularly in the United States.

Overall, the factional tension and violence within Iraq is fed by the slow and disappointing pace of national reconciliation; intensified by the inflow of foreign fighters, terrorists, and weapons; and promoted by neighboring countries, such as Iran and Syria. These two countries and certain non-state entities are generally acknowledged to be pursuing sectarian, political, and security objectives within Iraq and providing manpower, weapons, and support to proxy fighters and militia. Their activities substantially aid and contribute to factional discord, violence, and instability within Iraq.

Particularly in the west, and in key areas surrounding Baghdad, the security environment is being positively influenced by tribal elements who have turned against al Qaeda and are seeking to reduce violence. The most recent U.S. National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq stated: "There have been measurable but uneven improvements in Iraq's security situation since our last National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq in January 2007. The steep escalation in rates of violence has been checked for now, and overall attack levels across Iraq have fallen during seven of the last nine weeks."[2] The body of the Commission's report includes graphics provided by the Coalition depicting the trends in the security environment.

ISF Overall Assessment. The Commission finds that in general, the Iraqi Security Forces, military and police, have made uneven progress, but that there should be increasing improvement in both their readiness and their capability to provide for the internal security of Iraq. With regard to external dangers, the evidence indicates that the Iraqi Security Forces will not be able to secure Iraqi borders against conventional military threats in the near term.

While severely deficient in combat support and combat service support capabilities, the new Iraqi armed forces, especially the Army, show clear evidence of developing the baseline infrastructures that lead to the successful formation of a national defense capability. The Commission concurs with the view expressed by U.S., Coalition, and Iraqi experts that the Iraqi Army is capable of taking over an increasing amount of day-to-day combat responsibilities from Coalition forces. In any event, the ISF will be unable to fulfill their essential security responsibilities independently over the next 12-18 months.

In the aggregate, the Commission's assessment ascribes better progress to the Iraqi Army and the Ministry of Defense and less to the Ministry of Interior, whose dysfunction has hampered the police forces' ability to achieve the level of effectiveness vital to the security and stability of Iraq.

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[2] Director of National Intelligence, *National Intelligence Estimate*, August 2007, p. 1.

The Iraqi police are improving at the local level predominantly where the ethnic makeup of the population is relatively homogenous and the police are recruited from the local area. Police forces are hampered by corruption and dysfunction within the Ministry of Interior. In some areas, they have been vulnerable to infiltration, and they are often outmatched in leadership, training, tactics, equipment, and weapons by the terrorists, criminals, and the militias they must combat. The rate of improvement must be accelerated if the Iraqi police are to meet their essential security responsibilities.

Ministry of Defense Assessment. The Ministry of Defense is assessed as being one of the better-functioning agencies of the Iraqi government. It is building the necessary institutions and processes to fulfill its mission of overseeing and resourcing the Iraqi armed forces. The ministry can plan and budget at a basic level, but budget execution requires significant improvement. It has established basic administrative systems, and operates an adequate training system. However, bureaucratic inexperience, excessive layering, and overcentralization hamper its capacity. These flaws reduce the operational readiness, capability, and effectiveness of the Iraqi military.

Army and Special Forces Assessment. In general, the Iraqi Army and Special Forces are becoming more proficient in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations; they are gaining size and strength, and will increasingly be capable of assuming greater responsibility for Iraq's security. The Special Forces brigade is highly capable and extremely effective. It is trained in counterterrorism and it is assessed to be the best element of the new Iraqi military.

The Iraqi Army possesses an adequate supply of willing and able manpower, a steadily improving basic training capability, and equipment tailored to counterinsurgency operations. There is evidence to show that the emerging Iraqi soldier is willing to fight against the declared enemies of the state, with some exceptions remaining along ethnic lines. The Army is making efforts to reduce sectarian influence within its ranks and achieving some progress. The Army's operational effectiveness is increasing; yet it will continue to rely on help in areas such as command and control, equipment, fire support, logistical support, intelligence, and transportation. Despite continued progress, the Iraqi military will not be ready to independently fulfill its security role within the next 12 to 18 months. Nevertheless, the Commission believes that substantial progress can be achieved within that period of time.

The challenge for the Army is its limited operational effectiveness, caused primarily by deficiencies in leadership, lack of disciplinary standards, and logistics shortfalls. Some of these shortcomings are typical of unseasoned units and formations being supported by a newly formed government. Many of the problems can be attributed to marginal leadership at senior military and civilian positions both in the Ministry of Defense and in the operational commands. Identifying the next generation of Iraq's leaders early and placing them in key positions will be one of the major contributors to advancing the effectiveness of the Iraqi military.

Air Force Assessment. The Iraqi Air Force's relatively late establishment hampers its ability to provide much-needed air support to ground operations. It is well designed as the air component to the existing counterinsurgency effort, but not for the future needs of a fully capable air force. Though limited by the availability of properly skilled personnel, and by an inclination to value force

size and acquisition over operational effectiveness, it is nonetheless progressing at a promising rate in this formative period.

Navy Assessment. The Iraqi Navy is small and its current fleet is insufficient to execute its mission. However, it is making substantive progress in this early stage of development: it has a well-thought-out growth plan, which it is successfully executing. Its maturation is hampered by the Ministry of Defense's understandable focus on ground forces and counterinsurgency operations, as well as by its bureaucratic inefficiency. The Iraqi Navy will continue to rely on Coalition naval power to achieve its mission for the foreseeable future.

Ministry of Interior Assessment. The Ministry of Interior is a ministry in name only. It is widely regarded as being dysfunctional and sectarian, and suffers from ineffective leadership. Such fundamental flaws present a serious obstacle to achieving the levels of readiness, capability, and effectiveness in police and border security forces that are essential for internal security and stability in Iraq.

Iraqi Police Service Assessment. The Iraqi Police Service is fragile. It is better trained than in past years and is establishing presence in some areas, but the force is underequipped and compromised by militia and insurgent infiltration. In general, the Iraqi Police Service is incapable today of providing security at a level sufficient to protect Iraqi neighborhoods from insurgents and sectarian violence. The police are central to the long-term establishment of security in Iraq. To be effective in combating the threats they face, including sectarian violence, the Iraqi Police Service must be better trained and equipped. The Commission believes that the Iraqi Police Service can improve rapidly should the Ministry of Interior become a more functional institution.

The National Police Assessment. The National Police have proven operationally ineffective, and sectarianism in these units may fundamentally undermine their ability to provide security. The force is not viable in its current form.

Border Security Assessment. Iraq's border security forces are generally ineffective and need more equipment, training, and infrastructure before they can play a significant role in securing Iraq's borders. The Department of Border Enforcement suffers from poor support from the Ministry of Interior. Overall border security is undermined by the division of responsibilities between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Transportation. Corruption and external infiltration of the border security forces are widespread, and the borders are porous.

Overall Capacity Building. To maintain progress in the development of the ISF over the next 12 to 18 months, the national government has to establish a competent and reliable administration to provide for the full range of support required to sustain the military and police. Doing so includes establishing functional procurement, storage, and asset management systems and providing the proper weapons, vehicles, spare parts, medical supplies, ammunition, communications assets, and other vital equipment.

Additionally, the ministries of Defense and Interior must focus on meeting the needs of their manpower in terms of benefits, career development, and support. The Iraqi government will also have to assume responsibility for ensuring that adequate services are provided to security forces,

especially when they are operational. Essential services include medical, transportation, maintenance, ordinance disposal, and supply. To overcome current shortfalls and deficiencies, the Iraqi government will need to rely heavily on Coalition support to develop the appropriate practices, procedures, and organizations to accomplish these tasks to an Iraqi standard that will enable the Iraqis to directly take the lead for independent security operations.

Additional Observations. The Commission's work and the main body of this report have focused on the issues assigned by Congress. Nevertheless, the opportunity for Commissioners to immerse themselves in the dynamics of this complex engagement while in Iraq, coupled with the extraordinary access the Commission was afforded, has given rise to associated observations and findings. The Commission believes that sharing them is vital.

The Commission has done so in the concluding chapter so that Congress and the nation at large can take full advantage of the total lessons learned from its work. While the Commission was not assigned to comment on such subjects as Iraqi governance or general trends associated with our ongoing national efforts, this final chapter seeks to share observations and suggest answers to questions regarding the road ahead with respect to Iraqi security and to the larger issues that arise from this study, including the important question: "What does this all mean in terms of the future in Iraq?"

To conclude, the Commission recognizes the leadership, contributions, and sacrifice of the men and women of the United States armed forces and of our allies who have created the conditions for Iraq to emerge as a free and independent nation. The nation's military and civilian professionals have without question approached a daunting task with the same level of dedicated service to our nation that continues to be the pride of the American people past and present.

CONCLUSIONS, KEY FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)—Military and Police

Conclusion: The Iraqi armed forces—Army, Special Forces, Navy, and Air Force—are increasingly effective and are capable of assuming greater responsibility for the internal security of Iraq; and the Iraqi police are improving, but not at a rate sufficient to meet their essential security responsibilities. The Iraqi Security Forces will continue to rely on the Coalition to provide key enablers such as combat support (aviation support, intelligence, and communications), combat service support (logistics, supply chain management, and maintenance), and training. The Commission assesses that in the next 12 to 18 months there will be continued improvement in their readiness and capability, but not the ability to operate independently. Evidence indicates that the ISF will not be able to progress enough in the near term to secure Iraqi borders against conventional military and external threats.

Finding 1: Although the Iraqi Army and Special Forces have demonstrated significant progress in counterterrorism capabilities at the operational level, the Iraqi Police Service and National Police have many challenges to overcome and cannot yet meaningfully contribute to denying terrorists safe haven in Iraq. The border security forces are assessed as being ineffective.

Finding 2: The ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to bring greater security to Iraq's provinces varies by region and by organization within the ISF owing to many factors, including political leadership, security environment, sectarianism, and available resources.

Finding 3: The "clear, hold, build" strategy being implemented by Iraqi Security Forces is on the right track and shows potential, but neither the Iraqi armed forces nor the police forces can execute these types of operations independently.

Finding 4: The Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police Service have the potential to help reduce sectarian violence, but ultimately the ISF will reflect the society from which they are drawn. Political reconciliation is the key to ending sectarian violence in Iraq.

The Ministry of Defense

Conclusion: The Ministry of Defense, which is responsible for policy development and implementation as well as resource allocation for the Iraqi military, is building the necessary institutions and processes to fulfill its mission. However, its capacity is hampered by bureaucratic inexperience, excessive layering, and overcentralization. These flaws reduce the operational readiness, capability, and effectiveness of the Iraqi military. As the MOD continues to mature, it should assume the ministerial-level functions that currently fall to the Coalition.

Finding 5: Inefficiencies and overcentralization within the Ministry of Defense and its inability to fully execute its budget impede the combat readiness and capabilities of the Iraqi armed forces.

Finding 6: *The ability to contract efficiently is important to the MOD's mission to sustain the Iraqi armed forces. The MOD currently lacks effective processes to execute contracting requirements.*

Finding 7: *The MOD consistently compensates the members of the Iraqi military, but it has difficulty accounting for personnel.*

Finding 8: *The level of information sharing and cooperation between the Iraqi intelligence community and the Iraqi Security Forces is not satisfactory—a problem exacerbated by bureaucratic competition and distrust among duplicative intelligence organizations.*

Finding 9: *Parallel lines of direct communication to military units have been established under the control of the Prime Minister. He is perceived by many as having created a second, and politically motivated chain of command, effectively communicating orders directly to field commanders. Such a practice bypasses national command lines, which should flow through the Minister of Defense and the Commanding General of Iraqi Armed Forces.*

Finding 10: *The lack of logistics experience and expertise within the Iraqi armed forces is substantial and hampers their readiness and capability. Renewed emphasis on Coalition mentoring and technical support will be required to remedy this condition.*

The Iraqi Army and Special Forces

Conclusion: The Iraqi Army and Special Forces possess an adequate supply of willing and able manpower and a steadily improving basic training capability. The Army has a baseline supply of equipment for counterinsurgency, but much of this equipment is unavailable for operations owing to maintenance and supply chain management problems. They are making efforts to reduce sectarian influence within their ranks and are achieving some progress. Their operational effectiveness, particularly that of the Special Forces, is increasing, yet they will continue to rely on Coalition forces for key enablers such as combat support (aviation support, intelligence, and communications), combat service support (logistics, supply chain management, and maintenance), and training. Despite progress, they will not be ready to independently fulfill their security role within the next 12 to 18 months. Nevertheless, the Commission believes that substantial progress can be achieved to that end.

Finding 11: *In addition to protecting the nation against external military threats, the Iraqi Army can and should also play a role in preventing unconventional threats migrating from points outside of Iraq. The Army currently does not have sufficient forces to enhance border security and conduct counterinsurgency operations simultaneously.*

> *Recommendation:* *The Iraqi Army's size and capability should be developed as part of an Iraqi national security strategy that defines the roles and missions of the ISF to address both internal security and border security needs. The Army as well as the nation's police forces are currently emphasizing internal security; only ineffective border security forces are focused on controlling the borders. The Iraqi Army must contribute to both border and internal security. A national*

commitment to expand the Army's mission beyond counterinsurgency to include border security must be reflected in Army and MOD plans and policies.

Finding 12: *The Iraqi Army has become more effective in supporting Coalition-led counterinsurgency operations from the start of Iraqi and Coalition surge operations in early 2007. The reliability of Iraqi Army units continues to improve, and some units now are an integral part of the Coalition team for counterinsurgency operations. The overall rate of progress of the Army is uneven. Some units perform better than others; but there is rising confidence that progress is being made at a rate that will enable Iraqi Army tactical formations and units to gradually assume a greater leadership role in counterinsurgency operations in the next 12 to 18 months. However, they will continue to rely on Coalition support, including logistics, intelligence, fire support, equipment, training, and leadership development for the foreseeable future.*

Finding 13: *Iraqi Special Operations Forces are the most capable element of the Iraqi armed forces and are well-trained in both individual and collective skills. They are currently capable of leading counterterrorism operations, but they continue to require Coalition support. They remain dependent on the Coalition for many combat enablers, especially airlift, close air support, and targeting intelligence.*

Finding 14: *The Iraqi Army is short of seasoned leadership at all levels, and a lack of experienced commissioned and noncommissioned officers hampers its readiness, capability, and effectiveness.*

Finding 15: *A noncommissioned officer corps is not part of Iraq's military tradition, but it will be invaluable to making the Army more combat-effective.*

> **Recommendation:** *Developing leadership in the Iraqi Army will require continued support from Coalition advisors and units. Ongoing employment of a "train the trainers" approach, and continued emphasis on the development of a functioning noncommissioned officer corps, is essential, though developing leaders will take time to achieve.*

Finding 16: *The Iraqi Army is currently structured for counterinsurgency operations with a goal of manning 13 divisions by the end of 2008. The current divisions are experiencing absenteeism, both authorized and unauthorized. MOD has established a standard of 85 percent "present-for-duty" at all times. To achieve this, units will be manned at 120 percent of authorized strength, and the abundance of volunteers for service in the new Iraqi Army should make the attainment of this goal possible. This higher manning requirement will place additional strain on equipping and combat training programs.*

Finding 17: *The implementation of an Iraqi code of military discipline, professional development programs, and benefits for members of the armed forces is key to improving readiness. The Commission finds that inadequate implementation of these initiatives adversely affects personnel retention and leadership development. Developing future leaders must be an important objective of personnel programs.*

Finding 18: *The Iraqi Army is adequately equipped for counterinsurgency. However, equipping the Army with more armor, artillery, and mobility is tactically advantageous and communicates a powerful message to the Iraqi people and to the enemy about the growing strength and capability of the Iraqi Army.*

Finding 19: *Logistics remains the Achilles' heel of the Iraqi ground forces. Although progress is being made, achieving an adequate forcewide logistics capability is at least 24 months away.*

Finding 20: The current shortfall in logistics is emblematic of the urgent need to solve a major issue in terms that the Iraqi government and military can adopt. U.S. strategies and solutions rely heavily on outsourcing of logistics, an approach that has met resistance from the Iraqi leaders. In many cases, the "Iraqi way," though not always optimal, is sufficient. The solutions for the Iraqi armed forces must be developed with the goal of achieving an Iraqi standard that allows for Iraqi culture, traditions, and abilities.

> *Recommendation: To operate independently, the Iraqi Army must develop a functioning logistics and maintenance system. The Coalition should continue working with the MOD to develop a system that meets Iraqi needs.*

The Iraqi Air Force

Conclusion: The Iraqi Air Force's relatively late establishment hampers its ability to provide much-needed air support to ground operations. It is well designed as the air component to the existing counterinsurgency effort, but not for the future needs of a fully capable air force. Though limited by the availability of properly skilled personnel, and by an inclination to value force size and acquisition over operational effectiveness, it is nonetheless progressing at a promising rate during this formative period.

Finding 21: The long-term capability of the Iraqi Air Force will depend on its success in recruiting quality personnel, and will require greater emphasis on basic and technical training.

> *Recommendation: Together with its Coalition partners, the Iraqi Air Force must increase the quality of its recruits and the capacity of current and planned training programs, while also increasing the manpower authorizations to compensate for chronic absenteeism. Emphasis on the value of training must be relentless.*

Finding 22: Although aircraft procurement has been adequate to date, maintenance and sustainment systems lag well behind the procurement program and thus impede overall Iraqi Air Force capability.

> *Recommendation: Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq must redouble its efforts to inculcate the value of quality maintenance and support into the culture of the MOD in general, and of the Iraqi Air Force in particular.*

Finding 23: Although the Iraqi Air Force has had a very late start compared to the Iraqi Army, the present design of the Iraqi Air Force is appropriate for its current mission and it is making significant progress.

> *Recommendation: Given its good progress to date, the new Iraqi Air Force should stay its present course of developing a counterinsurgency air force with a view toward establishing quality operations and maintenance capability for integration into the joint fight. As these skills are refined, reliance on Coalition support can diminish.*

The Iraqi Navy

> *Conclusion:* The Iraqi Navy is small and its current fleet is insufficient to execute its mission. However, it is making substantive progress in this early stage of development: it has a well-thought-out growth plan, which it is successfully executing. Its maturation is hampered by the Ministry of Defense's understandable focus on ground forces and counterinsurgency operations, as well as by bureaucratic inefficiency. The Iraqi Navy will continue to rely on Coalition naval power to achieve its mission for the foreseeable future.

Finding 24: *The low profile of the Iraqi Navy within the MOD, as well as the ministry's inadequate budget allocation and execution, significantly impede Iraqi naval operations and development.*

> **Recommendation:** *Coalition advisors must assist the Iraqi Navy leadership in advocating budget priorities within the MOD. The strategic importance of the Iraqi Navy must be better articulated to the Government of Iraq, in terms both of maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity and of providing the security needed to ensure the efficient flow of exports. Larger issues of poor ministerial capacity and poor budget execution must also be addressed with Coalition support, as detailed more extensively in the discussion on MOD capacity (Chapter 4).*

Finding 25: *The Iraqi Navy area of responsibility is small, complicated, and of vital strategic importance. Relations among the nations bordering the area of responsibility and their respective navies and coast guards are fragile at best. Furthermore, the international maritime borders with Iran and Kuwait are contested and not clearly demarcated. These issues warrant greater attention from both the MOD and the Coalition.*

> **Recommendation:** *Absent clearly defined territorial seas, the Iraqi Navy's battle space will be further complicated. Although the Commission realizes that resolving this issue is made more difficult by long-standing animosities between these nations and may not be feasible in the near term, it is important that the profile of this issue be raised within the Government of Iraq and the country team.*

Finding 26: *The Iraqi Navy does not have a collaborative relationship with the Iraqi Coast Guard, though the two services operate in close proximity and have complementary missions. This lack of coordination has the potential to create vulnerable seams in a critical strategic environment.*

> **Recommendation**: *The Coalition should work with the MOD, Iraqi Navy, and Coast Guard to examine the feasibility and potential advantages of merging the Navy and Coast Guard into a single service with responsibility for coastal maritime security. If unity of command cannot be attained by combining both forces under the MOD, then better cooperation and coordination has to be developed to prevent a serious gap in security.*

Finding 27: *The new Iraqi Navy has made significant progress over a very short time period, particularly in planning, but it remains heavily reliant on the Coalition for training, logistics, and maintenance support.*

> **Recommendation:** *An ongoing Naval Transition Team presence in Umm Qasr is essential and should be continued.*

The Ministry of Interior

Conclusion: The Ministry of Interior is a ministry in name only. It is widely regarded as being dysfunctional and sectarian, and suffers from ineffective leadership. Such fundamental flaws present a serious obstacle to achieving the levels of readiness, capability, and effectiveness in police and border security forces that are essential for internal security and stability in Iraq.

Finding 28: Sectarianism and corruption are pervasive in the MOI and cripple the ministry's ability to accomplish its mission to provide internal security for Iraqi citizens.

Finding 29: The MOI lacks sufficient administrative and logistics capability to support the civil security forces it controls.

> *Recommendation: The MOI, with the support of the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team, must reform its organizational structure, develop a five-year strategic plan, and build sufficient administrative capacity to sustain Iraq's civil security forces in the field in a manner that is free of real or perceived sectarian favoritism.*

Finding 30: The MOI cannot execute its budget, a failure that undermines the effectiveness of the civil security forces in the field.

Finding 31: The Ministry of Interior and provincial authorities share responsibility for management and payment of the Iraqi Police Service. Serious deficiencies in these efforts have led to pay and morale problems and have heightened tensions between the central government and the provinces.

> *Recommendation: The MOI Transition Team should continue to work with MOI officials to establish workable mechanisms to better manage and resolve pay problems affecting police forces. This should be done in coordination with provincial authorities.*

Finding 32: The MOI has little control of the forces that make up the Facilities Protection Service (FPS). The allegiance of many Facilities Protection Service personnel has been to individual ministries, parties, tribes, and clans rather than to the central government, and such division of loyalties undermines their ability to provide security.

> *Recommendation: The Coalition should support consolidation of the Facilities Protection Service by encouraging the establishment of national implementing orders. As consolidation proceeds, the Coalition should assist the MOI to ensure that the Facilities Protection Service personnel can be properly vetted, trained, and equipped.*

Iraqi Police Service

Conclusion: The Iraqi Police Service is incapable today of providing security at a level sufficient to protect Iraqi neighborhoods from insurgents and sectarian violence. The police are central to the long-term establishment of security in Iraq. To be effective in combating the threats that officers face, including sectarian violence, the Iraqi Police Service must be better trained and equipped. The Commission believes that the Iraqi Police Service can improve rapidly should the Ministry of Interior become a more functional institution.

Finding 33: The emphasis on local recruiting and assignment in the Iraqi Police Service is showing promise in establishing security at the local level; strong personnel vetting processes will remain vital.

> *Recommendation: The MOI and the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should work closely with provincial authorities to ensure that established vetting procedures are used consistently throughout the country to combat militia, criminal, and terrorist infiltration of the Iraqi Police Service.*

Finding 34: Police training in Iraq is improving, particularly in areas where training is led by Iraqi instructors partnered with civilian police advisors.

> *Recommendation: The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should continue transitioning the lead for training to the Iraqis wherever possible and should consider instituting a "train the trainers" program throughout the provinces to facilitate this process.*

Finding 35: U.S. military officers rather than senior civilian law enforcement personnel lead the Coalition training effort for the Iraqi Police Service; this arrangement has inadvertently marginalized civilian police advisors and limited the overall effectiveness of the training and advisory effort.

> *Recommendation: Leadership of the Coalition Police Assistance Training Team and the Police Training Teams should be transferred to senior civilian law enforcement professionals.*

Finding 36: The number of civilian international police advisors is insufficient to the task of training the Iraqi Police Service.

> *Recommendation: The Coalition—not just the United States—should fund and recruit the requisite number of international police advisors.*

Finding 37: Training programs to date have emphasized quantity of police trained over quality of training, thereby undermining the long-term effectiveness of the force in favor of force generation efforts.

> *Recommendation: Particularly in light of a significantly high number of personnel in the Iraqi Police Service who have not yet undergone Coalition training, the Ministry of Interior and Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should seek higher-quality police recruits and vet them more carefully as they continue to address the training backlog.*

Finding 38: *The Iraqi Police Service lacks a formal police leadership academy, a deficiency that impedes leadership development.*

> ***Recommendation****: The Iraqi Police Service should work with its Coalition advisors to establish a formal Iraqi Police Academy that is focused on developing civil policing skills in senior officers and includes a separate first-line supervisor training program.*

Finding 39: *The Iraqi Police Service is underequipped to combat the threats it faces and suffers persistent shortfalls in vital equipment.*

> ***Recommendation:*** *Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq should work with the Iraqi government to provide adequately armored vehicles and heavier weaponry to the Iraqi Police Service, particularly to police stations in urban areas or other areas where improvised explosive device (IED) and explosively formed penetrator (EFP) attacks are prevalent.*

Finding 40: *Quality intelligence is central to the ability of the Iraqi Police Service to take the lead for security, but intelligence supporting police operations is limited and information sharing with other security agencies is weak.*

> ***Recommendation:*** *All Iraqi security agencies and the Iraqi Police Service must work together to establish information-sharing systems, practices, and protocols that meet their requirements. The MOI should work with the provinces to establish mechanisms to share information from the national level down.*

Finding 41: *The Iraqi Police Service has extremely weak investigative and forensic capabilities that greatly limit its effectiveness.*

> ***Recommendation:*** *As the Iraqi Police Service continue to develop, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq should work with the MOI to increase the investigative and forensic capabilities of the police service by expanding the Major Crimes Task Force, increasing the number of crime lab facilities in major cities, increasing training courses for criminal investigators, and establishing an investigator rank within the police service.*

Finding 42: *The Iraqi Police Service is but one element of a broader justice system that is not yet well established in Iraq.*

> ***Recommendation:*** *The Government of Iraq, particularly the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, should collaborate to create and implement a framework to enable the rule of law in Iraq. The Coalition should continue to strongly support these efforts.*

Finding 43: *The police are central to the long-term establishment of security and stability in Iraq. Today, the Iraqi Police Service is incapable of providing security at a level sufficient to protect Iraqi neighborhoods from insurgents and sectarian violence.*

> ***Recommendation:*** *The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should work closely with the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense to develop a detailed strategic plan to transition primary responsibility for internal security in Iraq from the Iraqi Army to the Iraqi Police Service.*

The National Police

> *Conclusion:* The National Police have proven operationally ineffective. Sectarianism in its units undermines its ability to provide security; the force is not viable in its current form. The National Police should be disbanded and reorganized.

Finding 44: In its current form, the National Police is not a viable organization. Its ability to be effective is crippled by significant challenges, including public distrust, sectarianism (both real and perceived), and a lack of clarity about its identity—specifically, whether it is a military or a police force.

> *Recommendation: The National Police should be disbanded and reorganized under the MOI. It should become a much smaller organization under a different name with responsibility for highly specialized police tasks such as explosive ordnance disposal, urban search and rescue, special threat action, and other similar functions.*

The Department of Border Enforcement

> *Conclusion:* Iraq's borders are porous. The Department of Border Enforcement suffers from poor ministerial support from the MOI. Border forces often lack the equipment, infrastructure, and basic supplies to conduct their mission. Overall border security is further undermined by the division of responsibilities between the MOI and the Ministry of Transportation. Corruption and external influence and infiltration are widespread. Absent major improvements in all these areas, Iraq's borders will remain porous and poorly defended.

Finding 45: The overall capacity of the Department of Border Enforcement and the Ports of Entry Directorate is undermined by weak MOI capacity. Further, border security commanders have little confidence that the MOI will address their needs and concerns.

Finding 46: The divided responsibility for land, sea, and air ports of entry between the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Transportation, together with the lack of unity of effort between these ministries, undermines the effectiveness of the Department of Border Enforcement and the Ports of Entry Directorate.

> *Recommendation: The Government of Iraq should establish clear guidelines to facilitate unity of effort between the MOI and MOT for border security and move quickly to consolidate overall responsibility for border security under the MOI.*

Finding 47: The MOI has not created standardized concepts of operations, operating procedures, or processes for the Ports of Entry Directorate to apply at Iraq's land ports of entry; each appears to be run according to the initiative—or lack thereof—of the local commander.

Finding 48: Many land ports of entry have neither the quantity nor the quality of monitoring and detection systems required for border security operations to function effectively.

Recommendation: The Coalition should continue to emphasize to the MOI that the territorial integrity of the country relies heavily on the Department of Border Enforcement's ability to secure the borders and that funding for detection and monitoring equipment for those forces should be accorded a very high priority to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of ports of entry security forces.

Finding 49: The Department of Border Enforcement lacks sufficient logistics, support systems, and infrastructure to sustain many of its forces in the field.

Recommendation: Coalition forces should strongly encourage the Department of Border Enforcement to implement its national Headquarters Distribution Plan while continuing to provide logistical and maintenance support in the near term so that Department of Border Enforcement and ports of entry personnel can accomplish their mission.

Finding 50: Corruption is a serious problem at many land ports of entry. This fact has not yet been adequately addressed.

Recommendation: Eliminating corruption will most likely be a generational undertaking in Iraq, but Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, Multi-National Corps–Iraq, and civilian agencies should work together to try to increase Border Transition Team oversight of Department of Border Enforcement and Ports of Entry Directorate facilities, as well as to develop a standardized training program emphasizing leadership and professional ethics.

Table 1. ISF Independent Assessment Commission Organization

General James L. Jones, USMC (Ret.), Chairman

Ministry of Defense Syndicates	**Ministry of Interior Syndicates**
Iraqi Army	**Iraqi National Police and Iraqi Police Service**
General George Joulwan, USA (Ret.), Syndicate Chair	Chief Charles Ramsey, Syndicate Chair
General John Abrams, USA (Ret.)	The Honorable Terrance Gainer
General Charles Wilhelm, USMC (Ret.)	Colonel Michael Heidingsfield, USAF (Ret.)
Lieutenant General John Van Alstyne, USA (Ret.)	Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland
Command Sergeant Major Dwight Brown, USA (Ret.)	Chief John Timoney
Sergeant Major Alford McMichael, USMC (Ret.)	
	Other Ministry of Interior Functions
Iraqi Special Forces	General Charles Boyd, USAF (Ret.), Syndicate Chair*
Brigadier General Richard Potter, USA (Ret.)	Admiral Gregory Johnson, USN (Ret.)*
	Lieutenant General Martin Berndt, USMC (Ret.)
Iraqi Air Force	
General Charles Boyd, USAF (Ret.)*	* Denotes dual Commission role
Iraqi Navy	
Admiral Gregory Johnson, USN (Ret.)*	

Cross-Cutting Issues Syndicates

Logistics	**Resources**
Lieutenant General Gary McKissock, USMC (Ret.)	The Honorable John Hamre
Intelligence/Command and Control	**Personnel**
Lieutenant General James King, USA (Ret.)	Major General Arnold Punaro, USMC (Ret.)

Figure 1: ISF Independent Assessment Commission Site Visits (Iraq)

1. Tal Afar
  3rd Iraqi Army Division HQ

2. Mosul
  Multi-National Division-North HQ
  2nd Iraqi Army Division HQ

3. Kirkuk
  Kirkuk Air Base (Iraqi Air Force)

4. Sulaymaniyah
  Joint Iraqi Police Academy
  Provincial Directorate of Police HQ

5. Habbaniyah
  Habbaniyah Iraqi Police Academy
  Regional Training Center - Habbaniyah
  Multi-National Forces - West (MNF-W) HQ
  MNF-W ISF Training Facilities
  Iraqi National Maintenance Site
  1st Iraqi Motor Transport Regiment

6. Zurbatiyah
  Point of Entry Border Station

7. Taji
  Camp Taji
  Counterinsurgency Center for Excellence
  Iraqi Counterinsurgency Academy
  Iraqi Military Intelligence Academy
  Iraqi Signal School
  Regional Support Unit - Taji
  Iraqi Army Services Support
    Training Institute
  Taji National Depot
  Regional Training Center - Taji
  1st Brigade Combat Team
    1st Cavalry Divison
  Iraqi Army NCO Academy
  CMATT Command
  Taji Air Force Base
  Saba' Al Bur
    Join Security Station-West

8. Arab Jabour
  Patrol Base Whiskey One

9. Numaniyah
  Numaniyah Iraqi National Police
    Academy23

10. Basra
  Multi-National Divison-Southeast
  10th Iraqi Army Division
  U.S. Regional Embassy Office
  Department of Border Enforcement - J-7
  Iraqi Chief of Police

11. Umm Qasr
  Umm Qasr Naval Base

12. Offshore Oil Terminals
  al-Basra Oil Terminal
  Khor al Amaya Oil Terminal

13. Tallil
  8th Iraqi Army Division
  Provincial Reconstruction Teams
  1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division
 Iraqi Army Commanders for Al
    Muthanna and Dhi Qar Provinces

14. Trebil
  Point of Entry Border Station

15. Al Walid
  Point of Entry Border Station

Figure 2: ISF Independent Assessment Commission Site Visits (Baghdad)
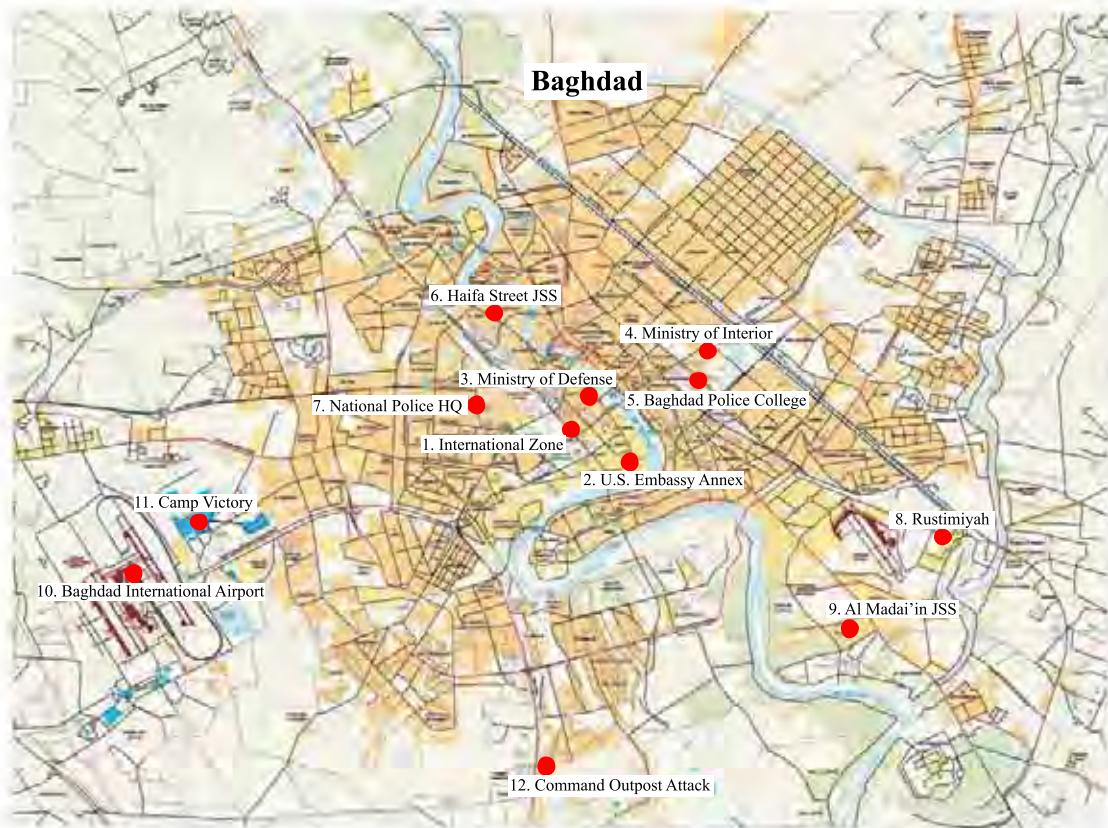
1. International Zone
   Iraqi President Jalal Talabani
   Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih
   Multi-National Security Transition
      Command - Iraq HQ
   Tactical Training Command
   NATO Training Mission
   Iraqi National Defense University
   Iraqi National Command Center
   Baghdad Operations Center
   Iraqi Office of the Commander-in-Chief
   Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement

2. U.S. Embassy Annex

3. Iraqi Ministry of Defense

4. Iraqi Ministry of Interior

5. Baghdad Police College
   Baghdad Provincial Directorate of Police HQ
   Provincial Directorate of Police
   Karkh Directorate Police Headquarters

6. Haifa Street Joint Security Station

7. Iraqi National Police Headquarters

8. Rustimiyah
   Iraqi Military Academy - Rustimiyah
   Iraqi Joint Staff College

9. Al Madai'in JSS (Al Karradah District)

10. Baghdad International Airport
   Camp Dublin
      - National Police Emergency Response Unit
      - Iraqi Center for Dignitary Protection Training
   Al Muthanna Air Base
      - Iraqi Air Force
   Iraqi Counter Terrorism Command

11. Camp Victory
   Multi-National Corps - Iraq HQ
   Multi-National Force - Iraq
   Iraqi Assistance Group
   Iraqi Ground Forces Command
   6th Iraqi Army Division
   Command Operations Post Cleary
   Multi-National Division-Center HQ

12. Command Outpost Attack (West Rashid)

CHAPTER 1: THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN IRAQ

To put the Commission's assessment of the Iraqi Security Forces in an appropriate context, it is important to understand the internal and external threats facing Iraq and its people, as well as the requirements that those threats impose on the Iraqi Security Forces. The societal forces defining the security environment in Iraq today are enormously diverse, complex, and violent, and they directly affect the stability of the broader Middle East. The conflicts in Iraq today flow from differences over religion, from historical divides, and from disputes in Iraqi society that were unleashed following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. They also reflect the broader power dynamics of the region. The Iraqi Security Forces are attempting to develop and operate in the midst of an extraordinarily complex environment—an environment that significantly challenges far more mature international security forces as well.

Iraq's modern history is the story of different groups and tribes merged into a single nation-state by European powers. After the defeat of the Ottomans in World War I, the Franco-British plan to unite Mesopotamia was executed through the imposition of rulers and drawing of maps in European capitals—without the censuses of or consultation with the local interested parties. In carving modern Iraq out of the former Ottoman provinces of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra, a largely Kurdish north was combined with a largely Sunni Arab center and a largely Shi'a south (See Figure 3). This consolidation papered over existing problems and created new ones.

Figure 3: Religious / Ethnic Areas in Iraq (as of April 07)
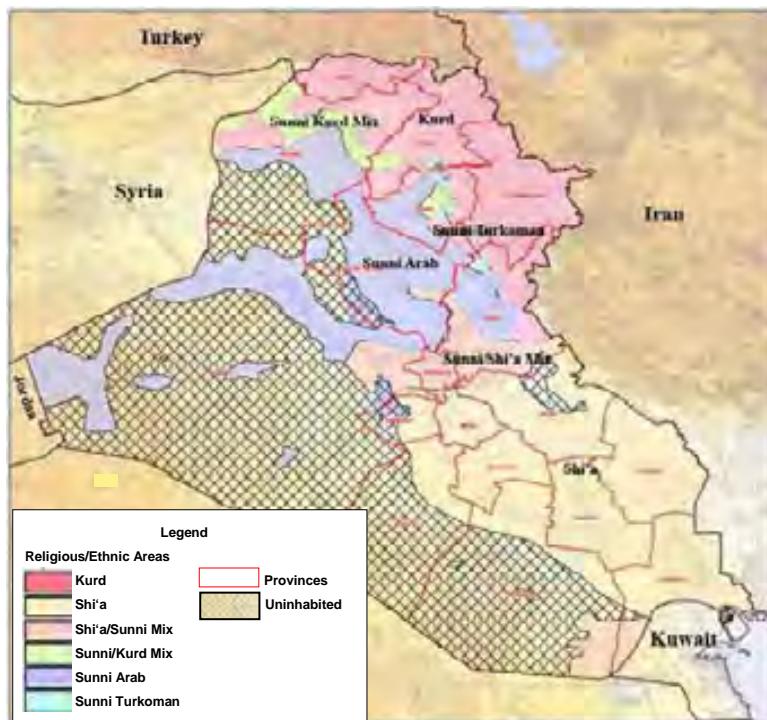
Source: U.S. Department of Defense

The Kurds in Iraq number more than 4 million, representing perhaps 20 percent of the total Iraqi population. Significant Kurdish communities in the neighboring countries of Turkey, Iran, and Syria bring the total Kurdish population of the area to more than 25 million. Surrounding states conceive the possibility of Kurdish secession in Iraq as an inspiration to their own Kurdish minority populations, and thus as a threat to their own territorial integrity. The Sunnis also represent another 20 percent of the Iraqi population. Iraq's Sunnis traditionally have lived in the center of the country, an area without substantial oil or other economic resources. With support from the Ottomans, the British, and the Ba'athists, Sunnis ruled Mesopotamia for more than 400 years—until the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. The Shi'a make up about 60 percent of Iraq's population, living principally in the south, the area that possesses most of Iraq's known oil reserves and has access to the Persian Gulf. Many Iraqi Shi'as feel that after years of oppression, the time has come for them to assume a leading role in Iraq, and they profess pride in being the first inhabitants of an Arab state in centuries to be Shi'a led.

Iraq is bordered by Iran, Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Syria and Iran have long played a significant role in Iraq's affairs. Iran, a large Shi'a state governed by an avowedly revolutionary theocracy, is largely Persian, not Arab. In 1980, after a series of border disputes and growing tension between Saddam's Sunni regime and the Shi'a ruling government in Iran, Iraq invaded Iran, and the two countries battled for eight years and lost more than one million lives between them. So great and widespread was the sacrifice that in many ways, the Iran-Iraq War is as much a defining element of Iran's political culture as the Islamic Revolution itself. Today, Iran's cultural and political influence is expanding significantly in Iraq, as pan-Shi'a networks help consolidate Iraqi Shi'a power. Iranians are agreed among their leadership that Iraq should never be allowed to emerge as a powerful and hostile rival. Consolidating Shi'a control with Iranian influence over the central government is one way to achieve their goals. High among Iran's goals is to undermine U.S. influence in Iraq, since a successful, secure, and pro-U.S. Iraqi government will thwart their regional ambitions.

Syria severed relations with Iraq in 1982 after siding with Iran in the Iran-Iraq War, but the two countries renewed formal diplomatic relations in 2006. Today some 1.5 million Iraqis fleeing their country have crossed the border into Syria, and the growing refugee population is becoming a difficult issue in their bilateral relationship. Syria shelters former Ba'ath Party officials, and many of the foreign Sunni insurgents in Iraq are believed to enter through Syria. Like the Iranian government, the Syrian government believes that a U.S. success in Iraq is adverse to its own interests. But whereas much of the Iranian support appears to go to Shi'a groups and militias, it is Sunni insurgent groups who draw their support from Syria.

Other Arab governments have their own reasons for protecting the interests of Iraq's Sunnis. Though they may stop short of direct support to Sunni insurgents, they are not as aggressive as they might be in cutting off such aid from private sources. Sunni tribal leaders certainly enjoy overseas support, and some of that money goes toward protecting Sunnis—protection that has sometimes manifested itself as attacks on Shi'a.

Overall, each of Iraq's neighbors is concerned about developments in that country, and each has invested in some way—often through armed proxies—to protect itself from those developments. The resultant downward spiral in security has meant that each of these countries feels threatened by

the situation in Iraq, but the perils these surrounding countries face are in no way as great as the dangers currently confronting Iraqis themselves.

Against that history and set of regional dynamics, the most significant threats currently facing Iraq are generally agreed to be al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), Sunni insurgent groups, Shi'a militias, and the largely negative involvement of neighboring countries in Iraq's internal affairs—especially Iranian support of Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) and the Badr Brigade.

Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)

Al Qaeda in Iraq was credited with only 15 percent of the insurgent attacks in Iraq at the beginning of 2007, but its attacks were typically the most destructive, sensational, and destabilizing.[3] According to the Department of Defense, al Qaeda in Iraq is responsible for approximately 90 percent of the suicide bombings in Iraq and the kidnapping of more than 250 foreign workers. Abu

Figure 4: State of Al Qaeda - Iraq
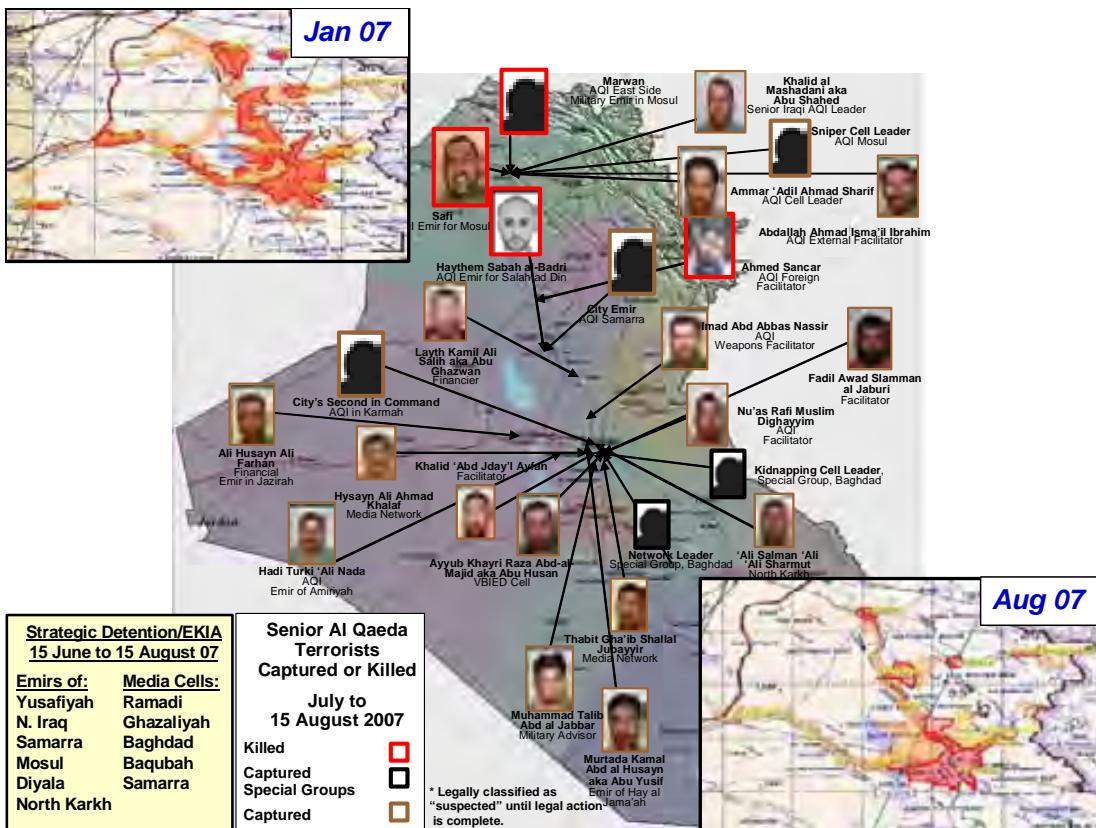
Source: MNF-I

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[3] Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Sunni Insurgents: Looking Beyond Al Qa'ida," CSIS working draft, July 16, 2007, p. 7; available at http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/070716_sunni_insurgents.pdf.

Hamza al-Muhajir—an Egyptian—has been al Qaeda in Iraq's leader since the death of the organization's founder, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in a Coalition air strike on June 7, 2006.[4] Although al Qaeda in Iraq's leadership is foreign—a reality that members have tried to hide through information operations—its makeup is likely 90–95 percent Iraqi.[5] Even so, 80 percent of al Qaeda in Iraq suicide bombings are carried out by foreigners.[6] The relationship between al Qaeda in Iraq and the greater al Qaeda leadership in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region remains unclear, but the groups share common goals and openly support one another through the media and sworn loyalty oaths.

Al Qaeda in Iraq has consistently sought to destabilize Iraq and instigate sectarian violence in an effort to oust U.S. forces from the country. Its 2003 bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad was a turning point that led many in the international community to reconsider support for Coalition operations in Iraq. Similarly, al Qaeda in Iraq's February 22, 2006, bombing of the Shi'a Askariya Mosque in Samarra was an early accelerant of sectarian violence in Iraq, catalyzing retaliatory attacks against 60 Sunni mosques and the killing of more than 400 Sunnis by Shi'a militias in the bombing's immediate aftermath.[7]

There are indicators in some parts of Iraq that popular support for, and even tolerance of, al Qaeda in Iraq's presence may be weakening significantly, in large part because the local population and its leaders resent al Qaeda in Iraq's coercion and brutality. In Anbar province, which makes up one-third of Iraq's landmass, Sunni tribal leaders have formed alliances with Coalition and Iraqi forces during the past six months to hunt members of al Qaeda in Iraq operating in the west (For key al Qaeda in Iraq members captured or killed, see Figure 4). Strong Coalition involvement with the local sheikhs has significantly transformed the security environment in that region—once the principal stronghold of Sunni extremist activity manifested in part through al Qaeda in Iraq operations. The ongoing ISF and Coalition presence in Anbar province encourages the population to cooperate with Coalition forces and has markedly spurred police recruiting efforts. Though these new Sunni allies have yet to earn the complete trust of the Government of Iraq—and vice versa— they have dramatically improved the security situation in Anbar province (see Figure 5), providing Coalition forces with valuable intelligence leading to the captures of top al Qaeda in Iraq leaders. There are positive indications that popular support for al Qaeda in Iraq is decreasing dramatically in other provinces as well.

The Sunni Insurgents

Hard-line Arab Sunni Ba'athists began the insurgency in Iraq after the fall of the Saddam regime. They were originally backed by small groups of foreign fighters—mostly secular Arab nationalists—who had crossed into Iraq before the beginning of the war to support the Ba'athist cause.[8] Today Sunni insurgents target Coalition forces, Iraqi forces, and government personnel

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[4] Kenneth Katzman, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, Congressional Research Service, RL31339: April 27, 2007, pp. 29–30.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[6] Cordesman, "Iraq's Sunni Insurgents," p. 3.

[7] Cordesman, "Iraq's Sunni Insurgents," p. 32.

[8] Mohammed Hafez, "Fresh Air: Martyrs Without Borders," interview on National Public Radio, July 23, 2007; available at http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12169774.

Figure 5: Anbar Attacks

Density plots are of incidents where attacks occurred

Source: MNF-I: As of 10 Aug / Please Note: * Aug is projection
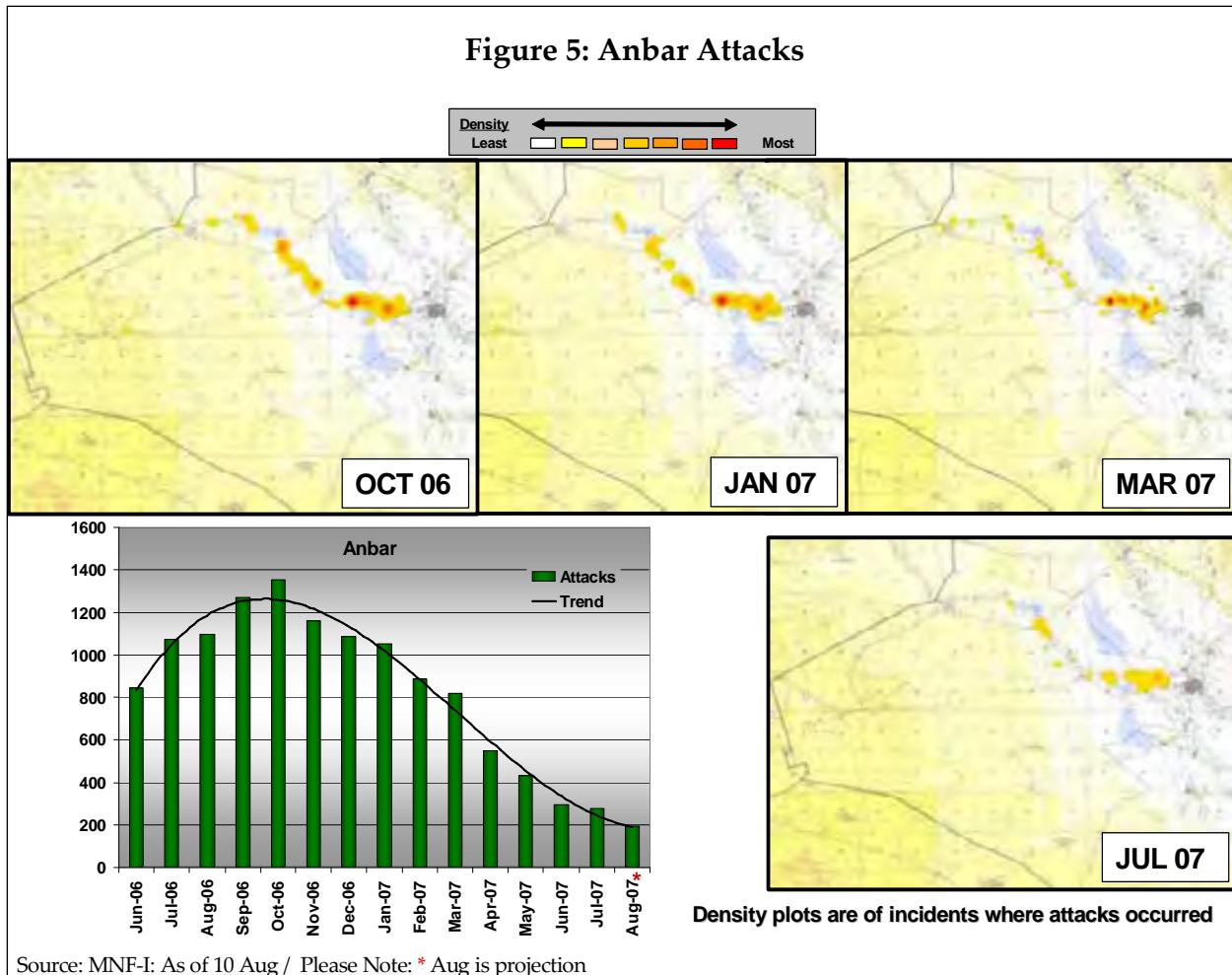
or those seen as cooperating with them, as well as Shi'a Iraqis and militia members.[9] Their goal is to restore Sunni rule in Iraq. The main Sunni insurgent groups currently operating in the country are the 1920 Revolution Brigades, the Islamic Front of Iraqi Resistance, and the Mujahideen Army in Iraq. These groups are believed to be responsible for roughly 70 percent of attacks.[10] Most Sunni insurgent groups are made up of former soldiers and Sunni Arab civilians led by former Iraqi military officers. They have been concentrated in the Sunni-dominated Anbar province, as well as several majority Sunni neighborhoods in Baghdad, including Amiriya, Adhamiya, Fadhil, Jihad, Amal, and Doura.[11] The recent U.S. and Iraqi troop surge has focused on these violent areas, forcing many insurgents to retreat from their traditional home bases into outlying provinces such as Diyala, which has seen a major spike in insurgent activity since the beginning of the surge.[12] These groups are also increasingly active in the northern, majority-Kurdish provinces and around the multi-ethnic and contested cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

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[9] Daniel Kimmage and Kathleen Rudolfo, "Iraqi Insurgent Media: The War of Images and Ideas," Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, Special Report, July 2007, p. 9.

[10] Cordesman, "Iraq's Sunni Insurgents." p. 7.

[11] Katzman, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, p. 29.

[12] *Ibid*., p. 37.

Shi'a Militias

There are approximately 80,000 Shi'a militia members in Iraq. Their roots go back to the underground resistance to the Ba'athist regime, but the militias rapidly grew in strength after the Coalition invasion, in part to fill the security vacuum left by the sudden collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, and also to ensure that the Ba'athists would not rise again. Shi'a individuals in government and other positions of authority throughout Iraq remain deeply insecure about their place in the new Iraq, despite their majority rule of the country.[13]

Approximately 60,000 of these militia members belong to Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM), 15,000 to the Badr Brigades, and 5,000 to smaller organizations.[14] Jaysh al-Mahdi is loyal to the young anti-Western cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The group controls most of Sadr City, a Baghdad slum containing more than 2.5 million Iraqis, and is also increasingly active in southern Iraq. While remaining a fierce critic of the U.S.-led occupation, Muqtada al-Sadr has repeatedly called for Jaysh al-Mahdi to avoid direct confrontation with Coalition and Iraqi forces during the current surge. At the same time, there are increasing signs that Sadr is unable to exercise control over all factions within Jaysh al-Mahdi, and that Iran's influence over the militant arm of this organization is growing.

The Badr Brigade[15] is the Iranian-trained military wing of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC, formerly SCIRI), which is currently the largest Shi'a political party. The Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council controls the most seats in Iraq's parliament and governing coalition.[16] The Badr Organization is led by a member of the Iraqi parliament, Hadi al-Amiri, and also operates primarily in southern Iraq.

The Badr Brigade and Jaysh al-Mahdi are both believed to have infiltrated many of Iraq's ministries and security forces. Various units within the National Police have likely been penetrated by the Badr faction, while Jaysh al-Mahdi is believed to exercise significant influence over Iraq's Facilities Protection Service, which employs more than 140,000 armed personnel.[17] Militia members who join the ISF often remain loyal to their local militia, and may take part in sectarian "extracurricular" activities. The Iraqi government is making efforts to counter the negative influence of these groups. For example, in October 2006, Iraqi Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani fired 3,000 ministry employees, and seven of nine National Police brigade commanders have been removed in the past six months because of sectarian behavior.[18]

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[13] National Intelligence Council, "Prospects for Iraq's Stability: A Challenging Road Ahead," National Intelligence Estimate, January 2007.

[14] *Ibid*., p. 31.

[15] The Badr Brigade is also called the "Badr Organization" by some experts, as the militia claims to have de-militarized.

[16] Lionel Beehner, "Iraq: Militia Groups," *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 9, 2005.

[17] Jeremy Sharp, *The Iraqi Security Forces: The Challenge of Sectarian and Ethnic Influences*, Congressional Research Service, RS22093: January 18, 2007, p. 5.

[18] Katzman, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, p. 32.

Iranian Influence in Iraq

Iraq's borders with Iran are long, porous, and subject to wide-scale corruption at points of entry. While the exact nature, depth, and breadth of Iranian involvement in Iraq is not fully known, there is general consensus that Iran is a rapidly increasing threat to Iraq's stability (see Figure 6).

American intelligence and military officials have stated publicly that there is clear evidence of Iran's providing funding, weapons, ammunition, training, and other forms of support to militia in Iraq, particularly in the southeastern region of the country. For example, U.S. officials have repeatedly asserted that members of the Al Qods Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard have been arming Iraqi Shi'a militias with weapons and explosively forced projectiles (EFPs), which defeat up-armored vehicles.[19] Multi-National Corps–Iraq has stated that EFPs were used to carry out 99 attacks in July 2007, accounting for fully one-third of Coalition combat deaths. EFPs accounted for 18 percent of combat deaths of Americans and allied troops in Iraq in the last quarter of 2006.[20]

In December 2006 and January 2007, U.S. forces detained seven Iranians suspected of being dispatched agents of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard; five remain in U.S. custody.[21] Muqtada al-Sadr's close connections with certain Iranian factions make Jaysh al-Mahdi the most likely recipient of the aid flowing from Iran, but Iran's assistance may not be limited to Shi'a militia groups. In April 2007, Coalition officials announced that they had also uncovered evidence of Iran's aiding some Sunni insurgent groups in an apparent attempt to undermine overall Coalition policy in Iraq.[22]

Iranian influence has also contributed to increased Shi'a-on-Shi'a violence in the south, as factions vie for power and control of the region's natural resources and infrastructure. Many leading Shi'a politicians currently in power in Iraq spent decades in exile in Tehran and formed links that are certain to continue to affect the direction of Iraq's internal politics.

The Role of Iraq's Other Neighbors

Among Iraq's neighbors, Jordan, Kuwait, and Turkey have played the most productive roles in assisting the Government of Iraq. Jordan has hosted ISF training, while Kuwait is an invaluable logistics hub for ISF and Coalition supplies. Jordan has accepted some 750,000 Iraqi refugees, but it recently closed its borders as it no longer feels it can manage the unending flow of refugees.

Although their numbers are relatively small, foreign fighters of different nationalities flow into Iraq mainly through networks in Syria (see Figure 6)—a problem that the Syrian government has not taken effective measures to stop.[23] Iraq's relations with Saudi Arabia have also become

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[19] See, for example, Brigadier General Kevin Bergner, July 2, 2007, Multi-National Forces–Iraq press briefing, available at http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12641&Itemid=131.

[20] Information related to EFPs, unless otherwise noted, is from Michael Gordon, "U.S. Says Iran-Supplied Bomb Kills More Troops," *New York Times*, August 8, 2007.

[21] Katzman, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, p. 32.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[23] Jim Garamone, "Abizaid Says Percentage of Foreign Fighters Increasing in Iraq," American Forces Press Service, March 27, 2005; available at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=31091.

increasingly strained, as more than 50 percent of all foreign fighters—and especially would-be suicide bombers—appear to be coming from Saudi Arabia.[24]

Means and Methods of Violence

Thanks to the legacy of the Ba'athist regime, insurgents and militias in Iraq are extremely well-armed. During his rule, Saddam Hussein purchased an enormous arsenal of conventional weapons, including huge stockpiles of artillery, tanks, mines, mortars, explosives, and ammunition of all types.[25] As Coalition forces advanced into Iraq in spring 2003, Ba'athist security forces melted away, leaving large, unguarded depots and armories that were quickly looted. Insurgents and militia members may also be buying on a black market weapons originally intended for the Iraqi Security Forces.[26]

Figure 6: Iraq – External Influences

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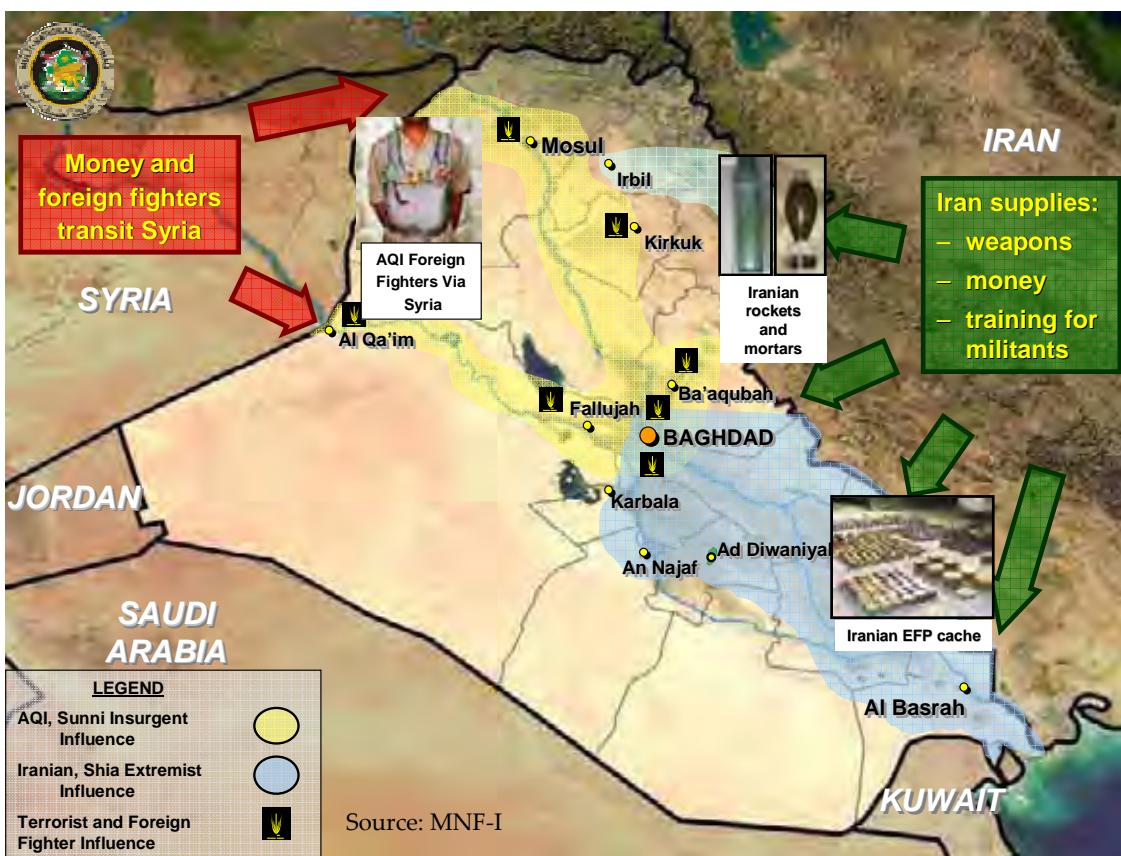
[24] Anthony Cordesman, "Iraq and Foreign Volunteers," CSIS working draft, updated November 2005; available at http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/051117_iraqforeignvol.pdf. See also Sam Dagher, "Anti-Saudi Tide Rises in Iraq," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 9, 2007; Helene Cooper et al., "U.S. Officials Voice Frustration with Saudis, Citing Role in Iraq," *New York Times*, July 27, 2007.

[25] Although a large portion of Iraq's arsenal was destroyed in the 1990–1991 Gulf War, there still remained packed depots throughout Iraq.

[26] Government Accountability Office, *DOD Cannot Ensure That U.S.-Funded Equipment Has Reached Iraqi Security Forces*, GAO-07-711, July 31, 2007.

The war in Iraq features the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on a sweeping scale. Throughout the conflict, IEDs have been responsible for the majority of casualties. Their main components are explosive material, an ignition device, and a trigger. Explosive materials are abundant, and ignitions and triggers can be made from almost any small electronic device or collection of spare parts. Derivatives of the common "package-size" IEDs are vehicle-borne (VBIEDs), suicide vests, or even entire blocks of houses wired together (house-borne or HBIEDs).

VBIEDs have been the most effective weapon of insurgents in Iraq. VBIED attacks include the truck bomb that hit the United Nations headquarters on August 19, 2003, and killed Special Envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello. Most IEDs are planted with a wire or pressure trigger or are remotely activated. This method is a force multiplier for the enemy, and it allows placement by unskilled foot soldiers while bomb makers and leaders remain undetected and out of danger. The tactical impact of IEDs is very similar to that of antipersonnel or antivehicle land mines; however, because of Iraq's urban terrain and the ease of IED construction, IEDs are more difficult to detect.

Levels of Violence and Their Impact on Iraqi Society

Violence remains a fact of life in Iraq. Those insurgents who perpetrate this violence are elusive, operate covertly, and seek to avoid direct engagement with Coalition and Iraqi forces. While violence has recently declined sharply in the Sunni-dominated Anbar province—the former stronghold of the insurgency—attacks have risen in Diyala, Balad, Basra, and Amarah. Violence remains endemic in Baghdad, despite measurable gains made since the implementation of Fardh al-Qanoon (the Baghdad Security Plan) in February 2007 by Coalition and Iraqi forces.

Since the beginning of Fardh al-Qanoon, the average number of sectarian killings in Baghdad has decreased. The average number of daily attacks has similarly fallen [27] (see Figure 7). While these numbers may simply reflect the decision of many of the Shi'a militias to maintain a low profile during the Coalition-led surge, there are signs of improvements in the security situation in Baghdad.

Iraq's violent environment has placed its population under extreme duress. Iraq's population at the time of the 2003 invasion was about 26.5 million. Currently, more than 40,000 Iraqis leave Iraq each month. There are at least 2 million Iraqi refugees throughout the Middle East, whose presence places increasing pressure on Iraq's neighbors, and an additional 2.2 million displaced persons within Iraq.[28] Seventy percent of Iraqi residents lack adequate water supplies, compared with 50 percent in 2003.[29] Twenty-eight percent of children are malnourished, compared to 19 percent before the 2003 invasion. Ninety-two percent of Iraqi children suffer learning problems due to the stress of the war. Sadly, international funding for humanitarian assistance in Iraq has plummeted, from $453 million in 2005 to $95 million in 2006.[30]

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[27] Katzman, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, p. 31.

[28] "Iraqi Refugees Flee War-torn Country," *Lehrer News Hour*; available at
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/july-dec07/refugees_07-26.html.

[29] Oxfam, "Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq," Briefing Paper 105, July 2007; available at
http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp105_humanitarian_challenge_in_iraq_0707.pdf/download.

[30] Oxfam, "Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq."

Figure 7: Ethno-Sectarian Violence: Baghdad Security Districts
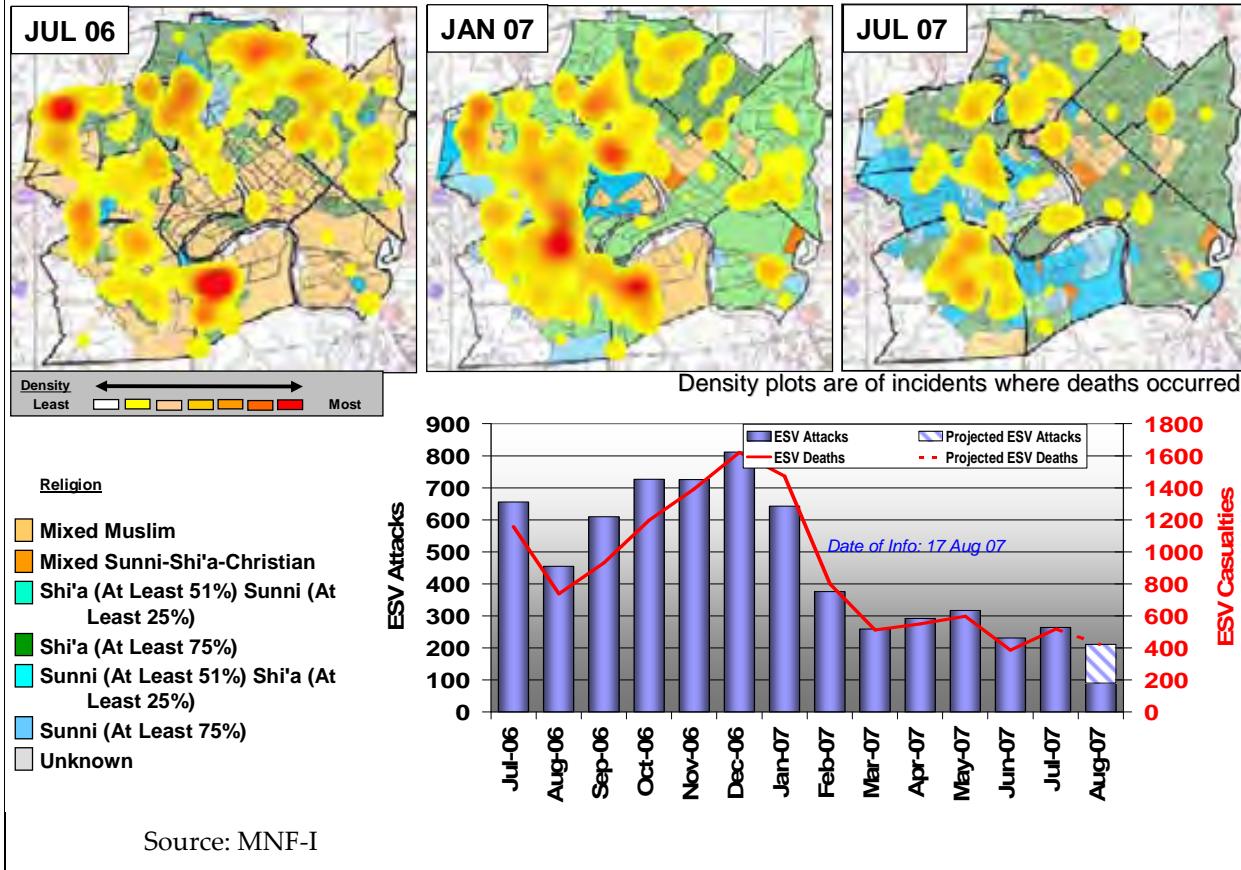
Iraqi society is being convulsed by sectarianism that if not swiftly and significantly curtailed could contribute to a rapid deterioration of Iraq, with "grave humanitarian, political, and security consequences."[31] Iraq's overall security environment is very complex. Elements of terror, ethnic violence, insurgency, meddling by external actors, and criminal activity all combine to define, in varying degrees, the nature of the threats. The Commission assesses that despite all that remain to be done, the single most important event that could immediately and favorably affect Iraq's direction and security is political reconciliation focused on ending sectarian violence and hatred. Sustained progress within the Iraqi Security Forces depends on such a political agreement.

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[31] National Intelligence Council, "Prospects for Iraq's Stability: A Challenging Road Ahead," Unclassified National Intelligence Estimate: January 2007, p. 8.

CHAPTER 2: OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

This report assesses each element of the Iraqi Security Forces in terms of its military readiness to contribute to the security of Iraq. Though many of the challenges facing the ISF are common across the military and police forces, each force has unique characteristics, potential strengths, and evident weaknesses. This chapter provides the Commission's perspective on the overall ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to conduct four critical missions: maintaining the territorial sovereignty of Iraq, denying safe haven to terrorists, providing greater security in the provinces, and ending sectarianism to promote national reconciliation.

Although the ISF have made significant progress in many areas, the Commission finds that they are not yet able to execute these missions independently. Without continued combat support, combat service support, and assistance from Coalition Military Transition Teams, it is unlikely that the ISF will achieve, in the near term, the proficiency and readiness needed to provide security for Iraq.

Figure 8: Glide Path: Iraqi Security Forces

* Manning level of combat battalions raised to 120% owing to Operation Fardh al-Qanoon lessons learned (FMS funded).
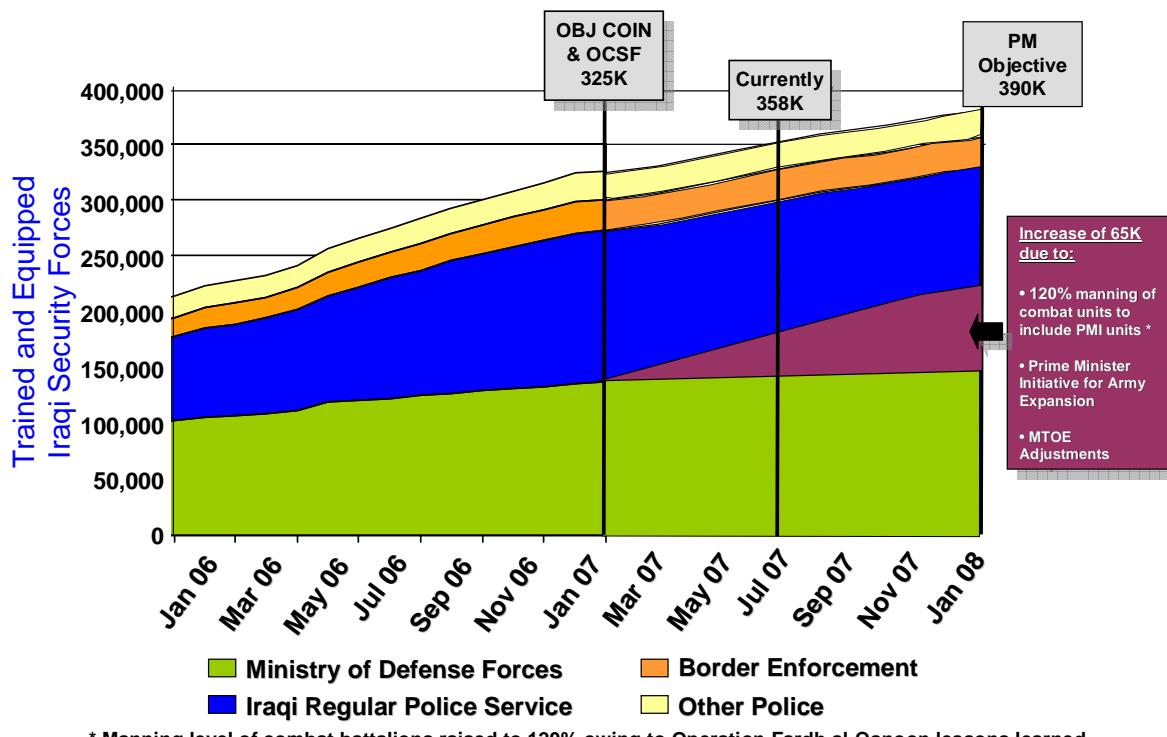
Source: MNF-I

Overview of Iraqi Security Forces

The Iraqi Security Forces are composed of Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Ministry of Interior (MOI) forces.[32] The Iraqi Army and Special Forces, Iraqi Air Force, and the Iraqi Navy report to the Ministry of Defense. Under the Ministry of Interior are the National Police, the Iraqi Police Service, the Department of Border Enforcement, the Facilities Protection Service, and the Coast Guard (for current and projected ISF end strengths, see Figure 8).

In 2004, the Coalition established the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq to focus exclusively on helping to establish and develop the Iraqi Security Forces so that the Government of Iraq would be able to provide for its own security. The command is responsible for working with the Government of Iraq to generate and train Iraqi Security Forces, and to develop administrative capacity within the ministries of Defense and Interior to support the ISF. The Multi-National Corps–Iraq (the tactical unit responsible for command and control in Iraq) has joined in helping to develop the ISF, with an emphasis on providing Military Transition Teams and Police Transition Teams that partner with Iraqi military units at the division, brigade, and battalion levels and with police forces at the provincial, district, and police station levels.

Since 2003, United States has spent $19.2 billion on the development of the ISF.[33] Iraq has spent approximately $16.6 billion for the same purpose, but in 2007 its expenditures for the first time exceeded those of the United States.[34] In 2008, the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq anticipates that Iraq will spend about $11.6 billion on the ISF, and has recommended that the United States contribute $5.5 billion.

Although this chapter examines each of the four missions in turn, it is clear that the missions themselves are interrelated: many of the capabilities needed to accomplish one specific mission are needed to accomplish the others as well. In order to deny terrorists safe haven in Iraq, the ISF must ultimately be able to secure Iraq's borders, an objective that is central to maintaining Iraq's territorial security. Denying terrorists a safe haven will contribute to bringing security to the provinces. In a similar vein, to accomplish any of these four missions, the ISF and the ministries that organize, train, and equip them must have functioning administrative and budgeting systems; logistics and supply chain management systems; and combat support such as aviation support, intelligence, and communications.

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[32] Kenneth Katzman, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, Congressional Research Service, RL31339: April 27, 2007, pp. 35–36.

[33] U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, *Stand Up and Be Counted: The Continuing Challenge of Building the Iraqi Security Forces*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., July 2007, p. 41.

[34] In 2007, the Government of Iraq spent $9 billion compared to $4.5 billion by the United States (telephone interview with Lieutenant General Dempsey, Office of the Secretary of Defense, June 1, 2007, http://www.defendamerica.mil/specials/2007/blog/docs/Dempsey_June01_07_transcript.pdf).

Maintain Territorial Integrity

To maintain Iraq's territorial integrity, the Iraqi Security Forces need to be able to protect the country from external threats, secure the nation's borders and maritime approaches, and control its air space. To fulfill these missions, the Iraqi Security Forces must be able to recruit, train, equip, and retain sufficient officers and soldiers who are loyal to the nation. They also must be able to project and sustain forces around the country, collect and act on military intelligence, command and control forces effectively, and conduct military operations successfully.

Today, the ISF is not able to secure Iraq's borders. The Iraqi Navy and Air Force do not control Iraq's maritime approaches or airspace, and the Ministry of Defense does not have the systems in place to project and sustain its military forces independently.

Iraq has 2,268 miles of land border—compared to 1,951 miles of the U.S.-Mexican border—as well as 36 miles of coastline. The nation's borders are porous, and at least two of Iraq's neighbors are actively contributing to instability within the country. Arms, munitions, and foreign fighters regularly come across the Iranian and Syrian borders. Not only is Iran providing matériel to militia groups but there are also distinct signs of Iranian influence at the political level in Iraq. Saudi Arabia has not taken effective steps to stem the flow of Saudi foreign fighters and suicide bombers into the country. However, discussions with Coalition commanders and intelligence officials in Iraq made it clear to the Commission that Iran's activities raise the greatest concern for future stability, and are making it more difficult for the Coalition to achieve its goals in Iraq.

The Iraqi armed forces are not yet a major factor in Iraq's border security effort. Iraq's 37,000 Department of Border Enforcement personnel are just over one-third the numbers that monitored Iraq's border during Saddam Hussein's rule. Border forts and land crossings lack equipment to inspect and monitor people and cargoes coming into the country. Many border facilities are crumbling, and corruption is a serious problem at many points of entry into Iraq.

Although Iraq's armed forces are not yet able to independently defend Iraq from external threats, they are increasingly capable of managing counterinsurgency operations. More than 75 percent of the battalions in the Iraqi Army can plan, conduct, execute, and sustain counterinsurgency operations with Coalition support,[35] though the degree of that support—particularly in logistics—can be substantial at times. The improvement in the Iraqi Army was aptly captured by the comment of a senior American general who noted that "a year ago we just wanted the Army to stand and fight with us and not run away—today we don't even have to think about that."[36]

As part of Fardh al-Qanoon (the Baghdad Security Plan), the Iraqi Army has participated in a large number of high-intensity operations and demonstrated an effectiveness and level of determination far greater than what Coalition forces observed during joint operations in 2005 and 2006 (this is illustrated by casualty figures, see Figure 9). The Iraqi Minister of Defense seemed to recognize both the progress the Iraqi Army has made and the remaining challenges when he

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[35]White House, "Initial Benchmark Assessment Report," July 12, 2007, p. 21.

[36] Meeting with senior U.S. commanders in Iraq, July 2007.